



## October 2023 Member Matters

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Gift a Wild Ones Membership today!

Member Matters is our members only e-news published in the months between our quarterly newsletter for the whole WOFR community.

## Colorado Native Seed Collection & Cleaning Tips

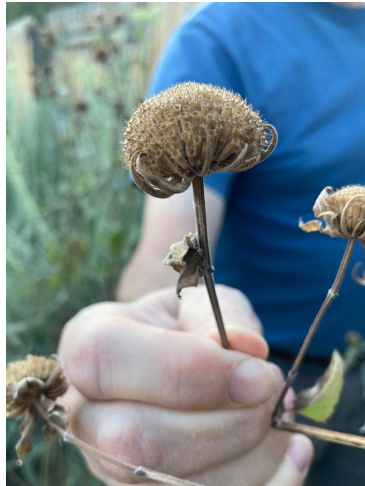
**By Jan Midgely**

*Originally published September, 2020*

Colorado plants evolved in tough soils and climates. Even in natural areas with no supplemental water many are producing fertile seeds this year. If collecting seeds has slipped your mind, it is time to get cracking and get ready to swap seeds at the fall [Native Seed Swaps](#).

You will need paper bags and/or small re-closable plastic bags and a pair of clippers or scissors. Look for fruits that are turning brown or fluffy. Some will split at a seam (or two) or gape open at the tip. Some may have holes like those of a salt shaker.

*[Click here to read more!](#)*



## Chapter Updates

### **Native Seed Collection is Underway!**

Our Swaps Chair, Peggy Hanson, hosted small pop-up events to collect native seed in September. If you are interested in helping with future seed collecting and/or cleaning, [email Peggy](#).

*Photo: Abi Cohen at Ekar Demo Garden - collecting *Mirabilis multiflora**





### **Northern Colorado Plant Swap**

Members enjoyed gathering at City Park in Fort Collins to discuss their native landscaping successes, challenges, and goals going forward. By the time they finished chatting, it was dark enough that phone flashlights were required to check out the various native plant seedlings people brought to swap! The group is looking forward to the November Seed Swap and winter sowing native plants for next season.



### **Board Member & Board Committee Updates**

Vicki Saragoussi Phillips has been voted in as a new board member to fill an open position. Vicki has contributed to Wild Ones Front Range in a variety of ways, including being our Zoom co-host and leading our Programming Committee.

Vicki showed an early interest in gardening when she created her first “rock garden” on a pebble-filled tray with houseplants in her Brooklyn bedroom. Moving to Denver in the 70’s, she longed to explore the larger gardens in the Colorado mountains. Studying environmental sciences, biology and eventually licensed in elementary education, Vicki taught outdoor education with the United States Forest Service, Wilderness Experience Program where she guided high-risk youth through personal discovery in the outdoors, and additional experiential education jobs devoted to science exploration and discovery. Eventually raising a family, she veered into traditional classroom teaching, frequently incorporating environmental education lessons. Her latest professional venture was at Denver Botanic Gardens



(DBG), working as a Children’s Program Instructor, and training and supervising adult volunteers. Working at DBG stimulated her interest in learning more about gardening; particularly incorporating native flora to create natural, integrated and diverse environments surrounding her home.

Kimberly Lehman is now Co-Regional Coordinator with Kristine Johnson for Boulder County.

Suzie Muttel is stepping down as Regional Coordinator for Northern Colorado due to other commitments. A huge thanks to Suzie for organizing educational Member Meetups and advocating passionately about landscaping with native plants!

## Ask CSU Extension Anything (About Native Plants)



**QUESTION: I have heard that most native plants like good drainage. My soil is clay. Do you recommend amending the soil with expanded shale, sand, or something else?**

**ANSWER:** It depends, but in most cases, probably not. We can look at this situation from a couple of different angles.

First, do most native plants like good drainage? Given the soil conditions of much of the state, I think this may be an oversimplification. Many native plants that are credited with wanting good drainage are adapted to dry conditions, so under standard garden conditions would require good drainage so as not to rot by overwatering. If you adjust your watering practices to allow the soil to dry, “good drainage” becomes less relevant. If the soil is draining poorly because it is compacted, then remediation to allow better air circulation would be warranted to improve root growth—this would look like digging or tilling, breaking up the massive soil structure but not pulverizing it to dust. Think loosen and lift. Take steps to prevent additional compaction, like adjusting your traffic pattern if applicable, not working in the garden when its wet, and applying a thick layer of mulch.

Second, does amending with gravel, expanded shale, or sand improve drainage? It can, if you use enough—use too little and you can actually make drainage worse. You need to add enough coarse material for the particles to actually touch and establish a framework, each small stone connected to others. This allows for resistance to compaction and for the establishment of channels through the soil structure that penetrate more deeply into the soil. Using a layer of gravel mulch on the soil surface,

though, has been shown in studies to allow for deeper penetration of water into the soil profile than mixing in gravel or stones. Given that surface mulch with gravel can do a better job, why bother with the work and effort of mixing the stones in, especially when you risk damaging your soil structure in so doing.

For a discussion of this, check out this CSU webinar, [Evidence and Opinion for Xeriscape Practices](#) (video linked).

The upshot—if you choose plants that are native to clayey soils and don't overwater them (many require no supplemental water whatsoever), you probably don't need to do anything about drainage. To be on the safe side, a layer of gravel mulch is the most effective way to increase drainage—no mixing required.



*Answer developed by:*

*John Murgel*

*Extension Specialist, Horticulture and Natural Resources*

*Douglas County*

*Colorado State University Extension*

Ask your native plant questions here!



## Get Involved

### Volunteer With Us

The Wild Ones Front Range Chapter is run by volunteer committee and board members. Consider volunteering your time and talent with us to help deliver on our mission.

Below are some of our openings, but we are always looking for help in a variety of ways. No experience is required, and we will work around your availability - just bring your passion for native plant gardening.

Interested? Complete this [Volunteer Interest Form](#) to help us match you with some opportunities to contribute!

### *Communications*

Partner with the newsletter, social media, and website chairs to communicate about our



chapter's events and resources.

#### *Greenverein Demonstration Garden Maintenance*

Greenverein is a 100' long primarily native plant garden on the north side of the Denver Turnverein Dance Center @ 1570 Clarkson Street, Denver 80218. Volunteers weed, prune, and collect seeds.

#### *Newsletter*

Help to create our content calendar, identify authors for articles, and coordinate content submissions.

#### *Plant & Seed Swaps*

There are multiple ways to volunteer in support of the upcoming seed swaps, including collecting and cleaning native seed, assisting with event coordination, and/or helping on the day of the event.

#### *Publicity*

Increase awareness of Wild Ones Front Range in the community via a variety of approaches, such as newspaper articles, podcasts, event sponsorships, and educational presentations.

#### *Volunteer Coordinator*

Track interested volunteers and help match them to the right chapter committee.



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## Upcoming Events

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*Check out our website's [Events](#) section for full event details!*

### **Pikes Peak Region Meet & Greet**

Saturday, October 7

10:00 am - Noon

Rick's Garden Center

Colorado Springs, CO

[Register here](#)

### **WOFR October Board Meeting**

Wednesday, October 18

6:00 - 8:00 pm

Online/Virtual

Please [email us](#) if you're interested in attending.

### **Denver Native Seed Swap & Giveaway**

Saturday, November 4

10:00 am - 1:00 pm

The Table Public House

Denver, CO

### **Pikes Peak Native Seed Swap & Giveaway**

Sunday, November 5

2:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Grace & St. Stephen's Church

Colorado Springs, CO

### **Northern Colorado Seed Swap & Giveaway**

Saturday, November 11

10:00 am - 1:00 pm

Gardens on Spring Creek

Fort Collins, CO

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Wild Ones Front Range Chapter | <https://fronrangewildones.org/>



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