

LEXINGTON CHAPTER — June, 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...

Garden tours are a lot of fun and they are gaining in popularity. There are community-wide garden tours and neighborhood garden tours and, I imagine, there must be theme-based garden tours focused perhaps on edible gardens or shade gardens or some other specialty. Our *Wild Ones* garden tour on June 30 is theme-based: not surprisingly, we are sponsoring a tour of native plant gardens.

To prepare for a tour, garden owners or designers work anxiously to show off their gardens at their very best on the day when they are open to the public. And visitors are looking for inspiration. They hope to discover that someone else has succeeded where they themselves have so often encountered disappointment, namely, in creating a garden that is the perfect expression of its owner's aspirations.

But perfection is not a meaningful goal in garden-making. If it were ever achieved, it would probably not be evident on the day of the tour. And even if it were apparent on that day, it would be compromised soon afterwards, when petals have dropped, a night wind has toppled previously erect flower stalks or a flock of birds has eaten all the colorful serviceberries that added so much luster to the garden just a few days earlier.

We *Wild Ones*, of course, embrace change for we know it is the way of nature, whereas perfection is not. If we, nevertheless, offer a garden tour to the general public, engaging in its rituals and expectations, we try to draw attention to our passion through a popular pastime. The gardens on our tour will present themselves at their best on June 30 and they will give visual pleasure to those who visit them. But, above all, they represent a serious effort on the part of their owners to connect a piece of suburban land with our natural environment, which is the source of all life and should be the source of all garden-making.



Royal catchfly (Silene regia) photo by Beate Popkin 2009

Beate Popkin

Mark Your Calendar Now for the *Wild Ones* Garden Tour

Beauties of the Bluegrass Garden Tour

Sunday, June 30th, 2013

from 2 to 5 p.m.

Three native plant gardens that are sustainable and eco-friendly:

308 Greenbriar Road

992 Stonewall Road (Here a small selection of native plants, including milkweed will be offered for sale.)

2173 Palomar Trace Drive

Cost: \$5 per person. Tickets available at each garden site.

This is a "rain or shine" event.

More information at:

www.wildones.org/chapters/lexington/

The following three articles and the accompanying pictures provide a brief preview of the gardens that will be featured on the tour.

Native Plants as an Alternative to Grass Lawn

By Karen Lanier

The Finucane/Podet Home When you step into the garden at 308 Greenbriar, take a moment to imagine it engulfed in more than four tons of bush honeysuckle and winter creeper. Then refocus and see yourself in the midst of over 250 species of thriving native plants, that create a setting both inviting and private. Since 2001, Mike Finucane and Eve Podet have been fostering biodiversity that defies the typical garden design of suburbia.

Eve and Mike approach native plant gardening from differing perspectives that complement each other. Eve chooses natives so she can say no to grass and to chemicals. She prefers plants that are well adapted naturally and welcomes the task of weeding for the hands-on opportunity to check on the plants and see how they are doing, up close and personal.

Mike, on the other hand, takes a macro approach to gardening. He envisions the landscape as a whole, with an architectural perspective. His native garden not only provides an alternative to a grass lawn but also serves as a wildlife refuge. Mike's passion for songbirds motivates him to keep several species of viburnum which provide songbird habitat. He finds particular delight in the sounds of wood thrushes in his own yard.

The native plants in this garden also coexist with a select few (seven, to be exact) species of exotic plants. Some of these are bulbs that Eve looks forward to seeing each year as a connection to the unknown history of the property. They are a reminder that the gardens we tend today will have an impact for generations to come.

This couple shares an enthusiasm for hiking in natural areas. They are keen to compare what they encounter with what they have growing in their own back yard. Visitors on the garden tour will be amazed at the product of their labors.



Eve and Mike worked tenaciously to free their lovely garden from the grasp of invasive plants.

Fresh Starts Evident on Garden Tour

By Deborah Holloway

The Gerald's Home—Oscar and Frankie Gerald's have a lovely home—and a lovely garden. They bought the house in the Palomar neighborhood and married all about the same time, in 2007. I visited recently and discovered the garden is beginning to look well-established.

Neither Oscar nor Frankie really knew much about plants or planting when they moved in. They **did** know they wanted to grow native plants. Oscar had begun with a vegetable garden in raised beds. But flowers? Well, as far as he was concerned they were all either red, yellow or white. Don't ask for names!

So, searching for a real starting point they called Connie May, one of our *Wild Ones* members and a garden designer specializing in native plants. She planned and planted most of the different areas, including most recently the front yard, a challenge because it is drier and partly shaded.

They now enjoy native perennials and trees that are beginning to mature, even a microforest in a far corner. Frankie especially loves the butterfly milkweed, the coneflowers and the bluestar. She says no pesticides or fertilizers are ever needed. I saw native honeysuckle and wisteria in the garden as well as sweet shrub and yellowwood trees. A young fringe tree was in full bloom when I visited. Just lovely.

One of the main problems they have had to solve is a slope with a solid rock base allowing no water drainage. The answer? A very attractive rain garden.

Now the Gerald's love to sit in their sun room and look at all the vibrant colors. They have become avid birders too. They see dozens of species visiting the feeders and the flowers and Oscar keeps a journal of the activity.

I was excited to learn that Oscar and Frankie have had their garden certified as a Monarch Way Station. Lots of happy butterflies will be coming and going!

This garden is one of three native plant gardens to be featured on the *Wild Ones* tour June 30. I am so glad you all will be able to see it then!



Frankie welcomes guests to her garden.

The Baker Home—There are many ranch houses on Stonewall Road in Lexington's Gardenside neighborhood. Jannine Baker's is the one with flowers planted at the curb, the one with the gorgeous fringe tree by the front walk. Here she has lived with her husband and her parakeet and has gardened with native plants since 1998. Jannine's garden will be featured on the *Wild Ones* tour June 30.



Jannine points out her vine covered arbor.

Originally, the property had a grass lawn just like the other homes in the area. One day a neighbor invited her to go on a dig, saving native plants before they were to be bulldozed in highway construction. She said she had no idea what she was doing and didn't even know how to divide plants.

Now, with her husband's help, she is a competent gardener and a walking textbook on plants. Jannie is involved in the Down to Earth Garden Club, a member of the Kentucky Council of Garden Clubs. She told me that there are many in her garden club who are becoming interested in native plants. Her own garden seems to have a few of everything. Her favorites include butterfly milkweed, lead plant, prairie smoke and dwarf crested iris. Oh—and crossvine—which I was happy to see in full bloom. I asked her how she came up with the design for the beds and paths and she said she stood on the roof and decided from that vantage point. Great idea!

Gardens and birds go together and Jannine has observed a total of 67 species in her retreat. The birds add to her enjoyment of the garden.

As for advice to new gardeners? "Just take it one square foot at a time." She knows how overwhelming a garden can be, especially at this time of year.

"Keep it mulched."

Another little gem? "Let the plants tell you what they like. Don't force a plant to grow where you want it—plant it where it will be happy."

This garden—as well as the gracious woman who has created it—will be remembered by all who come to visit.



Members Wild about Plant Exchange

By Karen Lanier

The Lexington chapter of *Wild Ones* hosted its fourth annual plant exchange and social on Thursday, May 2. The evening was a big success socially, financially and environmentally. Fifty members and friends waited patiently for the opportunity to choose plants to take home. A spread of good food and drinks kept everyone occupied between the selection rounds. Folks caught up with old friends, met new ones and toured the rain garden at St. Michael's Church.

Participants brought plants that ranged from wildflowers to trees, all native to the Eastern United States. One of the most unusual plants was Alabama snow wreath (*Neviusia alabamensis*), a flowering shrub that is rare in many states and possibly extinct in Missouri. Milkweed plugs were also sold to help create more monarch waystations in Kentucky.

In addition to spreading the wealth of native plants among the attendees, the chapter used the event as a fundraiser and brought in \$386. Special thanks to the nurseries that donated native plants: Springhouse Gardens, Michler's Greenhouse, Dropseed Nursery and Shooting Star Nursery.



Mary Carol Cooper checked labels on plants during the exchange.

Three Plants That Add Interest and Attract Butterflies

By Victoria Ligenza



Photo from funflowerfacts.com

Blazing star (*Liatris spicata*), also known as gayfeather, is a beautiful perennial that sends up erect feathery spikes of magenta flowers that bloom from top to bottom. These flower spikes can be up to four feet long, growing out of a basal clump of narrow grass-like leaves. Blazing star thrives in moist soil but will grow under dry conditions. It likes full sun. This member of the aster family attracts hummingbirds, bees and butterflies and is drought tolerant and deer resistant. Blazing star can be propagated by seed or you can divide the tubers in spring or fall.



Photo from whatgrows.there.com

Turtlehead (*Chelone glabra*) displays unique flowers, each shaped like a turtle's head, growing on dense spikes two to three feet tall. These stay in bloom for four to eight weeks. They are pink or white with a pink tinge and bloom mid-summer to fall. The name Chelone comes from Greek mythology. It is said a nymph named Chelone insulted the gods and was punished by being turned into a turtle. Turtlehead can be found along stream banks in damp ground, preferably a neutral soil pH, and in full sun to part shade. This plant is used for erosion control, in a rain garden or bog garden, or naturalized into a woodland garden. This flower is the host plant for the Baltimore checkerspot butterfly, which is on the decline.



Photo from dematisonline.co.uk

Dutchman's pipe or pipevine (*Aristolochia macrophylla*), a vine with heart-shaped leaves, can grow 15 to 30 feet long and 15 to 20 feet wide. It has inconspicuous greenish-yellow flowers that look like a Dutch smoking pipe. These blooms have a specialized pollination mechanism. The strong scent of the flowers attracts insects. Inside the tube of the flower are hairs which trap flies. The hairs then wither to release the pollen-covered fly. Dutchman's pipe will grow in full sun or part shade in moist, well drained soil. It is intolerant of dry soil. This vine sends runners underground and is easily grown from seed. It can be cut back in winter to control its size. Dutchman's pipe is the host plant of the pipevine swallowtail butterfly.

Wild Ones June Event

Thursday, June 6, the *Wild Ones* will meet at the 5th Street Apiary, 235 E. Third Street at 7 p.m. for a tour of the facility and a presentation on beekeeping. Yes, it is the 5th Street Apiary and, yes, the location is **235 E. Third Street**.

The 5th Street Apiary is the brainchild of Grant and Jess Clouser who will talk with us about ways gardeners can support pollinators, especially, honeybees. The apiary is a small urban honeybee farm begun in 2010. (If you check the apiary's Facebook page you will see some new hives recently installed on the roof of the Bread Box, the mixed use project in the old Rainbo Bread factory at 6th and Jefferson which is home to 6th St. Brewery, Broke Spoke Community Bike Shop, Cricket Press and Food Chain.)

This should be an interesting and entertaining field trip! Hope to see you there.

AREA CALENDAR FOR JUNE

Pine Mountain Settlement School

Wed., June 5, through Sun., June 9, "In the Footsteps of Lucy Braun" Forest Study Workshop—The four-day workshop will combine field trips, lectures and slide presentations in the study of forest types found in Eastern Kentucky. Participants will also see the effects of coal mining, logging and gas well drilling on the area's forests. Cost: \$350, includes meals, lodging and all programs. For more information go to www.pinemountainsettlementschool.com.

Bernheim Forest

Wed., June 5, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. "Gardening for Butterflies"—Join Bernheim's Certified Interpretive Guide and Volunteer Naturalist for this exploration of gardening for the flying jewels of summer. Dress for time outdoors. This is an O.W.L.S. program (Older Wiser Livelier Seniors.) Cost: \$5 members, \$10 non-members. Call **(502) 955-8512** for more information.

Shaker Village

Sat., June 8, 10 a.m. "Native Habitat"—Learn to develop a native habitat in your own backyard.

Sat., June 15, 10 a.m. "Planting a Butterfly Garden"—Learn how to design a garden of flowers and shrubs that will attract butterflies of all kinds to your backyard. (Learn and Grow Saturdays, 10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., included in regular admission.)

Floracliff Nature Sanctuary

Fri., June 28, and Sat., June 29, Ferns Workshop—Rob Paratley, curator of the UK herbarium and teacher in the Department of Forestry, will explore the history of ferns, their life cycles and their ecology. Field trips to Natural Bridge and one other location. Cost \$50. For more information go to: <http://www.floracliff.org/fieldstudies.html> or call **859-351-7770**.

The Secret Charm of the Yellowwood

By Ann Bove



Lovely spring blossom clusters on yellowwood captured by naturallandscapesnursery.com/.

"Rare and refined" is how Nancy Hugo and Jeff Kirwan describe the yellowwood tree (*Cladrastis kentukea*) in their book "Remarkable Trees of Virginia." This tree has many characteristics to recommend it: lovely foliage—clusters of fragrant white, wisteria-like blooms in May and golden leaves in fall; smooth grey beech-like bark that is handsome in a winter setting; and very few pests and diseases. It can withstand urban settings, likes full sun and is attractive to birds. Its deep taproot helps make the tree drought resistant and allows for plantings around its base.

Add that the yellowwood is slow growing, reaching only 40 feet at maturity, and you have a wonderful tree for the smaller city lot.

And yet, it isn't planted very often. Perhaps this is because it is slow to mature and usually doesn't bloom until it is 8 to 10 years old. These qualities make yellowwood less likely to be propagated in the nursery trade. It can be an inconsistent bloomer as well, flowering every couple of years. But when it does bloom, it is spectacular!

Yellowwood requires pruning by a knowledgeable arborist to ensure good structure. If it is properly cared for, it will be a beautiful tree for years to come.

Yellowwood is native from North Carolina to Kentucky but not commonly found anywhere. It gets its name from the yellow color of its heartwood.