

CANYON FALLS
MIDDLE SCHOOL
1211 Frost Rd
Sunday, May 26th
10:00am - 3:00pm

Spring
OUTDOOR
MARKET

ENTRANCE BY DONATION

Silver
Star

PAYMENT PLANS
PAY IN 6 PAYMENTS!

USING PLANTS NATIVE TO AREA

'Re-wilding' is one way to rebuild an ecosystem

Sigrie Kendrick - Feb 1, 2023 / 11:00 am

Photo: Contributed
Aster conspicuus, known commonly as Showy aster, visited by a happy pollinator.

Re-wilding is the term for restoring healthy ecosystems in the landscape that have been disturbed by humans. Think of the millions of acres of mono-culture that is turf grass currently planted across this country.

Re-wilding aims to reverse biodiversity loss by using native plants and animal life to rebuild ecosystems and to mitigate climate change.

It is in the hope that we as humans can undo some of the destruction we have wreaked on our home—earth.

Gardeners, if you are currently spending these colder months planning for changes to your outdoor spaces come spring, please consider allocating a portion of your garden to native plants.

Plants native to the Okanagan thrive in our semi-arid valley and support countless pollinators, birds and animals. Think of the ripple effect, much as that from a single stone thrown into a pond.

When I took master gardener training in 2014 the only resource for purchase of native plants was Sagebrush nursery in Oliver, so it was a problem to suggest the use of native plants for clients.

But, in the last five or so years, things have evolved and we now have a fantastic local native plant nursery available locally, Xen Endemic Nursery in West Kelowna.

I initially met Josh Smith, the manager of Xen, while we were both volunteering to improve the landscape surrounding St. Andrews Anglican Church on Lakeshore Road in Kelowna. We got to talking and he mentioned that he ran a little-known nursery in West Kelowna. Of course, I immediately invited myself for a tour.

What I found was a fledgling business being managed by a passionate, knowledgeable plant person.

Fast forward a few years and this business has expanded to cover a whole hillside and now houses upward of 70,000 native plants. These plants are used to reclaim areas disturbed by all sorts of human activities, effectively re-wilding huge swaths of disturbed landscapes.

Although currently access to the nursery is only available for wholesale purchases, Josh has very graciously allowed OXA members to purchase native plants directly from his nursery as a benefit of membership.

Often, he will walk with you between rows of plants he has propagated, extolling their many virtues and discussing their habits.

If you are considering including a native area in your garden, why not become a member of our not-for profit organization, with the many benefits that include supporting OXA's message of water conservation and helping to increase the sustainability of our beautiful home, the Okanagan Valley.

Membership is just \$25 for individuals and \$40 for households and it includes many other benefits, all of which are outlined on our website: www.okanaganxeriscape.org

Members paid up prior to the end of March will be eligible to win one of two \$25 gift certificates to be used at our annual spring plant sale.

Josh will also be one of the keynote speakers at our upcoming Feb. 10 xeriscape workshop for professionals. See details on our website. His presentation is "Beauty and Function: Native Plants in Landscaping and Slope Retention."

Industry professionals and home gardeners alike, come and join us and learn how you can help craft more climate-resilient landscapes.

Follow us on social media for inspiration to create the sustainable beauty that is xeriscape and consider sharing photos of your garden by sending them to: director_smedia@okanaganxeriscape.org to be featured in our Share your Garden segment.

Sigrie Kendrick is a Master Gardener and executive-director of the not-for-profit Okanagan Xeriscape Association and can be reached at 778-363-8360 or by email at exec_dir@okanaganxeriscape.org.

This article is written by or on behalf of an outsourced columnist and does not necessarily reflect the views of Castanet.