

## LEXINGTON CHAPTER — MAY, 2012

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

### Next *Wild Ones* Events

**Thurs., May 3—7 to 9 p.m.**—*Wild Ones* annual plant exchange at St. Michael's Episcopal Church. Members are encouraged to bring plants they have thinned from their gardens. **Reminder: plants have a better chance of surviving transplant if they have been potted in small pots or plastic containers for a few days before bringing to exchange.**

**Sat., May 5—10 a.m. to noon**—Planting workshop at 121 St. Margaret Drive. **(Rain date—Sun., May 6—2 to 4 p.m.)** Bring shovels and gloves to help or just come to listen and watch.

### Much to Learn at *Wild Ones* Pruning Workshop

By Ann Bowe



Town Branch Tree Experts presented an excellent pruning workshop March 24. Owner, Sara Hesley, attended and the workshop was conducted by

ISA Certified Arborist, Stacy Borden.

We all met at member **Mary Carol Cooper's** home which is situated on property full of native trees, plants and wildflowers. Stacy started with a tree pruning demonstration, using a small blackgum as his example. We learned about proper pruning cuts, when and how to limb up a tree, and how to develop a central leader, which is important to long term structural integrity and health.

Next Stacy worked on many different shrubs. We learned how to determine where to make a cut when reducing the size of a shrub. The bud direction tells you the direction that the resulting branch will take as it grows. A real light bulb went on when Stacy removed a large, older stem from a spicebush and left the younger suckers, in effect rejuvenating the shrub. Exciting to see!

We look forward to the next workshop Stacy gives, since he did offer to come back again, by popular demand!



### 4th Annual Midwest Native Plant Conference

- July 27, 28, and 29, 2012 at the Marianist Environment Education Center in Dayton, OH.
- Touring MEEC is a wonderful experience in itself. (<http://meec.udayton.edu/>).
- Excellent talks, field trips, vendors and more!
- Registration form and more information at <http://midwestnativeplants.org/>
- Carpooling can be arranged once we know who is going. Contact Ann Bowe if interested.

## Plant of the Month

### WALKING FERN

*Asplenium rhizophyllum*

Photo and text by Victoria Ligenza



Intriguing as its name is, this fern unfortunately will not follow you around the woods on your hike. In fact, it needs at least a year to take a step.

The walking fern has very unfernlike fronds but it is easy to identify because no other fern in the state resembles it. When the tips of a frond touch moist ground, a new fern can grow. This vegetative reproduction causes new tufts of leaves to develop around the mother plant, resulting in a colony of plants in one area. The walking fern also produces tiny spores on its underside that are released during the summer or fall and distributed by the wind.

Its habitat is shaded to partly shaded moist moss-covered outcrops. The fronds are 6 to 12 inches long and 1/4 to 2 inches across. It likes a sheltered location with protection from the wind.

This picture of a walking fern was taken at Floracliff Nature Sanctuary.

## Program Provides Helpful Field Guides and Resources

At our membership meeting on April 5, several *Wild Ones* board members as well as **Beverly James**, manager at Floracliff Nature Sanctuary, presented their favorite reference and field guides to native plants. **Connie May**, who had organized this program, pointed out how fortunate we are to have a variety of guides available to help us learn about our wildflowers, trees and shrubs. The number of such works has grown substantially over the last 20 years or so.

Beverly presented several books that she uses routinely in her work at Floracliff to identify the trees and shrubs on the preserve. **Mary Carol Cooper**, veteran leader of many, many nature hikes for the Sierra Club and other organizations, presented a number of wildflower field guides and discussed their relative virtues and drawbacks. **Beate Popkin** introduced the U.S. Department of Agriculture plant database website ([plants.usda.gov](http://plants.usda.gov)), which provides a wealth of information and many useful links to individual native plants, and Connie May discussed her favorite native plant books.

**Betty Hall**, our Lexington butterfly expert, told us about her favorite books to identify butterflies. She also invited listeners to help her track butterfly populations by keeping systematic records of their sightings. If you are interested in participating in this project, you might contact Betty. She encouraged everyone to consider planting milkweed species, host plants for the monarch butterfly. This lovely creature is suffering a loss of habitat due to the use of herbicides in the U.S.

It was a very interesting and instructive program. Resources discussed are listed on page 5 of this publication.

## Fall Bloomers

Dr. Tammy Horn, in her March 22 presentation, stressed the importance of cultivating fall blooming flowers as the number available to support pollinators cannot meet the demand. While we generally think of asters and goldenrods for this season, Victoria Ligenza has thoughtfully provided us information on three of her favorites:

**White Turtlehead (*chelone glabra*)**—2-3 feet tall and 1.5 - 2.5 feet spread. A stiffly erect, clump forming wildflower. It prefers medium to wet soil and part sun. It will naturalize. Attracts butterflies and native bees.

**Cardinal Flower (*lobelia cardinalis*)**—1 - 6 feet tall with red flowers in summer to fall. It can grow in sun to shade in moist to wet soil. Prefers rich soil, loamy clay or sandy loam. Attracts hummingbirds.

**Common Boneset (*eupatorium perfoliatum*)**—2 - 4 feet tall with white flowers 2 – 8 inches across, blooming late summer to fall. It can grow in sun to part shade, preferring moist/wet soil with organic material. Attracts bees, wasps and butterflies.



White Turtlehead  
(Photo by Robert H. Mohlenbrock  
USDA SCS)



Cardinal Flower  
(Photo by Sally Wasowski)



Common Boneset  
(Photo by Mrs. W.D. Bransford)

## Try a Bee House in Your Garden

By Judy Johnson



USDA photo

Would you like to nurture much needed pollinators but maintaining a honey bee hive sounds like too much work?

Think about attracting mason bees with the simple structure pictured below.

Mason bees are beautiful insects about 1/3 inch long, blue black with a metallic sheen. (Unfortunately, they are often mistaken for large flies.) They are solitary, yet like to live in close proximity. They are gentle and shy and do not sting unless provoked. They are good pollinators, in short, excellent guests for backyard environments.

The female bee forms a small ball of pollen and nectar in the back of a nesting tube and lays an egg on the ball. She then collects mud to form a cell partition and repeats the pollen ball-egg laying process until she reaches the mouth of the tube where she caps the end with mud. Larvae will remain in the tube nest through the summer, changing to young adults that will winter over in the nest, emerging the following spring.

The structure pictured here can be purchased from Gardener's Supply Co. online at [www.gardeners.com](http://www.gardeners.com). It is priced at \$16.95. A good location is the east or south wall of a house.



## Wanted! Wild Ones Ecoscapers

This is the perfect time of year to register for the Wild Ones Ecoscaper Program at [www.wildcertification.org/ecoscaper/](http://www.wildcertification.org/ecoscaper/). The levels are relatively easy to complete and, with spring upon us, NOW is the best time to get started so you can document your work as the summer progresses.

## Wild Ones Photo Contest

Time to start thinking about subjects for this year's contest. Entries are due **Aug. 13**, 2011 slide show as well as all previous winners are available at [www.wildones.org/members/photos/](http://www.wildones.org/members/photos/).

## Local Events

- **Sat., May 5—10 a.m. to 1 p.m.—** WEED WARRIOR DAY at Floracliff. Call ahead to register and receive more information at 859-351-7770.
- **Sat., May 12—8 a.m. to 2 p.m.—** Down to Earth Garden Club's annual plant sale at Woodland Christian Church, 530 E. High St. Many of the plants will be native.
- **Sat., May 12—10 a.m. sharp—**Plant exchange at UK Arboretum.
- **Tues., May 15—1 to 3 p.m.—** "Rain Water Gardens" presented by Dr. Brad Lee and Dr. Rick Durham. Sizing, designing, and selecting appropriate plant materials. **FREE.** (Repeated **Wed., May 16, 6-8 p.m.** for those who need evening hours.) Pre-registration required.
- **Sat., May 19 and 26—9 a.m. to 4 p.m.—**Dropseed Nursery native plant sale. (Goshen, directions on website [www.dropseednursery.com](http://www.dropseednursery.com))
- **Sat., May 19—10 a.m. to 2 p.m.—** Native plant sale at Dunbar High School. Proceeds support the maintenance of the Dunbar Memorial Garden.
- **Sat., May 19—9 a.m.—**Herpetology hike with Zeb Weese at Floracliff. Family outing in search of frogs, turtles, reptiles of all sorts. \$5 per person or \$12 per family. It is very popular event so register early at 859-351-7770.

## Critter of the Month

### RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD

#### *Archilochus colubris*

*by Victoria Ligenza*



We all marvel at these flying jewels but what are some things that we might not know about our little friends?

The Ruby-Throated Hummingbird weighs as much as a penny, can raise its heart rate to 1,250 beats a minute and may fly more than 1,000 miles when it migrates.

Hummingbirds sip nectar and eat tiny insects and spiders (up to 400 a day) which the female also feeds to her young. They have the ability to endure temporary colder temperatures by becoming dormant or going into what is called 'torpor'. While in torpor they can drop their heart rate to 50 beats a minute to conserve energy.

They do not flap their wings like other birds. Hummingbirds rotate their wings in a figure 8 which enables them to go backwards in the air and hover in one spot. Also due to their tiny feet hummingbirds cannot walk.

To attract hummingbirds to nest in your yard you should grow perennials, annuals and vines with fuzzy foliage which they use to build their nests along with animal hair, moss, lichen and spider webs. For nourishment they are attracted to plants with bright colors—cardinal flower, orange jewelwood, copper or red iris, fire pink, round-leafed pink, Carolina pink, columbine, and various species of phlox.



## NEW PRODUCT – MOJOGRO

*By Victoria Ligenza*

This product claims to be: weed free; retain more moisture than regular soil; work well for growing a wide variety of plants and vegetables; be easier to use and understand; and affordable. On the bag it states it contains organic matter, nutrients and microbes. This product is made in the U.S. with American ingredients. Currently, it can be purchased at Kroger stores. More information can be found at [www.mojogro.com](http://www.mojogro.com).

I bought the large bag for \$5. I will try it on vegetables, fruits, and flowers and will provide future updates on its usefulness and why it is important to stop using peat moss.

## Field Guides and Other Resources

- <http://www.louisvilleky.gov/NR/rdonlyres/034D7B52-DA05-4FB1-BA52-C3DF417251DC/0/SRAG200PocketfieldguideKywildflowers.pdf>—long URL but handy downloadable **FREE** guide (recommended by Victoria Ligenza).
- **“Wildflowers of Tennessee, the Ohio Valley and the Southern Appalachians”** edited by Horn, Cathcart, Hemmerly, and Duhl (Mary Carol Cooper’s favorite), can be purchased used online for \$14.
- **“Tree Finder, A Manual for the Identification of Trees by Their Leaves,”** authored by May Theilgaard Watts, can be used with children (recommended by Mary Carol Cooper), can be found online for \$5.
- **“Native Ferns, Moss and Grasses”** by William Cullina (favorite of Connie May), can be found used online for \$15.
- **“Native Trees, Shrubs and Vines”** by William Cullina (favorite of Connie May), can be found used online for \$20.
- **“Wildflowers: A Guide to Growing and Propagating Native Wildflowers of North America”** by William Cullina (favorite of Connie May), can be found used online for \$10.
- **“Attracting Butterflies with Native Plants”**—Bulletin FOR-98 by Tom G. Barnes, can be printed from [www.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/for/for98/for98.pdf](http://www.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/for/for98/for98.pdf), recommended as good basic beginning resource by Betty Hall.
- **“The Life Cycles of Butterflies”** by Judy Burris and Wayne Richards, especially helpful for folks who are just beginning to learn about common Kentucky butterflies, recommended by Betty Hall, can be found used online for \$6.
- **“Butterfly Gardening: Creating Summer Magic in Your Garden” (revised 1998)** by the Xerces Society and the Smithsonian Institution, collection of essays on various subjects related to butterflies and recommended as “fun reading” by Betty Hall, can be found used online for less than \$1.



### FREE FRONT ROW SEATS!

It is a joy to look in on Cornell University’s webcams positioned to show you the nests of a pair of great blue herons and a pair of red-tailed hawks. Video streams 24 hours a day.

Since it will take several weeks for the eggs to hatch and the fledglings to fly there is still much entertainment in store. You will find links to each setup at <http://www.birds.cornell.edu>.

Enjoy!

This newsletter is a publication of the Lexington Chapter of the *Wild Ones* organization. It is published nine times a year: March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, 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@insightbb.com](mailto:judylex@insightbb.com).