



Newsletter

December, 2023



Our Plants Might Be Dormant ...

... But we haven't been! We've added in a few details for WOAH events. Since the last newsletter, we convened a WOAH officers meeting, and for that I thank all in attendance for being patient with me and for kindly providing guidance about what I should be doing as president. I also know that many of us are at work with winter sowing projects and that some are busy planning next moves in yards and gardens. I'm excited to share that I've installed nest boxes—one for bats and another for screech owls. I'll let you know when we have occupants!

We owe tremendous thanks to Dick Olson for compiling the WOAH State of the Chapter Report and to Anne Tucker for her report on chapter finances, both of which are required by the national organization.

Mark Merz, 2024 WOAH President

Volunteer Opportunity

I (Mark) will be representing WOAH at Sustain Abingdon's Randy Smith Plant Swap on January 27th. Let me know if you'd like to join me! markmerz243@gmail.com

Calendar at-a-Glance

- January 11: Propagating Appalachian Natives I**, In Person and Zoom
- January 20: WOAH Starter Meadow Plant List Collaboration**, In Person at Bristol Public Library
- January 27: Randy Smith Plant Swap** at the Washington County Public Library
- February 8: Managing Invasive Plants**, Zoom
- March 14: Propagating Appalachian Natives II**, In Person and Zoom
- April 13: Members' Spring Plant & Seed Share** at Steele Creek Park
- April 20: Abingdon Earth Day Celebration**
- May: Members Only Private Garden Tour**
- October: Members' Fall Plant & Seed Share** at Steele Creek Park

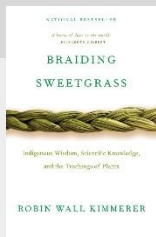
Wild One: Gail Olson, Events Committee Chair

I started gardening with native plants later in life. It did not come to me quickly either. I started off like many people, going to garden centers or big box stores picking out "pretty". Usually that meant non-native and blooming at that moment. Not a good start.

There is a saying "When the student is ready, the teacher will appear".

I've been blessed with so many teachers and experiences. I will not attempt to name them here, but gardeners are some of the most generous people I have met.

One of those experiences was a public tour of a Wild Ones member's garden in Wisconsin. I found the garden I had been trying to create! The next day I drove back on my own intending to "drive by". The owner was in her yard. I stopped and told her how much I enjoyed her garden. She gave me a private tour. That was my first experience/lesson with Wild Ones.



Bookshelf: Review by Mark Merz

Braiding Sweetgrass:

Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants

By Robin Wall Kimmerer

My daughter recommended this book to me, and I usually listen when she's excited about a book! It was on her reading list for an environmental literature course at Virginia Tech while she was working on her M.A. She was passionate about it, and, having read it, I am too!

We joined Wild Ones because we believe that even the small things we do make a difference. That's why we share our seeds and plants and nurture them in our home landscapes. In *Braiding Sweetgrass*, we not only find someone who shares the conviction that what we do matters, but we meet someone who has spent her life in personal and academic pursuit of wholeness in her relationship with the natural world. This book—the story of her search for health in a damaged world—provides an example and a challenge for readers to enter a deeper and more reverent relationship with the Earth. Her writing is informative and inspiring. It is just the very thing we need at exactly this moment: hope and encouragement.

In this book you'll read indigenous stories, personal memoir, and descriptions of natural processes in natural places. You'll read her reflections, analyses, and critiques on everything from conventional science and citizenship to economics. If you haven't already read *Braiding Sweetgrass*, consider adding it to your New Year's reading list!

Event Details

January 11

Propagating Appalachian Natives, Part I

Ben Casteel, Horticulture Instructor and Program Coordinator at the Virginia Highlands Community College invites us to the campus greenhouse in Abingdon to learn about propagation of native Appalachian plants. Ben will cover both sexual (seed prep – including processing, stratification, and scarification) and asexual propagation (division / separation, cuttings, layering, and grafting) of native plant species.

This will be a two-part series with the first class on January 11th at 7 pm, and the second class on March 14th at 7 pm.

A zoom link is posted below for those who would like to attend virtually.

Time: **7:00 pm to 8:00 pm** (Eastern Time)

Location: **VHCC Greenhouse, 100 VHCC Dr, Abingdon, VA, 24210**

Zoom Link: <https://vccs.zoom.us/j/4710139607>

Event Details (continued)

January 20

WOAH Starter Meadow Plant List Collaboration

The Chapter is starting a project to create a “starter meadow plant list” of a variety of native plant species that would do well in the Tri-Cities region, provide color and habitat over the seasons, do well in a garden setting, and generally be available from local nurseries. The list would be a subset of available lists of species native to our region compiled by government and nonprofit organizations. We will also incorporate the experience of WOAHA members.

We would like to have an organizational meeting on **Saturday afternoon, January 20, at the Bristol Public Library at 3 pm**. Please send an email to the WOAHA email (wildonesappalachianhighlands@gmail.com) to indicate your interest.

January 27

Randy Smith Seed Swap

Time: **1:00 pm to 4:00 pm**

Location: **Washington County Public Library
205 Oak Hill St-NE, Abingdon, VA**

www.wcpl.net/event/seed-swap/

February 8

Managing Invasive Plants

Rod Walker presents this educational ZOOM talk for WOAHA on the topic of invasive plants—what they are and why and how we control them. Rod is on the Board of Directors for Blue Ridge PRISM, Inc. (Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management, <https://blueridgeprism.org>), an organization dedicated to reducing the negative impact of invasive plants in the northern Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia.

For more information on Blue Ridge PRISM:

Time: **7:00 pm to 8:00 pm** (Eastern Time)

ZOOM Link: <https://wildones-org.zoom.us/j/86985016622?pwd=bkp3WHIHMEJuWlllNEJVM1RlZGZZdz09>