



Here are some **highlights from our October 6, 2021, chapter meeting:**

- Chapter Business:
 - Chapter membership has increased by 7 since last month and now stands at 74. Membership ranges across southeastern Pennsylvania and into Delaware, Maryland, and New Jersey, all part of the same ecoregion. The table events last month were great for meeting new people and spreading the word about the benefits of native plants.
 - Recordings of past meetings are available on our youtube channel. Search for Wild Ones of Southeastern Pennsylvania. We also have a chapter Instagram account and a facebook page.
 - Treasurer's Report – Chapter funds are available for projects that partner with other nonprofit organizations to get more native plants in the ground. Email wildonesofsepa@gmail.com with ideas for projects.
 - Nomination Slate – No change from current officers; any members interested in an officer or committee position please email wildonesofsepa@gmail.com.
- Thought of the Month: This month's message is: be ecologically friendly, leave the leaves. Rakes, leaf blowers, and bags are noisy and so much work! Instead, leave the leaves in place. Leaves are habitat for overwintering butterflies, moths, beetles, fireflies, and other beneficials. Shredding and mowing kill the critters that are counting on leaf cover for winter protection. Allow these insects to overwinter in your yard by raking leaves into a pile in one area of your yard, or collect your leaves in a bin if you prefer not to leave them on the lawn. Leaves on your garden beds are nature's mulch – they're free, they help retain soil moisture, contribute nutrients as they decay, and allow seedlings to emerge without being blocked by heavy wood mulch. Decaying leaves provide a place for birds and small mammals to forage for food over the winter and find shelter in bad weather. "It looks like dried plants to us, but it's breakfast, lunch, and dinner for birds." Wait to trim back woody stems and perennials until late March, to allow overwintering insects to emerge. Leaves are not litter; they're food and shelter for beneficial insects. Don't clean up your tall plants; native bees make their nests in hollow plant stems!
- Presentation – Identifying and Managing Invasives, presented by Dan Barringer, Invasives Management Coordinator for Natural Lands (NL)
 - Crow's Nest is one of NL's native plant preserves, many of which are open to the public. Crow's Nest is within Lenapehocking, the Lenape tribe's traditional lands.
 - Consider the goal – what are we managing the land for? Management goals will guide decisions.

- Management goals include protection of native species, e.g., spring ephemerals. Controlling garlic mustard in one preserve resulted in the appearance of nodding trillium. Native fauna – spotted turtle, American toad, spotted salamander, damselfly, opossum – all need native habitat to survive.
- Invasives are non-indigenous, introduced either on purpose or by accident. They overwhelm the landscape, allowing nothing else to grow. Invasives tend to be adapted to disturbances, both naturally occurring such as storm damage, and human disturbances such as logging, grazing. When a gap occurs, either invasives or natives could colonize the area. Many invasives thrive in these gaps and quickly take over.
- Impact of invasives – changes in nutrient cycling, altering the hydrology of a site, changing an area's fire regime, changing the contours of stream banks by allowing increased erosion, affects the amount of wildlife resources available to sustain insects, birds, and mammals.
- Invasives physically displace native plants. They out-compete natives for sunlight and can halt the natural succession from field to forest.
- Invasives are expensive to control – vines that overwhelm power lines must be removed.
- Some common invasives – Norway maple, ailanthus (tree of heaven), Japanese akebia, garlic mustard, porcelain berry, Japanese barberry, butterfly bush, oriental bittersweet, Canada thistle, crownvetch, autumn olive, burning bush/winged euonymus, English ivy, privet, Japanese honeysuckle, amur honeysuckle, purple loostrife, Japanese stiltgrass, Chinese fountain grass, giant reed, lesser celandine, glossy or European buckthorn, multiflora rose, Japanese knotweed, mile a minute vine, pale swallowwort.
- Stewardship includes restoration (e.g., converting ponds to wetlands, restoring farm fields to meadow or forest), maintenance (mowing and burning of meadows, native seed harvest and native plant propagation, prescribed grazing, hazard tree management, invasive species management, and wildlife management (deer control)).
- Stewardship is perpetual. Work with nature, use succession, fill niches with desirable species. Avoid unplanned disturbance of areas.
- Create goals for each area, e.g., maintain habitat continuity with neighboring lands, maintain representative sample of native flora, protect specific species.
- Sample Objectives: early detection, rapid response, prevent new invasions, reduce impact of existing invasions, restore areas as needed.
- Sample strategies: inventory and map species (invasives and natives) on your property, prioritize efforts, use best management practices, e.g., integrated vegetation management (corollary to integrated pest management), evaluate and adjust as needed.
- Less removal of invasives by roots; too much large equipment creates additional disturbance that allowed other invasives to establish.
- Best management practices can be found on line – e.g., Penn State Cooperative Extension, Morris Arboretum
- Prioritization can be geographic: start to control invasives where there are few of them, and work out to larger populations. Prioritize by species (can an invasive be controlled?) or by size (remove largest seed-producing individuals first).
- Invasion curve – catch invasive early, when containment is possible.
- Maintenance goal – high maintenance in first few years; maintenance decreases over time.
- Planning tools – imap invasives allows input of species and management actions.
- Management techniques: mechanical (cut plant to deprive it of nutrients), chemical, biological (risky; can't be recalled once released), cultural (prescribed fire, planting to create shade or competition)
- Questions:

- Stihl Kombi multi-tool; brush cutter, chain saw
 - How to dispose of fruits from invasives, e.g., mile a minute –pull it before it sets seed.
 - Autumn olive can be cut any time of year; watch for regrowth if cut in spring. Cutting in summer and fall is more successful in weakening the plant. Cut Japanese knotweed in summer, let it regrow and spray the regrowth.
 - How to reduce the amount of Canada goldenrod in meadows. This goldenrod can create a monoculture. Mow to create conditions that favor grasses. Mow in late winter when ground still frozen; mow in mid-summer at 8” or higher to set plants back. 2-year mowing rotation is fine for meadows.
 - Basal bark herbicide will work on poison ivy, but don’t get any herbicide on supporting tree bark. Cutting is preferred; cutting kills everything above the cut, and use foliar spray on regrowth. Don’t use oil-based herbicide in summer because it can volatilize and kill nearby leaves of canopy trees.
 - Controlling English ivy—don’t pull vines out of the tree because that will break branches. Cut vines at ground level; it will die above the cut. Leaves are resistant to herbicides so add a surfactant to herbicide.
 - Less toxic sprays that burn leaves; be careful they don’t acidify the soil.
- Report – Chapter Project. Jessie shared some photos of our chapter’s first community planting project at Hillside Elementary School in West Chester. Second-grade students planted plugs supplied by the chapter to beautify a raised bed in front of the school.
 - Upcoming Opportunities:
 - **Oct. 20** Free webinar, Wasps: Their Biology, Diversity, and Role as Beneficial Insects, with Heather Holm. Register here: wildones.org/heather-holm-webinar-on-wasps/
 - **Chapter T-shirts** – board looking into options. Looking for an artistic member to design a T-shirt; email ideas to wildonesofsepa@gmail.com. Could be a chapter fund-raiser.
 - **Plant propagation** – members would start seeds this winter, provide some seedlings to chapter for our projects and keep the rest. email wildonesofsepa@gmail.com if interested.
 - **Outreach to kids** – after-school clubs, home schoolers
 - **Possible partnership** – provide plants for memorial garden at Phoenixville elementary school
 - **Possible partnership** – park improvement projects in East Pikeland Township
 - **Winter book club** – focused on native plants, gardening, and conservation. Email wildonesofsepa@gmail.com if interested.
 - **Wild Ones SEPA chapter meeting schedule:** Nov. 11 (Fall Dividing), Dec 8 (Winter Seed Sowing)
 - **View the recording of the meeting** on our Youtube channel: <https://youtu.be/B8grqGbwf-c>

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram for updates on planting natives in southeastern PA.