

LEXINGTON CHAPTER — April, 2013

<http://wildones.org/chapters/lexington/>

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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.wildones.org/chapters/lexington/ 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 or Judy Johnson, newsletter editor, at judylex@insightbb.com.

President's Message...

Is a garden a work of art? And is the ornamental gardener an artist? I used to think that the answer should be “No.” Gardens are too unstable, too much at the whim of maintenance crews and of the weather to lend themselves to artistic interpretation.

Lately, though, I have begun to rethink the relationship between garden making and artistic creation. After all, ornamental gardens stir our imagination and they do that because they work with symbolic representations, as does art. It is the purpose of art to make visible what is around us but remains invisible to us, and a garden, it strikes me, illumines something about its owner's relationship to nature.

Baroque gardens, for example, with their conical trees and carefully clipped hedges, signal the human will to bring nature's wildness under control. And so, I would suggest, do our own clipped boxwood gardens. Moorish gardens, which play with water in a myriad of ways, provide symbolic assurance that this precious element is richly present in the near-desert climate where such gardens are made.

So, where do we native gardeners stand? We certainly believe that our gardens speak about our love of nature. By planting coneflowers and little bluestem we want to salvage the nearly lost flora of our part of the world. We bring milkweeds into our gardens to help rescue monarch butterflies whose precipitous decline in recent years we deplore. Our woody plants are native viburnums, dogwoods and oaks because they help keep alien invasives at bay. In short, we aim to give expression to our hope that the natural processes on which human life depends are salvageable despite global rapaciousness.

But are our gardens compelling images that speak to others of that hope? Do they make visible anything more than just coneflowers and little bluestem and viburnums and bees and butterflies? Do we seriously aim to create works of art through which we can capture the human imagination and engage it for our mission? Or are we just gardening for the birds after all?



Beate Popkin

Monarchs the Topic for April 4

The April meeting of the *Wild Ones* will feature a presentation by Betty Hall as part of our chapter's participation in the "Wild for Monarchs" campaign. This campaign is a result of our national organization partnering with the Monarch Watch and Bring Back the Monarchs programs to encourage ongoing efforts to promote native plant habitat for this butterfly as well as for other pollinators.

Betty is a long time *Wild Ones* member and an award winning photographer. She will talk about the monarchs and their needs and display some of her stunning photos.

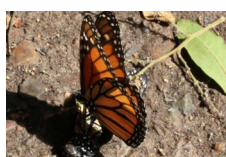
The meeting at St. Michael's Episcopal Church on Thursday, April 4, will begin at 7 p.m.

Caterpillar



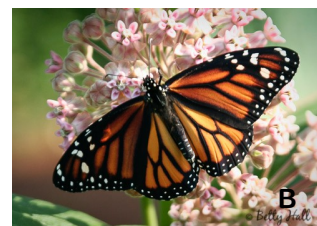
Chrysalis

Adults mating



Monarch ID Question

How can you tell whether a monarch is a male or female? Look carefully at the butterflies captured in Betty Hall's photos....



Clues:

1. The female is generally smaller.
2. Often the female is darker in color.
3. Now pay attention—the veins of the female are wider than those of the male.
4. And the real give away—the male has a black spot on one vein in the center of each hindwing.

You are correct—**A** is a male and **B** is a female!

Like Water for Butterflies

By Heather Wilson

Learning the necessary steps to provide water sources for butterflies has led me to a whole new understanding of how to create a butterfly garden. Sure, I knew that there are a number of plants that butterflies prefer and I knew that by planting these flowers and shrubs, it was more likely I would invite butterflies to visit my garden. Now I have found a number of other suggested features and tips for creating a well-rounded butterfly habitat. So, while this article will focus on ways to add water to your butterfly garden, I do hope to share other helpful suggestions in upcoming newsletters. But for now, back to water features.

Butterflies will not frequent bird baths. Nor will they visit ponds or other large areas of water. What a butterfly prefers is a small muddy or sandy puddle, if you will, with exposed rocks or other landing places. Butterflies tend to congregate in large groups around these muddy or sandy puddles to feast on extra salts and nutrients – this is known as “puddling.” A puddle is best located in a sunny location close to your butterfly garden and near to the ground so that the surrounding plants can provide shelter from wind and predators. There are a number of simple options available to create this puddle. The easiest may be the placement of a small dish among your plants, filled with sand and a small amount of water, barely covering the sand. The placement of a few rocks and twigs around the dish will provide landing sites for the butterflies. Other options include digging a shallow hole in the ground and lining it with plastic then filling it with sand and water, or using a plastic pail dug into the ground also filled with sand and water.

Any of these options are viable, so it is up to you to choose the one that best suits you and your garden. Whether you prefer a simple hole lined with plastic or an ornate dish placed in your garden, providing a source of water for butterflies in your garden is easy. Happy puddling! If you can't wait until our next issue, please visit <http://pss.uvm.edu/ppp/pubs/oh77butt.htm>, <http://www.thebutterflysite.com/butterfly-behavior.shtml>, or <http://www.nwf.org/how-to-help/garden-for-wildlife/gardening-tips/how-to-attract-butterflies-to-your-garden.aspx> for more ideas.



Milkweedgardens.blogspot.com

Incorporating Woodland Plants into the Garden

By Mary Carol Cooper

Dr. Tom Barnes, Extension Professor and Wildlife Extension Specialist in the University of Kentucky Department of Forestry, was our presenter at the March meeting of *Wild Ones*. Tom is best known for his photography and his many books which include *Gardening for the Birds*, *Kentucky's Last Great Places* and *Rare Wildflowers of Kentucky*.

Tom noted that woodland wildflower gardens are usually special to many of us. They often bring back memories of a special person, like a grandparent who took you on your first walk in the woods and shared beautiful spring ephemerals with you.

However, woodland wildflowers can be finicky and while more nurseries are offering them, they can be costly. So you will want to be careful in your selection. Learn about each plant's requirements before purchasing.

Many of the flowers are pollinated by ants and we do not have large ant communities as one finds in the woods. Many of the orchids are pollinated by bumblebees and our bumblebee population is in decline. Because they are likely not to be pollinated, you must plant them in drifts and clumps since many will spread through rhizomes (underground roots).

The soil is also to be reckoned with! In Lexington we typically have soils with a higher pH than the acid forest soils. This problem can be solved by adding lots of organic matter—like composted leaves—mixed with some construction sand (not sandbox sand) along with sulphur or Hollytone.

Tom suggested that you add a few midstory trees and shrubs to your woodland garden like Carolina silverbell (*Halesia carolina*), Piedmont azalea (*Rhododendron canescens*), ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius*) and native mock orange (*Philadelphus inodorus*), not the invasive European shrub (*Philadelphus coronarius*).

Tom Barnes (left) is a trusted resource for *Wild Ones* members like Erwin Jones (center) and Susan Menard (right).



(Cont'd from Col. 1)

There are many interesting herbaceous plants for early spring: foam flower (*Tiarella cordifolia*), Dutchman's breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*), Virginia bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*), blue phlox (*Phlox stolonifera* and *Phlox divaricata*), true rue anemones (*Thalictrum thalictroides*) and wild geranium (*Geranium maculatum*). And he suggested ferns to fill in after the spring flowers go dormant. For later in the summer: blue cohosh (*Caulophyllum thalictroides*), Turk's cap lily (*Lilium superbum*), black cohosh (*Actaea racemosa*), southern monkshood (*Aconitum uncinatum*) and for the fall: white wood aster (*Eurybia divaricata*) and zig-zag goldenrod (*Solidago flexicaulis*)—"just don't let them take over."

Wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*), dwarf crested iris (*Iris cristata*) and green and gold (*Chrysogonum virginianum*) were his suggestions for ground cover.

AREA CALENDAR FOR APRIL

UK Arboretum

Friday, April 12 at 2 p.m., Care for the Rare Tree Walk—Join Curator of Native Plants, Todd Rounsaville, for a walk at The Arboretum featuring rare trees of Kentucky. He will provide information on characteristics of select trees and answer questions. **Free**

Saturday, April 27, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.—ARBOR DAY—Check <http://www.ca.uky.edu/arboretum/> for details.

Central KY Wildlife Refuge

Saturday, April 13 at 10:00 a.m., Spring Wildflower Walk—Dr. Anne Lubbers of Centre College, a wildflower specialist, will lead a walk along the Martha Clay Wildflower Trail. Details at http://www.ckwr.org/educational_program.htm.

Floracliff Nature Sanctuary (Registration required for all events. Cost \$5. Call 859-351-7770.)

Saturday, April 6 at 1:00 p.m., Wildflower Hike w/Mary Carol Cooper—Hiking level moderate; led by the retired coordinator of the Salato Native Plant Program.

Wednesday, April 10 at 10:00 a.m., Mid-Week Wildflower Hike—Hiking level moderate; led by Field Tech Josie Miller.

Saturday, April 13 at 9:00 a.m., Birds and Wildflowers—Hiking level moderate; led by Hank Yacek and Preserve Manager Beverly James to seek out spring migrants and spring ephemerals.

Raven Run Nature Sanctuary

Saturday, April 13, and Sunday, April 21, at 1:00 p.m., Language of Spring Wildflowers—Call the Sanctuary for details and registration at 859-272-6105.

Reforest the Bluegrass

Saturday, April 13 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Hisle Park, 3551 Briar Hill Rd in north Lexington—Bring your gloves and shovels and join the effort. Information and registration at <http://www.lexingtonky.gov/index.aspx?page=2864>.

The Not So Common Violet

By Victoria Ligenza

Tom Barnes lists twenty-one native violets in his book *Wildflowers and Ferns of Kentucky*. Let's talk about three: the common blue violet (*Viola sororia*), the Canada violet (*Viola canadensis*) and the halberd-leaved violet (*Viola hastata*).



Common blue violet

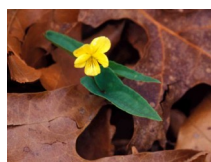
The common blue violet is easily grown in average soil, although it prefers moisture retentive soils rich in humus. In full sun to part shade it grows to four inches. This violet does not spread by runners but freely self-seeds and can be very prolific in good growing conditions. Once established it is difficult to remove. Its bloom time is from April through August. In spring you will see the familiar blue blossoms but during summer and into fall this violet produces cleistogamous flowers (blooms that never open but are self-pollinating) which can be found underground.

Caterpillars of many fritillary butterflies feed on the foliage of blue violets, and so do various upland birds like the wild turkey, bobwhite, and mourning dove. Small mammals like the white-footed mouse occasionally eat the seeds.

The Canada violet likes medium to wet conditions in full sun to part shade. It has white flowers tinged with purple and grows from 12 to 18 inches tall. The nectar and pollen of this flower attract bees and, occasionally, skippers and butterflies. The larvae of many moths and butterflies feed on the foliage. The seeds and fleshy roots are eaten by ruffed grouse and wild turkeys and sometimes even white-tailed deer, eastern chipmunks and wood turtles. This violet is an aggressive seeder.



Canada violet



Halberd-leaved violet

The halberd-leaved violet is very easy to grow in average soil and much better behaved—it will not take over your garden. Unfortunately, it is not usually attractive to insects. The name of this violet comes from its spear-shaped leaves, thought to resemble a medieval battle axe called a halberd. These leaves often have a silvery pattern on them making the plant an attractive addition to any native plant garden. Its yellow flowers, four to ten inches tall, bloom in April and May. This violet likes full shade to dappled sunlight in dry soils. Propagation is done most easily by dividing the small creeping rhizomes.

Bewitching Witchhazel

By Ann Bowe

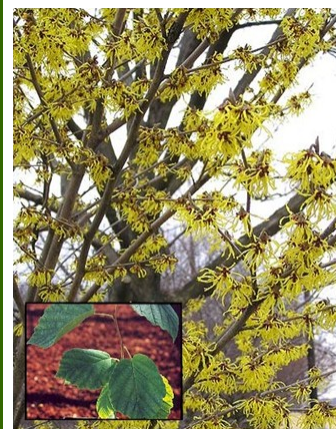
There are two witch-hazels that are native to Kentucky. These deciduous shrubs grow in woodlands, forest margins and stream banks. Both will grow in sun to part shade, with better blooming in full sun. While they prefer moist, acidic, organically rich soils, they will tolerate clay as long as it is not too dry.



Common witchhazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*) will grow to 15 to 20 feet high and wide. Stem-hugging clusters of fragrant bright yellow flowers, each with four crinkly, ribbon-shaped petals, appear along the branches from October to December, usually after leaf drop. The leaves have lovely yellow fall color. The aromatic extract witchhazel, used in mildly astringent lotions, is distilled from the bark of young stems and roots.

Vernal (or Ozark) witchhazel (*Hamamelis vernalis*) is smaller, 6 to 10 feet high and wide. It is noted for its extremely early (January to February/March) and lengthy (up to four weeks) bloom period. However, the old dried leaves tend to cling to the branches and obscure the fragrant blooms. Fall leaf color is a brilliant yellow.

This plant makes a great addition to the garden, as a specimen plant, a hedge planting or in a rain garden. However, suckers should be removed promptly to prevent spreading.



Photos-<http://www.studioblog.com/>

And the name? According to information from the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, not so mysterious—witch comes from the Old English word “wych” referring to the plant's pliant branches (also the root word for “wicker”). Hazel comes from the perceived resemblance of witchhazel leaves to those of the hazel (*Corylus*) species.

Small Lot, Big Plans

By Deborah Hollaway



Have any of you ever wondered if you were putting too many plants in your yard? Well, meet two of our younger *Wild Ones* members, Nathan Skinner and Josie Miller. After our interview at Third Street Stuff, I went to their home in the Kenwick neighborhood, close to downtown Lexington. In less than a quarter of an acre they have planted an amazing number of native trees, shrubs and perennials. Before we talk about all of the species, let me tell you about these two interesting people in more detail.

Nathan is a Kentucky native from the Winchester area where his parents still have land and where he goes to help plant more native trees and do battle against the nasty invasive honeysuckle. After studying cultural anthropology at ECU, Nathan joined AmeriCorps, working at Lake Tahoe where he did trail work, made fire-breaks and thinned the woods to lessen the risk of fire. While there he also worked with at-risk teens in a wilderness program for boys. And it was at Lake Tahoe in 2006 that he met Josie through her sister who lives there.

Josie was born in Michigan and lived in Seattle from the age of nine. She was in AmeriCorps, too, in Boston and Cambridge. Nathan and Josie traveled together, learning about sustainable building techniques and organic farming and they volunteered together in the 9th Ward of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. They then went to Eugene, Oregon, where Josie's father lives, staying there for 18 months. Nathan developed his carpentry skills and Josie apprenticed at an organic farm.

In 2007 Nathan returned to Kentucky and Josie followed soon thereafter. Nathan worked at Longwood Antiques, a business known for using reclaimed lumber in many beautiful projects. He later joined Dave Leonard Tree Specialists and has been a certified arborist for five years. He now works with Town Branch Tree Experts here in Lexington. Josie works at Michler's Garden Center on Maxwell Street and now also has a part time position at Floracliff State Nature Preserve in Fayette County.

Working as they do with trees and plants, Nathan and Josie have been lucky enough to bring home many native varieties. I am not sure they have duplicates of any one plant. Log-edged trails of bark chips and a minimum of grass make the area feel natural. How they found space for a few raised vegetable beds (obviously not native) I have no idea!

Some of the perennial plants that work best for them include green and gold (*Chrysogonum virginianum*), cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), purple phacelia (*Phacelia bipinnatifida*), wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*), ferns of all kinds, great blue lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*), stonecrop (*Sedum*), royal catchfly (*Silene regia*) and bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*).

Nathan and Josie share a consciousness of our fragile environment. They practice sustainable living with as small a carbon footprint as possible. As they continue their stewardship they will be good examples and excellent resources for the rest of us.



Standing in the yard as I was reluctantly ending the interview, we saw a butterfly (in early March!). Josie told me that a great blue heron has visited, too, so they are clearly doing things that wildlife appreciates. Their property will be a very interesting place to visit as it comes back to life in the months to come.

