



Volume 15: Issue 1

## LEXINGTON CHAPTER — March, 2015

<http://lexington.wildones.org>

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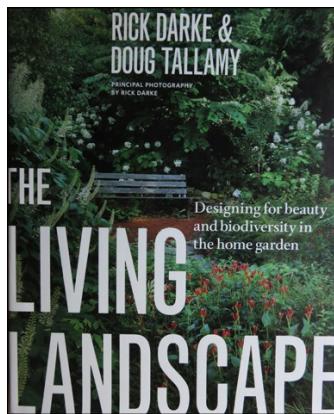
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The Lexington chapter of *Wild Ones* meets the first Thursday of every month and at other times for special programs. Visitors welcome! Check our website [www.lexington.wildones.org](http://www.lexington.wildones.org) for details.

This newsletter is a publication of the Lexington chapter of *Wild Ones*. It is published nine times a year—March through November—as an electronic newsletter.

If you have any questions, suggestions, or information for future editions, contact Ann Bowe, chair of the Marketing and Communications Committee, at [annbowe@annbowedesigns.com](mailto:annbowe@annbowedesigns.com) or Judy Johnson, newsletter editor, at [judylex@twc.com](mailto:judylex@twc.com).



## *President's Message...*

The native plant community has long anticipated *The Living Landscape: Designing for Beauty and Biodiversity in the Home Garden* by Rick Darke and Douglas Tallamy. And it was worth waiting for. The authors have produced a book of beautiful nature and garden photos that is also worth reading from cover to cover.

In his earlier work *Bringing Nature Home: How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens*, Professor Tallamy laid out what became the native gardener's mantra: the suburban and ex-urban landscapes where we garden should provide habitat for insects, birds and other wildlife, and native plants form the foundation of those creatures' food web.

This proposition, eloquently restated and elaborated here, has lost none of its compelling force. But in *The Living Landscape* the authors show that ecological functions can be incorporated into gardens that are also aesthetically pleasing. Gardens, they assert, should serve two broad purposes. One, to enable people to create beauty and order, experience sensual pleasure, seek refuge and privacy, observe nature close up and learn about it. And, two, to purify air and groundwater, to provide shelter for wildlife, to support pollinators, and to foster conditions for the natural hybridization of plants to occur.

Rick Darke, a noted landscape architect and author of several previous garden design books, combines a deep understanding of nature with an expert aesthetic judgment. The ecosystem Darke proposes we emulate and adapt in our gardens is the hardwood forest of eastern North America. This is the vegetation that would regrow where we live, if we would not constantly intervene to prevent it. The plants in our forests grow in **horizontal layers** from the canopy of tall trees to smaller understory trees to the shrubs to the herbaceous layer to the ground layer. Darke also explains the concept of **vertical layering** which highlights the biological richness of edge habitats, for example, between a forest and a wetland or the forest and a meadow (though natural meadows are rare in the eastern United States). Edges, of course, occur frequently in urban landscapes along driveways, walkways, building foundations, the borders of lawns and elsewhere.

Typically, planting designs for new landscapes allot to each individual plant its "required" square footage with room for growth carefully calculated. But this is not how plants grow in nature and this is not how they should be planted in our habitat gardens. Explaining how to plant for layers, Darke describes each layer as it might work in a garden, suggesting suitable plants to fill architectural roles and ecological niches. He points out that many landscape features typically effected by expensive and static hardscape constructions can be created with plants--screening, edging, framing views, structuring space, marking paths.

As I was reading *The Living Landscape*, I began to see my garden with different eyes. Much that is happening in it suddenly makes sense and some of what I have tried to make happen suddenly no longer matters. The book has stirred my creative processes, and what more can we ask of a work of garden writing.

*Beate Popkin*

# Trees and Rain Gardens To Enhance Northside

By Karen Lanier

Good news! More trees and gardens are coming to North Lexington! A Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government (LFUCG) Stormwater Quality Projects Improvement Grant for Neighborhoods was recently awarded to North Limestone Community Development Corporation (NoLi CDC). By the end of 2015, the residents of the North Limestone neighborhood will enjoy the beginnings of a denser tree canopy, an edible orchard, and three rain gardens.

In total, eight local businesses and organizations are collaborating to complete five projects with the common goal of reducing stormwater runoff, improving water quality, and educating the public. (Of the five implementation leaders, Sara Hesley, Schuyler Warren, and Ryan Koch are actually residents of the neighborhood.) Some of the ventures are already under way and public workshops are planned for the spring.

1.) The Castlewood Park Rain Gardens, an undertaking led by Russ Turpin of EcoGro, will use soils and native plants to slow runoff from the Loudoun House, current home to the Lexington Art League and Castlewood Neighborhood Association. This site provides an excellent opportunity for education on the benefits of native plants and the importance of allowing an estimated 111,330 gallons of stormwater to soak into the ground annually.

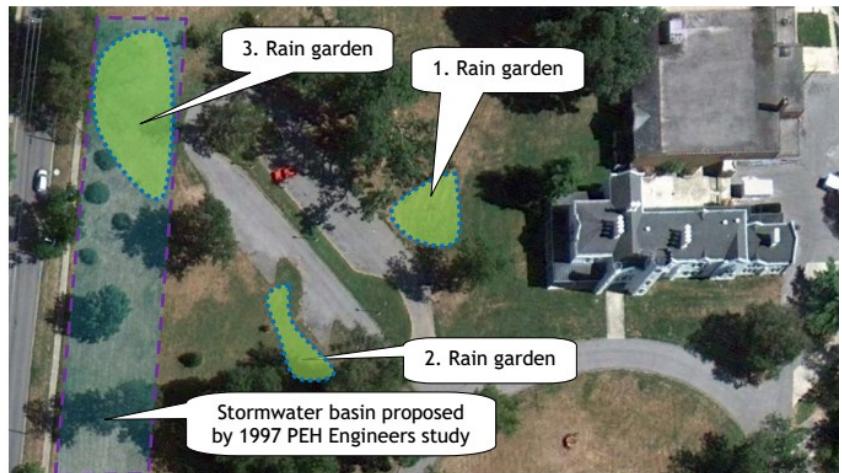
2.) An even greater volume of water, approximately 544,440 gallons, will be captured by the trees of the North Limestone Canopy Enhancement, a project led by Sara Hesley of Town Branch Tree Experts. When completed, 120 new street trees will enhance roadways in the neighborhood. After an assessment and selection of species, Town Branch Tree Experts will partner with NoLi CDC and Bullhorn Creative to distribute informational packets about tree care to residents. Volunteers will plant the trees with supervision to ensure they are installed properly.

3.) More volunteer opportunities will directly benefit homeowners with the Community Rain Barrels endeavor, led by Schuyler Warren of Bluegrass Greensource. At no cost, 100 rain barrels will be provided to residents, along with training and education, with an expected impact of preventing the entry of 473,800 gallons of stormwater into the sewer system in just one summer.

4.) A public service campaign (PSC) to complement the rain barrels will be the Anti-Litter PSC and Street Cleanup events led by Richard Young of NoLi CDC. Bullhorn Creative and Bluegrass Greensource will also create educational materials for homeowners living on the streets that are sources of litter in the sewer system. Three clean-up days will engage the neighborhoods in improving their appearance and water quality.

5.) Residents will be able to enjoy (literally) the fruits of their labor with York Street Edible Orchard, a development led by Ryan Koch of Seedleaf. Town Branch Tree Experts will assess sites and decide which varieties of fruit trees are appropriate for the spaces. The company will then help Seedleaf organize volunteers for planting and maintenance. Informational signage will educate the community about the orchard and invite free harvesting.

Clean water, fresh air and delicious food. With time and care, Lexington's Northside can become a garden oasis.



This photo shows the location of three rain gardens proposed for Castlewood Park. Bryan Avenue is on the left and Loudoun House is on the right.

*Note: Russ Turpin and Sara Hesley are active members of Wild Ones!*

## ***Wild Ones Hear about Trees in Lexington***

*By Ann Bone*

The title of John Saylor's talk at the February meeting of *Wild Ones* was "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly," although he reversed the order in presentation.

John is Arborist Senior in Urban Forestry with the Lexington Fayette Urban County Government (LFUCG). In addition to earning a degree in Forestry/Environmental Science and working on an advanced degree, he is an ISA-certified arborist, municipal specialist and tree risk assessor. John advocates for the role of trees as a critical part of our urban infrastructure. He reminded us that they clean and cool the air, help with stormwater management, buffer urban noise, cut heating and air conditioning costs, increase property values and give a feeling of well being. People in hospitals heal more quickly when they have a view of a tree!

*Following these rules we can avoid the bad and the ugly on our own properties quite easily:*

**Don't plant invasive trees.** Avoid Callery pear, golden raintree, and mimosa for starters. If you see tree of heaven or non-native honeysuckle, get rid of it!

**Add mulch rings around your trees** to avoid mower damage to trunk and roots. But mulch properly, no more than three inches deep and the mulch should never touch the bark.

**Prune properly.** Proper pruning can improve the structure of an urban tree. Poor pruning will cause long term damage. Educate yourself on correct pruning methods.

**Select a new tree that will thrive on your site.** Remember—right tree, right place. How much room do you have for a tree, both vertically (electrical wires up there?) and horizontally? Is your site sunny, shady, wet or dry?

**Treat for lethal insects and diseases or replace an unhealthy tree.** Ash trees are susceptible to the emerald ash borer; hemlocks, the woolly adelgid; maples, the Asian longhorn beetle. Know what's happening out there, watch your trees for signs of disease and contact an arborist for help with health maintenance.

*Then John shared some of the good things happening in Lexington.*

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**NOTE:** LFUCG offers a planting manual (just google "LFUCG planting manual") complete with acceptable tree information. Also check out [www.LiveGreenLexington.gov](http://www.LiveGreenLexington.gov). Click on "Urban Forestry" for more information.

LFUCG Urban Forestry, in consultation with the Davey Tree Company, recently completed an Urban Tree Canopy Assessment for our city. There will soon be a report card function available so you can check out the tree status on your own street or in your own neighborhood.

**LFUCG Urban Forestry** is in the process of re-organization. There were nine different divisions with some tree-related responsibilities. Much of this work will be brought under Urban Forestry so that properly trained people will care for our public trees.

The **Cost Share Program for Street Trees** helps homeowners who must remove a hazardous street tree with removal and replacement. There are **Sustainability Grants** that can be used for neighborhood tree planting.

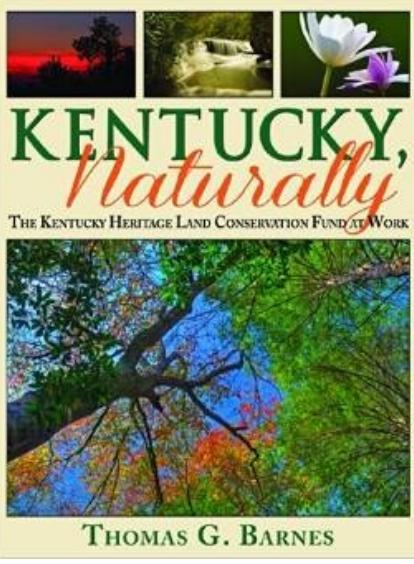
*What Lexington needs:*

**We have about 25% canopy coverage.** To get all the benefits of trees, we need 40% coverage. How can this happen? Citizens need to plant trees on their private property. We need to see our trees as a community resource. We must care for the trees we have and plant more! Above all, we must love our trees.

**LFUCG used to have an Environmental Landscape Examiner to review trees on commercial properties.** Since this position was eliminated, commercial properties often do not keep up with their landscape requirements. What can you do? Call **311** if you see dead, dying, damaged or improperly removed trees. These calls are logged and there will be a response. Also, tell your council member that the ELE position needs to be reinstated.

**Citizen awareness of the value of trees to our city is important.** Studies show that trees return up to \$4.00 in economic value and environmental services for every \$1.00 spent on their planting and care. Let your council member know that you are concerned about the lack of funding for trees. Urban forestry issues will gain political attention only if we care enough to speak out.

John Saylor provided an overview of the issues related to Lexington's tree canopy. Now it is up to us to insist that our urban forest be a high priority item for city government.



## A Guide to Hidden Treasures

With *Kentucky, Naturally* Tom Barnes has left us one last beautiful gift. Each page of this book presents a nature preserve whose acquisition was made possible by the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund. The text, almost entirely written by Tom, describes the flora and fauna at each tract of land and explains why it was deemed worthy of conservation. A final paragraph gives directions to those preserves that are open to the public. One of Tom's stunning photographs conveys a sense of the treasures to be found at each preserve.

The Lexington Wild Ones chapter is offering *Kentucky, Naturally* to its members and friends for \$32. Copies of the book will be available at our upcoming membership meetings on the first Thursday of every month. Or you can email Tee Bergman at [teebergman@twc.com](mailto:teebergman@twc.com) and ask her to reserve a copy for you.

## How Well Do We Know Our Friends?

By Karen Lanier



Shagbark Hickory



Northern Red Oak

Driving out to Floracliff's winter tree identification hike, I listened to a *Radiolab* program about prosopagnosia, a neurological disorder also known as face blindness. In the touching story, a young man struggled with his inability to remember faces. Whether a relative, friend, acquaintance, or lover, every face looked equally new, unremarkable and unfamiliar.

Is that how we see trees in the winter? Once their lovely leaves drop and they stand bare, we often forget the unobstructed tree trunks have distinguishing characteristics.

Tree bark is like our skin: protective and interactive with its environment. It keeps insects, weather, animals and disease away from the cambium layer. Scars, bumps, and wrinkles can

reveal stories that cover decades. Every species, indeed – every single tree, has its own traits.

Get some real face time with our dormant friends, and their unique features begin to stand out. Exercise your own memory skills and see if you can recognize these trees the next time you meet them up close.



Honey Locust



Kentucky Coffee Tree



Black Cherry

## Enduring Work of KY Artist

By Deborah Holloway

Continuing the search for artists who work with native flora and fauna, I found the delicate and carefully drawn artwork of Nellie Meadows, a self-taught artist from Clay City. Nellie died in 2006 at the age of 91 leaving behind many samples of her work. There is a sweet simplicity in her pictures that makes clear her love for the subjects she painted.

Nellie was part of the Kentucky Heritage Artists Program in the 1970s and traveled around the state demonstrating her work. She shared the joy she found in painting at every opportunity.



Kentucky the Great State

Her work is still available on notecards at the Redbird Mission in Beverly, KY ([crafts.rbmision.org](http://crafts.rbmision.org)).



In 1975 Nellie created a large painting called "Kentucky the Great State" which became the state's official piece of artwork for the U.S. bicentennial.

## March Wild Ones Event

Mark your calendar for the next meeting of *Wild Ones* **Thursday, March 5** at 7 p.m. at St. Michael's Episcopal Church, 2025 Bellefonte Drive. **Thad Scott**, Code Enforcement Supervisor for LFUCG will join us to talk about "naturalized plantings" and what is and is not acceptable in Lexington's urban yards.

We all know that native plants are hardier and easier to grow than plants imported to the area. However, the concept of naturalizing landscapes involves planning and maintenance, just like more traditional fertilized, mowed, and trimmed yards. Sometimes property owners simply allow space to "return to nature" which, in the urban setting, can result in unsightly overgrown lots.

As we expand our native gardens it is helpful to understand the regulations governing urban plantings.

## March Calendar



### Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest

Sat., March 28 from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m.—Early Wildflower Walk—scout for and celebrate early ephemerals. Cost is \$7 for members; \$10 for non-members. Call 502-955-8512 before 4 p.m. the day before to register.

### Floracliff Nature Sanctuary

Sat., March 21 at 11 a.m.—Signs of Spring nature hike—hiking level moderate to difficult. Suggested donation—\$5. Preregistration required. Email [info@floracliff.org](mailto:info@floracliff.org).

Sat. and Sun., March 28/29—Mosses of Kentucky: A Floracliff Field Studies Workshop—Dr. Allen C. Risk of Morehead State University. Cost \$50. For details check out [www.floracliff.org/fieldstudies](http://www.floracliff.org/fieldstudies).

### Raven Run Nature Sanctuary

Fri., March 13 at 7 p.m.—Woodcock Watch—a night walk in search of these elusive creatures. For information or registration call 859-272-6105.

Sat., March 28 at 8 p.m.—Earth Hour Owl Prowl—a night walk to listen and look for owls. Call 859-272-6105 to register.

### UK Arboretum

Tues., March 3 at 4 p.m.—Going Green Landscaping—Class for those starting from scratch or redesigning an existing landscape. **FREE** Call 859-257-6955 for information.

Continuing to Sun., March 15—Glories of the Garden Art Exhibit—Open to the public Mon. through Fri., 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Ends with reception **March 15 from 2 to 4 p.m.**

Thurs., March 26 at 7 p.m.—Founders' Lecture Series, "Early History of the Bluegrass" featuring M. Clare Sipple, Manager of Lower Howard's Creek Nature Preserve and Janice Clark, Director of Jouett House at Gluck Equine Center. **Admission \$5; students FREE.**