

# Art & Linda's Wildflowers

Spring/Summer 2008



## Backyard Trends

**D**id you ever wonder, as you drive home on a summer's eve, why more people aren't out enjoying their front yards?

Their porches are beautiful - some with elegant balconies and plantings - but where are the people? In fact, many of them are probably in the *backyard* which has become the new haven for homeowners.

**Front Yards** - Of course, the front of your house will always serve the important function as the greeting area for visitors and place of first impressions, and a reflection of the value you place on your home. Naturally, it should be maintained as a lovely place to sit and relax, but there is an unmistakable trend now to focus attention on the backyard.

**Backyards** - It seems that the backyard, now more than ever, is becoming an important part of people's lives, especially if they have children or pets. This is the place for *family*, with its quiet gardens, a waterfall, or other places for relaxation and retreat. People are installing more and larger windows overlooking their gardens. With all of this, there is a growing desire to make the yard more attractive for outdoor entertaining. With this shift to the backyard, garden design and stewardship have now become more important than ever to the average homeowner. Also, as we age, we homeowners have a desire to relax and enjoy our backyard space with its special sights and sounds which bring delight and a sense of calm. Retired people especially, want to be sure that this area is well maintained throughout the year for their children and grandchildren



*Your backyard is an important part of your life - now, more than ever.*

**A Beautiful Reflection** - Many of you who love native plants have chosen to beautify your backyards with a design that not only looks attractive, but also increases the health of the area. This is all part of a reflection of you and your values. This is one of the keys to your personal, and special enjoyment of your own backyard. You are the kind of person who truly appreciates the wildflower garden's ever changing colors and textures. How lovely a scene this is - with something new and vital happening outside your very own window. You now have the satisfaction of knowing that your own backyard will be the destination of some very interesting birds, butterflies and other insects that depend on those native plants for food and a place to raise their young - many of which aren't commonly seen in yards with average or alien plants.



(Above) Backyard in North Barrington, Summer, '07

**More Than a Design - A Dream** - Art and Linda's realizes that your backyard is far more than a *design* — it is a *dream*. The desire to improve it also reflects the growing trend to beautify and customize it. Knowing this, we lay out the beds naturally, and let the earth tell us what and where to plant. Part of the beauty of your wildflower garden entails a certain element of surprise. Therefore, we plant intuitively using these concepts so that you can enjoy, over and over again, the true nature of the ever-changing landscape which you have graciously invited into your own backyard. (Left) Home in St. Charles, Spring, '07

# Native Gardening at Home

## Stewardship - Caring for Something You Love

When you spend time weeding and pruning, cutting back and carefully tending your plants you are, in fact, *stewarding* your garden. The actual meaning of the word “steward” is: *The action of watching over and maintaining of something that has been entrusted to your care.* At times though, you might ask yourself - “Why should I bother weeding? Aren’t these *native* plants? Can’t they just take care of themselves? The answer is that if you don’t or can’t apply at least some stewardship, native plants may become aggressive and your wildflower garden could be in danger of losing its diversity. Many of us start out with the intention to always watch over our new garden, but not all of us actually have the time and energy to do the best job that the garden deserves. At *Art and Linda’s*

we feel that one needs to work at their stewardship, as you would at a relationship with someone you care for. It’s not just a once-in-a-season kind of attention given to family and friends, but more of an on-going and thoughtful process. So, once you have established your garden, you might want to familiarize yourself with its special needs to maintain its look. Or, you might consider the services of someone *like us* - a trained

steward. We will have the materials, knowledge, and tools we need in order to do the best job possible. We’ll also know how to watch out for certain plants that have become too aggressive. At *Art and Linda’s*, we know what’s a weed and what’s

### What’s a Weed?

The dictionary defines a weed as “Something that is growing where you don’t want it to”. Also, weed seeds are everywhere! After we plant your garden **anything new that comes up, is a weed** and not a little baby plant. For the best results, we place plants a foot or two apart and anything you see in between is a weed. If you see the same type of plant over and over again - **It’s a weed.**

not a weed in your yard and when plants need to be thinned out or cut back. So, when you are considering the stewardship of your home garden, consider a “steward’s” thoughtfulness to watch over it and maintain it in a healthy state for your future use, and continued enjoyment.



(Above) Secluded, peaceful hideout for reflection, Summer, 2007.

All photos this page from North Barrington.



(Above) Beautiful garden enhances home’s elegant stone front, Summer, ‘07

(Left) Hidden bench along a path, Summer ‘06

(Far Left) Backyard with interesting stone features, Summer, ‘07



# News and Events

Meet..

## Alexandra Ragland

Our new designer



Alex recently joined *Art and Linda's* as our new wildflower garden designer. She is a native of Woodstock and has had many years of experience in horticulture and gardening. Growing up on what she calls a “gentleman’s farm” of 15 acres helped Alex become familiar with natural areas. She has vivid memories of

walking in the woods and open fields of her childhood home where she witnessed the abundance of woodland and prairie flowers. She and her father would spend every summer planting a large vegetable garden and then using the harvest for canning. She was continually asked to help design flower gardens for her family and friends. Alex decided to combine a degree in marketing with her love of plants and gardens. Her experience with Midwest Trading in St. Charles, selling horticultural supplies, as well as working at two different nurseries in the area, contributed to her growing interests. But she credits The Natural Garden in St. Charles, (a native plant nursery) with a strong reinforcement of her love for the gentleness and beauty

of native plants. Once bitten with “Wildflower Mania”, Alex’s work became more focused on the native plants. Her recent involvement with *Art and Linda's* was based upon a resonance with our approach to designing and her strong commitment to capturing the spirit of the natural world. Welcome, Alex! We’re happy to have you on board!

## Art and Linda’s Gardens With The Best, Wicker Park, Summer '07

*Art and Linda's Wildflower's* is a part of The Landscape Design Association of Chicago, which promotes annual garden walks with yards designed by its members. The walks usually feature six or seven places with written and oral commentary by the designers. *Art and Linda's* was invited to participate last July with one of their gardens in the Wicker Park area. The entry that follows is from the LDA tour brochure at 1729 N. Honye:

“All of the plants used in the project were native flowers, grasses

and shrubs along with some very interesting rock and log features.

The garden is designed for year-round visual appeal where there is something blooming in the spring, summer and fall with lovely textural interest in the winter. It is also a haven for birds and butterflies. Situated on the south west corner of the block with the house facing west and south, this garden is surrounded by a wrought iron fence and gate. The enclosed garden is on the front of the house and faces west where it receives only filtered light through the trees. There is a path running along the north side of the garden for access and to be one with the plants. We took the downspout on the northwest corner of the house and then ran it through a perforated drain pipe which was underneath a



pine-bark nugget path. In this way, the extra rainwater irrigates the garden. Also planted were the parkways on the front or west side of the house and on the south side. On the shaded parkways, which had to endure a lot of people and dog traffic, existing shrubs were left in.”

(Above, center) Parkway garden, Northside of Chicago

# Places to Go, Things to Do

**OUTDOORS:** This spring, take a look at **CHICAGO WILDERNESS MAGAZINE**. If you don't have one, check out the magazine's separate website at: [chicagowildernessmag.org/calendar/index.html](http://chicagowildernessmag.org/calendar/index.html). Both places have some wonderful nature tours you can take all over Chicago Also check out the Chicago Wilderness general site for tours at [chicagowilderness.org/whats happening/index.cfm](http://chicagowilderness.org/whats happening/index.cfm) to find out about current events. **CHICAGOLAND GARDENING** has an excellent calendar of local events in their full-color magazine or visit: [chicagolandgardening.com/CGMPages/calendar.htm](http://chicagolandgardening.com/CGMPages/calendar.htm). CG publishes calendars three times a year, with events into Wisconsin.

**BOOKS:** **"OUT OF THE SHADOW, ECOPSYCHOLOGY, STORY, AND ENCOUNTERS WITH THE LAND"** by Rinda West, (University of Virginia Press, December, 2007) Ms. West writes about the recovery of and connection with nature as well as healing and harmony with the earth. Rinda is a Professor Emerita of English at Oakton Community College, and a member of the Landscape Design Association. **"BRINGING NATURE HOME: HOW NATIVE PLANTS SUSTAIN WILDLIFE IN OUR GARDENS"**, by Entomologist, Douglas W. Tallamy *"By favoring native plants over aliens in suburban landscapes, gardeners can do much to sustain the biodiversity that has been one of this country's richest assets.* (Timber Press Inc., 2007). **THE AUTHENTIC GARDEN: 5 PRINCIPLES FOR CULTIVATING A SENSE OF PLACE** (by Claire Sawyers, 2007, Timber Press Inc). Ms. Sawyers shows how we might create gardens that are both deeply rooted in their surroundings and deeply satisfying to their creators. Overview:  
- Capture the sense of place, - Derive beauty from function,  
- Use humble or indigenous materials, - Marry the inside to the outside, - Involve the visitor.



(Above: Assorted rainbarrels at Greenmaker's in Chicago

**PLACES TO GO: GREENMAKER, CHICAGO,** (above), **2500 N. Pulaski Road in Chicago** is a "one stop shop for healthy building materials" Recently, several of my staff and friends told me they had found an alternative and fun place to look for home remodeling ideas. So, I went myself and had a chat with Claudia Regojo, who is the Director of Product Development at Greenmaker, Chicago. Claudia described the innovative business as a wholesale and retail supplier which serves homeowners and the building and design community. Through their products and services they demonstrate how to minimize energy costs and how to improve indoor air quality as well as to help sustain our precious natural resources. The bright, and very well-planned interior of the store is uplifting and chock-full of interesting wares. Greenmaker seems to be emerging as a new *go-to* destination for energy-intelligent, environmentally sensitive home products. Call them or visit soon for ideas and trends that you can use to accent or improve the quality of your own home. Their phone is: **(773) 384-7500 or call toll free at (866) 702-7500. Website: [greenmakersupply.com](http://greenmakersupply.com)**

**INTERESTING:** For more fun with website visits here's something for the fine artist: **APrairieJournal.com** For a great site to ID plants, visit: [www.illinoiswildflowers.info/prairie/plant](http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/prairie/plant)



(Left) Stop by the Oak Brook Library on 31st Street in Oak Brook and watch the progress of this beautiful *Art and Linda's* native prairie garden in full bloom. You'll find it right outside of the children's reading section in the rear of the building. *Planted in Summer '05*

# News and Events, continued..



(Above) "Makeover" garden plot in Oak Park, Spring, '07



## Slide Show and Website Update!

For the last few weeks our webmaster, Jim Arbutnot, has been busy inputting photos that update and refresh the *Art and Linda's* website. Check out the many new photos, all linked to coordinate with our new Slide Shows and Garden Photo Albums. You just might be surprised to find your own yard has made the pages of *Art and Lindas*!

Our slide show presentation schedule is always available on line at:

[www.artandlindaswildflowers.com](http://www.artandlindaswildflowers.com)

## Consider These Stewarding Options for 2008!

*Art & Linda's*

### *Early Bird Special!*

TAKE 10%  
OFF LABOR



- \*Cut down old growth
- \*Remulch & weed the garden
- \*Become certified through:  
The Conservation Foundation's  
"Conservation@Home" Program
- \*Get Art & Linda's Yard Sign!

For more info be sure to visit:  
[artandlindaswildflowers.com](http://artandlindaswildflowers.com)

or call: (708) 785-2943  
by APRIL 10th!!



### Relentless Care Club

Now enjoy the benefits of the  
Early Bird Special **all year long!**

*Experience top quality stewardship for  
your garden on a regular basis - when  
needed. One phone call lets you know  
when we're near and ready to work!*

#### OUR SERVICES:

- Everything in the *Early Bird Special* performed before April 30th
- A 10% Discount On All Labor
- Adding, Removing, Dividing plants to look their very best!
- Mulching, Weeding, Trimming & Pruning

Contact us *now* to join **The Relentless Care Club** and get the benefits of *The Early Bird Special* **all year long!**

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## The Many Benefits of Gardening

A client once told me, “It’s funny, while I’m gardening I’m not thinking about the plants or what might be right or wrong with them. I just find myself thinking about my friends and family and how much I care about them. Then, when I’m with my friends and family, I often think about my garden!”

Gardening contributes to physical health, since activities such as planting, and weeding are all part of the movements of endurance, strength and flexibility. Chances are high that you’re probably going to do something you love much more frequently than something you don’t. Many of us love to garden, and given the choice between a one hour jog and gardening, we’ll probably go with the gardening. The benefits of keeping a garden are not just physical - they’re also mental and emotional.

Caring for your garden is very relaxing, and can help relieve anxiety and stress, as well as providing a break from the computer, caretaking or a stressful job. Because the work you’re performing is physical, you have a chance to release tension and allow the mind to reason naturally about your concerns, to meditate, or daydream. And don’t forget that great sense of accomplishment you’ll feel once you are finished!



(Above) Relatively new rain garden being weeded in McHenry, Summer '07.



(Above) Art and Linda’s yard sign looks right at home here in this Skokie front yard.

### Hints For The Deer-Weary

There is really nothing more aggravating than planting a beautiful garden, nurturing it along, and then to have the local *critters* come in and chomp it down! We have tried it all. From coyote decoys, (with which the deer try to mate), to harsh smelling, foul, eye - tearing sprays, etc. and none of this seemed to work. Something that we have begun to find helpful is the use of fragrant hand soap to discourage the deer and rabbits. Jewel/Osco carries a brand called “Equiline” which we cut in four to six pieces and place in the garden or hang in white socks from shrub branches. The white sock is a sign of danger to deer. It mimics their white tail and sends a message to flee. For a more aggressive approach, we have tried using black plastic mesh, right after our planting by placing it on sticks above the bed to curtail the rabbits from eating the new shoots.





# Art & Linda's Wildflowers

Beautiful Native Wildflower Gardens

## *Capturing the Spirit of the Natural World*

(708) 785-2943

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Spring 2008

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### Relentless Care Club

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THE EARLY BIRD SPECIAL  
ALL YEAR LONG!

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To: