

## LEXINGTON CHAPTER — May, 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/](http://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](mailto:annbowe@annbowedesigns.com) or Judy Johnson, newsletter editor, at [judylex@insightbb.com](mailto:judylex@insightbb.com).

### *President's Message...*

Spring is the season for woodland hikes, and also the season for wondering why the spectacular flowers that cover the forest floor in such abundance fail so often when we plant them in our gardens. At our *Wild Ones* meeting in March, Tom Barnes reminded us that the lush forest vegetation we cherish emerges from a thick layer of leaf mulch which gets replenished every year. The mulch keeps the soil underneath moist during the summer and protects it from continuously freezing and thawing during the winter. Best of all, as the leaf cover decomposes it becomes the loose, friable and fertile humus in which our woodland plants thrive.

This is how nature does it, but it is not how gardeners typically do it, and it is certainly not how landscape maintenance crews can afford to do it. In urban settings, where the demand for neatness and order has escalated in recent years due to the ubiquitous (and some may say, evil) presence of leaf blowers, garden beds tend to be kept leafless. Very early in spring, landscape companies, eager to put an end to winter's financial dearth, get busy spreading dense layers of processed woodchip mulch on garden beds, long before any perennial plants have had a chance to become visible.

Of course, as native gardeners, we can do it differently. We can learn to appreciate the low cost of leaf mulch. Conventional mulch costs \$4 a bag or \$25 a cubic yard, but leaves are free. Even if we don't have enough on our own property, we can get them from a neighbor, or we can pick up the yard waste bags that people all over the city fill with their leaf harvest in fall and put out on the curb for collection. We can be the collectors.

But are we ready to keep our shady and semi-shady garden beds covered with a 10 inch layer of leaves in winter? Can we embrace the aesthetics that such a practice implies? In my own garden I increasingly work toward what's ecologically sensible in preference to what looks neat and clean, but it's the slowness of change that enables me to let go of old aspirations. In fact, my transitioning to native plants in general has been gradual, and therefore both manageable and so very enjoyable. Becoming a native gardener does not have to be a radical step, it can and should be a journey, for there is so much to learn. Deciding to do a winter mulch with leaves can be a simple and money-saving first, or second, or fifth, or tenth step toward creating a viable native garden.



*Beate Popkin*

## Plant Exchange and Social on May 2

On Thursday, May 2, at 7 p.m. the annual Plant Exchange and Social will be held at St. Michael's Episcopal Church. We will meet in the lower parking lot which is accessed from Libby Lane. Because the event is a fundraiser, there will be a participation fee of \$5 for members and \$7 for nonmembers. Items to be exchanged can be seeds, perennials, grasses and sedges, shrubs, trees or vines. The plants must be native to the Eastern United States; cultivars of a native plant are acceptable. They should be potted if dug up several weeks before the exchange or, if they are dug on the day of the exchange, their roots may be kept moist in wet newspaper surrounded by a plastic bag. Each plant must be labeled.

Participants who have no plants to offer for exchange may contribute a food item or beverage to this social occasion. Finger foods, beer, wine and juices are particularly cherished. It's great fun and everybody gets to go home with new plants.

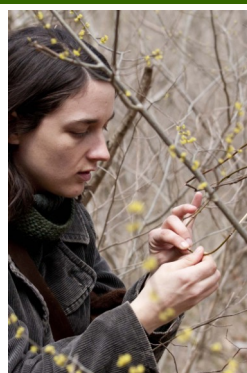
St. Michael's Episcopal Church is located at 2025 Bellefonte Drive, Lexington. Visitors are welcome!

## AREA CALENDAR FOR MAY

- **Raven Run**  
Sat., May 4 at 8 a.m.—Birds of the Bluegrass  
3788 Raven Run Way—cost is FREE. Call 859-272-6105 for more information.
- **Pine Mountain Settlement School —Black Mountain Weekend**  
Fri., May 3 through Sun., May 5—Featuring Tom Barnes' presentation of **Waterfalls of Kentucky**. Cost \$55 plus lodging. [Pinemountainsettlementschool.com](http://Pinemountainsettlementschool.com) or call 606-558-3416 for more information.
- **Dunbar Memorial Garden Native Plant Sale**  
Sat., May 11 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Dunbar HS, 1600 Man O War Blvd. Native plants, grasses, shrubs, tree seedlings. \$2 to \$15—cash please! Proceeds support the continued care of Dunbar Memorial Garden.
- **Down to Earth Garden Club—Plant Sale**  
Sat., May 11 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Woodland Christian Church, 530 E. High St., in the parking lot.  
[Downtoearthky.org](http://Downtoearthky.org) for more information.
- **Floracliff Nature Sanctuary**  
Sat., May 11 at 9 a.m.—Herpetology with Zeb Weese—Hiking level: Moderate. Cost \$5/person or \$12/family.  
  
Tues., May 28 at 7 p.m.—Land Snails with Daniel Douglas—Discussion of basic biology, ecology and natural history, as well as biodiversity among this group of poorly understood organisms with a special emphasis on species present at Floracliff. This session is FREE. [Floracliff.org](http://Floracliff.org) or call 859-351-7770 for more information.

## Wildflowers and *Wild Ones* Embrace the Change of Season

By Karen Lanier



Co-leader Beverly James

On Saturday, March 23, Beverly James and Mary Carol Cooper led our group of ten eager hikers into Tom Dorman Nature Preserve, following a looping two mile trail to the palisades and back. The route transects several rocky microclimates; where the edges merge, diverse species abound.

Abundant flowering plants included tiny cutleaf toothwort and the yellow buds of spicebush. Bloodroot, trout lilies, and sessile trillium hid their blossoms, as did stonecrop and saxifrage. A bright scarlet cup fungus popped in contrast to a soot black devil's urn.

Waterleaf, purple cress, white avens, bedstraw, sessile trillium, Dutchman's breeches, putty-root orchid and ragwort were also identified by their leaves. Rue anemone and false rue anemone kept folks guessing. A few ferns were found – ebony spleenwort, marginal woodfern and walking fern.

The group marveled at the colorful cliffs of the palisades as turkey vultures and great blue herons soared and spiraled. We explored historic sites near the river and then returned via an old stage-coach road. Sunshine on a south-facing slope brought out spring beauties and harbingers of spring. The crimson-colored buckeye buds seemed to unfurl before our eyes.

On this first hike of the season, *Wild Ones* explorers found evidence of life after winter as the season seemed to transition to spring within a morning's time.



Scarlet cup fungus



Sessile trillium



Sharp-lobed hepatica

All photos courtesy of [klanierphoto@gmail.com](mailto:klanierphoto@gmail.com).



## We Can All Help the Monarchs

By Mary Carol Cooper

What a treat our April program was! Betty Hall, a long-time *Wild Ones* member and award-winning photographer, spoke about “Monarch Waystations: Creating Habitats for Monarchs.” Her PowerPoint presentation included many of her own wonderful photos.



Betty Hall (center) with good friends Frankie and Oscar Gerulds.

Betty became enamored with butterflies about seven years ago when she first saw a monarch laying eggs on common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) in her garden. She watched the eggs hatch into caterpillars and then noticed that the caterpillars were disappearing. Betty took some of them inside so they would be safe from predators. Thus protected, she watched and photographed them making chrysalides and turning into butterflies.

The monarch butterfly is one of the few butterflies that migrate. What makes them especially unique is that those that live east of the Rockies migrate all the way to Mexico—up to 3,000 miles. After overwintering there, they mate and fly back to the southern part of the U.S. where they find milkweed, lay eggs and die. The generation that hatches out of these eggs moves farther north and does the same thing—finds milkweed, lays eggs and dies—and so on until some of them finally reach southern Canada. In the fall, there is a “super generation” that will live for seven months. This is the generation that migrates and overwinters in Mexico. In the spring these monarchs mate and travel to the southern U.S. to repeat the cycle.

Monarchs must have milkweed to lay their eggs on; their caterpillars cannot feed on anything else. Monarchs in the U.S. are in decline because of loss of habitat due to development and spraying of chemicals, both of which destroy the milkweed.

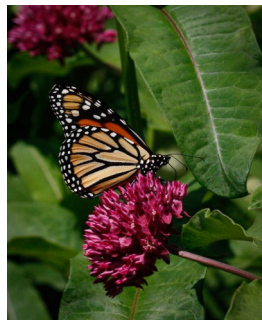
The good news is that we can help! Monarch Watch is sponsoring a Monarch Waystation program, challenging all of us to create habitat in our backyards.

The minimum requirement for a waystation is ten milkweed and four native nectar plants. Our local

native milkweeds include common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*), swamp milkweed (*A. incarnata*), butterfly milkweed (*A. tuberosa*) and purple milkweed (*A. purpurascens*). For information on the waystation program, go to <http://www.monarchwatch.org/waystations/>. Certification requirements can be found at <http://www.monarchwatch.org/waystations/download.html>. A bonus of these monarch waystations is that they also attract other butterflies and pollinators.

Betty’s two handouts—“Five Steps for a Certified Monarch Waystation” and “25 Kentucky Native Plants That Attract Butterflies and Other Pollinators,” along with local sources for milkweeds and native nectar plants—can be found at ([www.bettyhallphotography.com/resources/](http://www.bettyhallphotography.com/resources/)).

Our *Wild Ones* chapter also challenges us to plant milkweeds and get our yards certified. The sooner the better! Betty is offering a set of her butterfly note cards to the first five people who achieve certification and there will be a drawing for more prizes at our October meeting. To be eligible, email Doug Rigsby at [dwrigsby@gmail.com](mailto:dwrigsby@gmail.com) and let him know about your certification before Oct. 1.



Betty captured this beauty with her camera.

Betty is more than a casual fan of butterflies—she herself admits she is a “woman on a mission.” She wants to do everything she can to help our beautiful monarch butterflies. Let’s not disappoint her...or the butterflies!

## Looking for Native Plants?

- **Dropseed Nursery Plant Sales**—Saturdays May 11, May 18, May 25, and June 1, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
1205 S. Buckeye, Lane Goshen, KY. Call owner Margaret Shea at 502-439-9033 for information.
- **Shooting Star Nursery**—Now open Mon. through Sat.—10 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
This nursery, which features a wide selection of native plants, is located at 160 Soards Road, Georgetown, KY. Call 502-867-7979 for more information.
- **Michler’s Greenhouse**—Open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mon. through Fri. and 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sat. Located at 417 E. Maxwell St., Lexington. Call 859-254-0383.
- **Springhouse Gardens**—Open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mon. through Fri., 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sat., and 12 to 5 p.m. on Sun. Located at 185 W. Catnip Hill, Nicholasville, KY. Call 859-224-1417.

## Visual Interest for the Woodland Garden

By Victoria Ligenza



Mayapple photo from [appalachiaandbe-](#)

pears completely.) The flowers are pollinated by long-tongued bees and the berries are eaten by box turtles and possibly other small mammals. The roots and leaves are highly poisonous. While the berries are slightly toxic, ripe berries can be eaten in limited quantities, even in jams or jellies.



Solomon's Seal from [blueridgebotanicals.wordpress.com](#)

When the leaf stalk is broken from the rhizome it has a distinctive scar that is said to resemble the official seal of King Solomon. The plant's nectar and pollen attract long-tongued bees and ruby-throated hummingbirds.

False Solomon's Seal (*Maianthemum racemosum*) is easily confused with Solomon's Seal, since it has a similar form. The telltale difference is that False Solomon's Seal has a panicle of white blooms at the end of the stem which turns to a clump of red berries in the fall.



False Solomon's Seal from [kitsadot.com](#)



Photo by Betty Hall

### Northern Maidenhair Fern

(*Adiantum pedatum*) is a beautiful fern that easily grows in medium, well-drained slightly acidic soil in shade to part shade. It has finely textured, frilly fronds that grow outwards in a flat fan-like shape. The stem is black and wiry. In spring the fiddleheads emerge in a pinkish color.

This fern spreads slowly by rhizomes to form colonies. In early summer spore clusters appear on the underside of the leaflets. They ripen in the fall and are released to form new plants. Our summer heat may cause fronds to brown by mid to late summer, particularly if good soil moisture is not maintained and/or plants are grown in too much sun.

Consider these lovely plants as you think about adding interesting texture to **your** garden.



## Transplants Thriving in Kentucky

By Judy Johnson

Cheri Wolfe was listening when John Hartman told a *Wild Ones* gathering that the stately black walnut tree “could go extinct in Kentucky within 50 years.” She and her husband Tim had spent the last five years reclaiming 260 acres of overgrown land stretching for 1.5 miles down along the Kentucky River. Old Landing Farm was slowly being freed from the smothering vines, brambles and underbrush that had disguised it for so long. Hartman’s words were a reminder it was time to focus on trees. But to jump into the Wolfes’ story at this point is like beginning a Michener novel at page 500.

For a bit of background, Cheri was a museum curator and Tim had developed his own company for the display, storage, transport and installation of fine art (including monumental sculpture—in his mind, the bigger, the better) when they decided it was time to retire and take up farming. Having lived in the Dallas-Fort Worth area for 30 years, they knew they would have to find a climate more suited to their plans. Cheri, always the careful researcher, found a clue in an issue of *Stockman Grass Farmer*. It read, “Almost all of the year-round grass finishing in the world occurs within 100 miles north and south of this degree latitude (the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel). It is far enough North to grow cool season perennials but far enough South to avoid long periods of deep snow.” This parallel runs straight through Kentucky. She Googled “Kentucky” plus “farm” and there it was—a listing that led to 60 acres of pasture and 200 acres of forest a 90 minute drive from Lexington.

Many adventures followed as they tore down old structures and built new ones, carved out roads, cleared pasture land, dragged old farm machinery and other debris from the vines, dug a pond and strung fences. Through it all, Cheri and Tim hold fast to their dream. They want to produce organic meat, vegetables and fruits while being good stewards of all living things in their care. To quote Tim, “Our biggest joy is just living with nature every day. We get to know the families of deer and wild turkeys and we have a dandy bunch of coyotes!”

A project to delve into ramp cultivation was sparked by Grow Appalachia, a group based in Berea that encourages people of the region to once again produce their own food. The director’s initial offer was 1,000 seeds of the “wild leeks of Appalachia.” Cheri asked for 6,000 plus 200 for a control group and, as a jump start, she ordered 100 ramp bulbs from Maine. This planting is now finished and Cheri hopes next year to see the early spring green of ramp sprouts that she remembers from her childhood in the mountains of West Virginia.

And the tree project that sprang from John Hartman’s presentation? As they cleared away invasive brush, Tim and Cheri carefully opened up space around

existing native specimens of pawpaw, beech, blackgum, dogwood, hawthorn, oak, maple, smoketree, serviceberry and hickory. They designated one newly cleared area a nut grove, recently planting 30 hazelnut trees and three disease-resistant hickories. Another pasture now supports 10 persimmons. All were ordered either from the KY Division of Forestry or the Nolin River Nut Tree Nursery located in Upton, KY. To control erosion in the rolling pasture land along the Kentucky River they are now planting the gentle slopes of the washes with 100 wild plum trees. These will bear fruit within three to five years and their roots will help hold the soil in place.

This page can only provide a glimpse into life on Old Landing Farm. Stay tuned for updates and when you see Cheri and Tim at a *Wild Ones* event, ask about their well-trained coyotes or the Belted Galloways and Swedish ducks or the Pond of Many Names or the river maples that will one day be tapped for syrup. There is a life of big ideas, continuous learning, hard labor and great stories! And their perspective and experiences may inspire us all to seek new ways to tend our own gardens.



Cheri and Tim Wolfe



Tee Bergman inspects seedlings with Cheri.



Tim's metal sculpture figures called "The Mushroom Hunters" seem to emerge from the woods.