

Weekly Wild Wednesday

January 31st, 2024

What a Week of "Workshop Winter Sowing!"

What a WOOOOOOWWWW Workshop! 77 people attended the Make & Take Winter Sowing Project!

It was all hands on deck for set up, hands-on help with each step of the process, and clean up!

There was so much laughter and FUN!



Marcie's Presentation was amazing- and so user friendly!!



There were many questions which she, and other experienced Winter Sowers were happy to answer-- to the best of their knowledge!

One way to Winter Sow—With Photos [Printable PDF](#) [HERE!](#)



[Click here for Winter Sowing Step by Step—No Photos!](#)

Coral taught us an **AWESOME** way to easily drill holes in several gallon jugs—without a struggle to hold them in place! Simply place upside down in a container or a box that holds them in place and drill away!

Thanks, Coral!



How Native Plants Sustain Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health

By Coral Huber

Restoring and reconstructing the prairie at Spirit Mound has tremendous benefits for sustaining biodiversity and ecosystem health. Native plants, the flora that naturally occur in a specific region and have evolved over time to adapt to local environmental conditions, play a crucial role in maintaining the health and balance of ecosystems. As human activities continue to impact the environment, understanding the importance of native plants becomes imperative for conservation efforts, biodiversity maintenance, and overall ecological resilience.

Native plants are the foundation of biodiversity in any given ecosystem. They provide the necessary habitat and food sources for a myriad of organisms, including insects, birds, mammals, and fungi. Numerous articles in our previous newsletters describe many of these organisms. A diverse range of native plant species supports a variety of life forms, contributing to the richness and complexity of an ecosystem.

Over centuries, native plants have developed unique adaptations to local climate, soil, and other environmental factors. These adaptations make them well suited to withstand natural challenges, such as droughts, floods, and pests all of which we have experienced since our first efforts to restore prairie at the Mound. The resilience of native plants contributes to the overall stability of ecosystems, especially in the face of changing environmental conditions.

Native plants play a vital role in preventing soil erosion. Their deep root systems help bind soil particles together, reducing the risk of erosion caused by wind and water. Areas



Chokecherry blossoms
(Photo by Norma Wilson)

at the mound experiencing significant erosion have benefited from the return of native prairie plants. Additionally, native plants contribute to soil health by promoting microbial activity and nutrient cycling. The presence of native vegetation helps maintain the fertility and structure of the soil.

Native plants are often more adapted to the local water conditions, requiring less precipitation than do non-native or invasive species. The continued drought in our region has made reestablishment of prairie species at the Mound difficult, but once established they do persist. Their ability to thrive with minimal water is not only environmentally sustainable but also helps to conserve water resources, a critical consideration in regions facing water scarcity.

Native plants have co-evolved with local pollinators, forming intricate relationships that are essential for both plant reproduction and the survival of pollinator species. Bees, butterflies, and other pollinators depend on native flowers for nectar and pollen for food, and on native plant material for egg laying and larval foraging, highlighting the interconnectedness of these species in maintaining healthy ecosystems.

Native plants often hold cultural significance for indigenous communities. They are deeply intertwined with local traditions, providing not only practical resources but also a sense of identity and connection to the land. Moreover, many native plants contribute to the aesthetic beauty of natural landscapes, enriching our surroundings with unique colors, shapes, and textures in all seasons.

The importance of restoring and reconstructing of the prairie with native plants at Spirit Mound cannot be overstated in the context of preserving biodiversity, maintaining ecosystem health, and promoting sustainability. As we face the challenges of climate change, habitat loss, and environmental degradation, the conservation and restoration of native plant species become a critical component of efforts to protect the natural world. By recognizing and respecting the value of native plants, we take a significant step towards ensuring a harmonious coexistence between human activities and the intricate web of life that depends on these vital components of our ecosystems.

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Butterfly Milkweed seed pods
(Photo by Coral Huber)

Coral also has published a wonderful article on *How Native Plants Sustain Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health!* Click photo for link! If you are travelling to Vermillion, take time to stop at [Spirit Mound](#) and go for a Meander Tour or a hike!

Thanks, Dianne, for sharing this with us!

Buddy decided to go on a Meander Tour to see the Winter Beauty of the [Bur Oaks](#), [Black Walnut](#), and [Ironwood Trees](#)! We had to follow along...

What a peaceful and lovely walk!

Thanks, Buddy, for inspiring us to get out and see Nature in Winter!





**BHA Podcast & Blast,
Ep. 172: We Can Do
This, One Person at a
Time with Douglas
Tallamy**
BHA Podcast & Blast
with Hal Herring

Wilderness

Douglas Tallamy, Chair of the Department of
Entomology and Wildlife Ecology, University of
Delaware

[more](#)

Marc shared this podcast featuring Doug Tallamy!

We can hardly wait to listen!

Thanks, Marc!

← Click photo to link to Apple Podcast!

Or click [HERE](#) for the link to the website podcast!

**Dawn shared this Facebook post on a future
Conservation Blueprint Seed Cleaning Guide!**

**We checked out the website and there were several videos
posted on seed cleaning currently!**

**Check it out if you are interested, and sign up for the
updates on this future project!**

Thanks, Dawn! Click for link to website! →

We have been busy enjoying a snowy stretch in our neck of the garden lately! Lots of time playing outside with the kids and puppy! We hope you have been enjoying the weather your way and if you have been experiencing the bitter temperatures, we hope you have been safe and warm!

I thank you for your responses to help to update my 'Where to Buy Native Plants in the United States' resource! I have been busy going through your emails and comments on Facebook. If you have sent something and not gotten an email back or a comment back, please follow-up with me again. Or if you didn't get a chance to review it last week and have some additions, send them my way! I wanted to work on as many updates as I could during the winter, but I revise that throughout the year, so anytime you find a new native nursery, feel free to reach out!

Joe has been busy completing our next video. We hope you enjoy a look forward to summertime gardens. This video is on Showy Tick Trefoil. It is a great one for poor soil as it is a legume that fixes nitrogen. He will address some pros and cons to consider with this one. Enjoy and we thank you for your comments and shares of the video. (There will be a post on our Facebook & Instagram pages where you can share it.)

NEW VIDEO: Showy Tick Trefoil



The Conservation Blueprint Seed Cleaning Guide provides detailed guidance and instructions on how to clean more than 140+ local ecotype wildflower species. This guide will be made available to the public interested in the process in the future. Like, Follow and Rate the Conservation Blueprint Facebook page for more updates.

GrowItBuildIt made us want to try out Showy Tick Trefoil!

We do NOT currently have seed, so if anyone has extra, please share!

← Click for details and a link!

Wishing you a week filled with "Nature Plant Winter Sowing!!!"

