



Here are some **highlights from our December 8, 2021, chapter meeting:**

- **Chapter Business:**
  - Chapter membership has increased to 87. 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** – The bank account balance stands at \$753.88. Chapter funds are available for projects, including partnerships with other nonprofit organizations, to get more native plants in the ground. Email [wildonesofsepa@gmail.com](mailto:wildonesofsepa@gmail.com) with ideas for projects.
- **Thought of the Month:** This month's message focuses on decorating for the holidays with native plants. You can bring small potted native evergreens into your home for holiday decorations. The trees can be planted after the holidays up until the ground freezes solid, or held over in pots in a sheltered area until spring planting. Examples of native plants to use for decoration are eastern white pine, eastern red cedar, American holly, coral honeysuckle, Christmas fern, red twig dogwood, winterberry, red and black chokeberry, northern bayberry, highbush cranberry, partridgeberry, wintergreen, inkberry, staghorn sumac, and swamp rose. Pine cones, acorns, nuts, fruits (persimmon), and pods (milkweed) can be used to create wreaths and tabletop decorations. Photos and more information are posted on the [Resources](#) tab on our website.
- **Presentation – Winter Seed Sowing,** presented by Jessie Shiffler. This presentation will be posted on our website in the [Resources](#) section.
  - Growing your own natives plants from seed provides opportunities to grow plants that may not be easily available to purchase. By growing your own, you can control the timing and growing conditions, and grow dozens of plants for a small investment in time and money.
  - Many natives germinate best if sown in late fall and winter due to their need for a period of cold, moist weather to break dormancy, called cold stratification.
  - Make a list of the seeds you want to grow. You can research them on line to make sure you have accurate information about the specific varieties. Several good on-line sources are included in the presentation.

- A list of nurseries that sell native seeds is included in the presentation, but be aware that not all of these nurseries sell exclusively native seeds. You can also use native seeds you have saved from your garden or traded with friends.
- You can cold-stratify your seeds artificially in the refrigerator; instructions can be found on line. This process requires more attention than winter-sowing outside.
- Your supplies should include pots, labels, seed-starting mix, water, and something to cover your pots – screening or lightweight landscape fabric; not glass or plastic.
- Seeds can be sown thickly to mimic what can happen in nature. Cover seeds with sand only as deep as their thickness. Some seeds need light to germinate; check the information on line ahead of time.
- Make sure your pots don't dry out during prolonged dry periods over the winter. Once seeds start sprouting in spring, make sure the pots don't dry out; seedlings are vulnerable when first sprouted.
- Germination can be uneven; be patient if you don't see a lot of sprouts right away. More might germinate later on. Wait to transplant until a good number of seedlings in the pot have at least two true leaves.
- Identification of the seedlings is important; on-line resources can be very helpful.
- Transplant once the seedlings have at least two true leaves or the pots become crowded; any time from April through summer, depending on the species.
- Transplant into 4" pots or cells; if seedlings are very crowded, you can transplant several into one pot and separate them when you plant them outside.
- Protect seedlings from direct sunlight and keep them watered. Keep a screen over the pots to protect the seedlings from digging. Pots and cells are prone to drying out. Watering from the bottom works well.
- Seedlings can be planted in the ground when they're big enough for your project or have outgrown their pots. Many perennials concentrate on root growth their first year and can be ready to plant out even if they don't have a lot of top growth. Check the bottom of the pot or cell; if you can see roots, it's time to transplant.
- Several websites have tutorials on winter seed sowing, including [wildseedproject.net](http://wildseedproject.net) and [ecolandscaping.org](http://ecolandscaping.org)
- The presentation includes a list of natives that are easier to germinate, and also a list of natives that do not need any cold stratification and can be started in the spring indoors or even outside after frost.
- Seed starting can also work in gallon jugs; tutorials can be found on line.
- Upcoming Opportunities:
  - **Dec 21:** Endangered Pine Barrens Communities of the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center. Presented by Maryland Native Plant society. Register at [meflora.org/events](http://meflora.org/events)
  - **Member-only North Creek Nursery bulk plant order:** Members can order flats of plants from this Chester County nursery through Wild Ones. Check which species are available on their website under Availability. Email your order to [SecretaryWildOnesSEPA@gmail.com](mailto:SecretaryWildOnesSEPA@gmail.com). Orders are for full flats only; no cancellations; pickup the week of April 25. Orders are due by April 15.
  - **Jan 7 through Feb 11:** Tending Nature weekly webinar series. Ohio State Univ. More information & registration: <https://u.osu.edu/thebuzz/>
  - **Jan. 20, 21, 27, 28:** New Directions in American Landscape Symposium: Expanding the Scope of Landscape Design. Information & registration at <https://www.padeasla.org/event/33rd-annual-landscape-symposium-virtual/>

- **Feb 25-27:** Philadelphia Home & Garden Show, Philly Expo Center, Oaks (Montgomery County). Wild Ones will have a table; volunteer to staff our table for a few hours, or visit us while you're at the show. Email [wildonesofsepa@gmail.com](mailto:wildonesofsepa@gmail.com) to volunteer.
  - **Chapter T-shirts** – Two members have sent us possible designs. Email your design or ideas to [wildonesofsepa@gmail.com](mailto:wildonesofsepa@gmail.com). This could be a chapter fund-raiser.
  - **Winter book club** focused on native plants, gardening, and conservation. Email [wildonesofsepa@gmail.com](mailto:wildonesofsepa@gmail.com) if interested.
  - **Members seed swap.** If you have seeds to share or are looking for seeds, email us at [wildonesofsepa@gmail.com](mailto:wildonesofsepa@gmail.com)
  - **Wild Ones SEPA chapter meeting schedule:** January 5, February 10, March 9, April 7, May 4. Meetings will be on zoom unless otherwise noted. Trips and on-site tours will be scheduled early next year.
- **View the recording of the meeting** on our Youtube channel: <https://youtu.be/ejb20qxW6gw>

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