Wild Ones®
NATIVE PLANTS, NATURAL LANDSCAPES

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LEXINGTON CHAPTER — August, 2014

http://lexington.wildones.org

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** 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@twc.com.**

President's Message…

Bees appear to be guarding swamp milkweed clusters.

At the beginning of August, the summer heat has been with us for a while and so have the spells of dry weather characteristic of this season in eastern North America. Periods of drought always make me question what I like to preach: we should garden with native plants since they are adapted to our climate and, for that reason, will fare better in our gardens than plants from other continents. They live through our wet winters and springs without drowning or rotting in the ground and yet they also survive our dry summers and autumns.

What exactly does it mean for a plant to "survive" the dry spells of a hot summer? When the leaves of my garden phlox have drooped for a few days, I find it hard not to help it out with a drink from the hose, for I know that without water the phlox will fail to flower well and may not flower at all. Having planted swamp milkweed and lobelia, I have committed myself to watering them, since these plants require the constant moisture of a natural wetland. And where, in suburbia, is there a natural wetland? The moist areas in our gardens are created by run-off from roofs and pavement and they dry up like all other ground when the rains end. Even our rain gardens with their moisture-loving plants must be watered, as we learned after the first flush of rain garden enthusiasm settled down to rain garden reality.

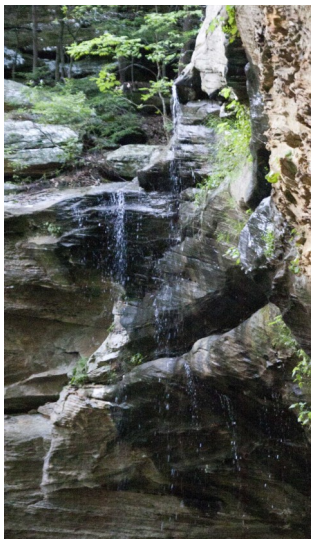
At least one native plant gardener told me that she never waters her plants once they are established. Since they live through Kentucky weather in their natural environment they should do the same in her garden. In nature, of course, non-wetland plants are likely to survive droughts. Even if individual plants die, the seedbank they have established in previous years will assure their reestablishment when the rains return. And in nature, nobody cares what they look like as they droop and linger and perhaps die. In nature nobody even cares whether they produce flowers for nectaring insects. But once we have made a garden, most of us want our plants to look lush and beautiful, and we native plant gardeners certainly care that they should be capable of feeding our pollinating insects. So, most of us water during dry spells.

Beate Popkin

Another Hidden Gem: Anglin Falls

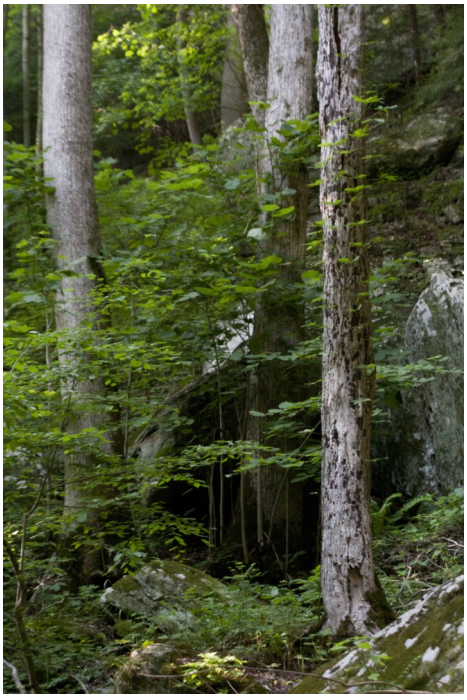
Article and photos by Karen Lanier

When I think of Anglin Falls, I think of the word "angelic". On my first visit two summers ago it seemed as if I had found a secret sanctuary. It refreshed me like an oasis on a hot, humid summer day and I left feeling like I'd been to the ocean. All it took was a tiny trickle of water over a stone bluff and the late-day golden light filtering through layers of air-purifying leaves. After that, on hot days when I was stuck in city traffic, my mind would drift back to Anglin Falls Nature Preserve.



The cooling waters of Anglin Falls

I returned this summer expecting to feel less inspired as these types of events are rarely replicated. Indeed, the circumstances were different—this time there were more people on the trail, less heat to escape from and no tumbling waterfall. But the sanctuary still held a vibrancy that recharged my batteries. As I explored this time, the expectation of magic around each turn of the trail kept me hushed and buoyant as I paused to photograph and identify plants in quiet wonder.

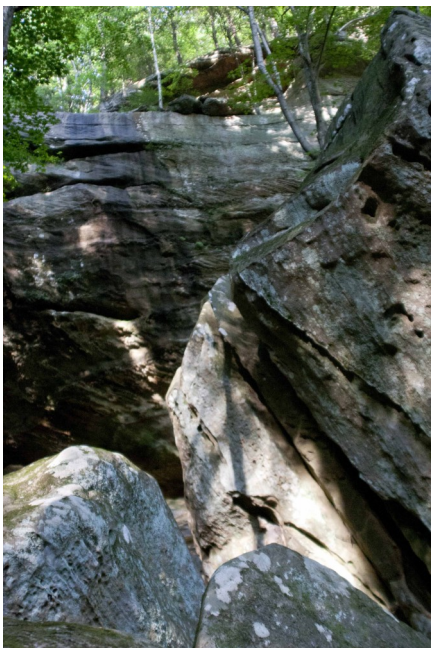


Tall but sturdy hardwoods contrast with slender saplings.

The trailhead isn't easy to find so beginning a hike is a bit of a challenge in itself. For good directions, see the map and brochure found at **http://naturepreserves.ky.gov/naturepreserves/Pages/jbstephenson.aspx**. Anglin Falls is the highlighted feature of the John B. Stephenson Memorial Forest State Nature Preserve. It's a long name for a short trail, just about one mile in its entirety. If there has been a good rain, the ephemeral waterfall pours down a 75-foot drop and on any day the forest itself offers many treasures among its 450 species of native plants.

Along the first section of trail thin beech trees intersperse many fallen logs, but as you continue walking the trees grow heartier and shrubs and ground cover fill in gaps. You feel as though you are striding through floating clouds of ground cedar, wild ginger and jewel weed, while umbrellas of magnolia, paw paw and spicebush hover overhead. All this greenery thrives beneath a sky seemingly braced up by thick pillars of tulip poplar, ironwood, oaks and hickories.

Ecological shifts continue to make the trail more interesting as boulders increase and cliffs appear. Cool stony resting spots await you at the end of the trail where Anglin Creek tumbles, or dribbles, over the waterfall. Whether the day is damp or dry, the temperature drops dramatically under ledges that harbor a wide variety of beautiful spiders.



Jumble of large rocks and boulders contrasts with greenery.

Anglin Falls Nature Preserve is an inviting place for kids to explore. One should be cautious around spiders and stinging nettle but, otherwise, it's a natural playground, full of possibilities for childish –or childlike– imaginations.

Both true and false Solomon's seal can be found coexisting happily.

A lush carpet of ground cedar contrasts with trees and shrubs.

Consider Greens to Beat the Winter Blahs

By Ann Bowe

Evergreens make native plant garden design a little easier. They take up space in a solid way, forming a backdrop for other plants. They hold that space all winter, hiding unattractive spots, offering privacy, and providing color when all else is leafless. Evergreen shrubs have a defined form, too, so when everything else is wild and wonderful, these plants give structure and form to our gardens. Evergreens also provide winter shelter to wildlife and some even offer food in the way of berries. Adding a few to our gardens enhances interest and supports wildlife.

The goal of this article is to give you a few resources and several possibilities. The research job is yours! Here are three excellent sites that will make your learning easier:

plants.ces.ncsu.edu

missouribotanicalgarden.org/plantfinder/plantfindersearch.aspx

hort.uconn.edu/list.php#top

American arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*): I have long wondered where the name arborvitae, or "tree of life," originated. It seems that early French settlers learned from Native Americans that the foliage could be used to treat scurvy. There are a number of cultivars you might consider depending upon the form and height you want. 'Green Giant', 'Emerald Green', 'DeGroot's Spire' are upright forms. 'Mr. Bowling Ball' and 'Tiny Tim' are round, a shape that adds a formal touch to the garden.

Eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*): The species can grow very wide but there are numerous narrow cultivars to consider. 'Burkii', 'Canaertii', 'Emerald Sentinel', and 'Glauca' are good examples. Check out 'Blue Arrow' and 'Taylor' for slim, columnar versions. 'Grey Owl' is an attractive shrub form.

Common juniper (*Juniperus communis)*: The oil distilled from the fleshy cones ("berries") is used for flavoring gin. Dr. Michael Dirr, author of the well known *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*, advises the reader to steer clear of common juniper, saying it cannot compete with *J. virginiana* in the garden.

American holly (*Ilex opaca*): The female requires a male pollinator in order to produce berries.

Rhododendron: Our native rhodos are gorgeous! *Rhododendron maximum* and *R. catabiense* offer many cultivars. The American Rhododendron Society website gives good information on planting and caring for these shrubs.

Southern magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*): 'Bracken's Brown Beauty' is a recommended cultivar if you seek the look of the Southern magnolia without the size. While 'Little Gem' is readily available here, it is not reliably winter hardy in our zone 6 location.

Canadian (Eastern) hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*): There are many forms available, including prostrate, globose, mounded, weeping and columnar. This is a wonderful tree for shady locations.

All of the above attractive evergreens are native to Kentucky. If you choose to expand your search to native to the United States, you can look at Yaupon holly (*Ilex vomitoria*), inkberry holly (*Ilex glabra*), creeping juniper (*Juniperus horizontalis*), various species of spruce (*Picea*), and osmanthus (*Osmanthus americanus*).

Mr. Bowling Ball arborvitae

Grey Owl juniper

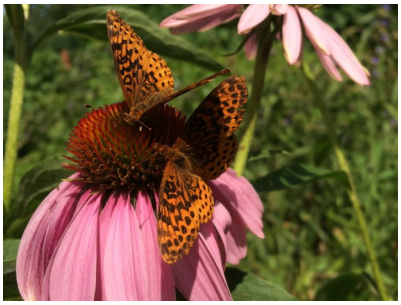
Bracken's Brown Beauty magnolia

Dr. Dave Svetich identifying plants that are attractive to butterflies.

Wild Ones Spend a Morning with Butterflies

By Beverly James

On Sunday, June 6th, twenty-five butterfly enthusiasts met at Dr. Dave Svetich's to participate in his annual butterfly count. Yearly butterfly counts are valuable for monitoring changes in butterfly populations and understanding the effects of weather, climate change, and habitat alterations on them. On this particular day we did not see a large number of butterflies, which Dr. Svetich theorized could be due to the harsh winter we all endured. Online resources echoed this sentiment and pointed to additional factors such as insecticide use and habitat loss affecting populations throughout the country.



Meadow fritillaries feeding on coneflower

Despite low butterfly numbers, there were still enough to keep us busy with field guides. A large blooming bottlebrush bush was a butterfly magnet that elicited a number of oohs, aahs, and comments such as, "I want that in my yard!" Our group spent some time gathered around the shrub identifying red-spotted purples, red admirals, question marks, great-spangled fritillaries, pipevine swallowtails, silver-spotted skippers, and eight-spotted foresters, a diurnal moth that often is mistaken for a butterfly. Meadow fritillaries were perhaps the most numerous butterflies of the day. By the end of the event, I felt more confident about distinguishing them from other fritillaries. Taking photos helped tremendously!

Between butterfly sightings, Dr. Svetich gave an informative tour around his garden, pointing out host plants such as common milkweed, violets, black cherry, and ironwood. Caterpillars observed during the tour were milkweed tussocks and catalpa sphinxes, both found on their namesake host plants. We enjoyed the opportunity to see many native plants not commonly used in gardens including northern and southern bush honeysuckles, moonseed, leatherwood, and vasevine.

Mary Carol Cooper and Hannah Helm consult field guide.

This *Wild Ones* event highlighted a few things we can all do to monitor and foster butterfly populations. First, provide insect-friendly habitats. Grow a variety of host plants and nectar plants to support a variety of *Lepidoptera*. If space is limited, target plants that support a high number of species or declining species, such as oaks and milkweeds. Finally, make observations by photographing and/or identifying butterflies and submit the information online. Two great websites for data contribution on butterflies are the North American Butterfly Association, **http://www.naba.org/**, and Butterflies and Moths of North America, **http://www.butterfliesandmoths.org/**. You can enter sightings any time of year and you can just submit photos if you are unsure about identification.

Don't Miss the *Wild Ones* Annual Picnic

- **7 p.m. Thursday, August 7th**
- **The UK Arboretum (picnic tables near parking lot)**
- **Water provided; bring dish to share**
- **Bring your own reusable plate, cup, fork and napkin (as little litter as possible) as well as portable chair**

Special Guest

Molly Davis, Lexington landscape architect by background and now the new Director of the UK Arboretum, will join us. Come meet her, connect with friends and eat good food.

Magical Mystical Ginseng

By Deborah Holloway

American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) is a slow growing, long lived understory plant native to the deciduous forests of Canada and the eastern United States, which include the Appalachian region of Kentucky. Native Americans as well as early colonists used the roots medicinally. It was one of the earliest American exports to China and is still highly valued in Asian cultures where it is thought to increase energy, help fight certain diseases, nourish a sense of well-being, and cure impotence in men.

Ginseng was abundant in earlier times, however, it has dramatically declined throughout much of its range due to habitat loss, over harvesting, browsing by deer and competition from invasive species. There are guidelines in many states in its native range for growing, harvesting, and selling the root. In Kentucky, the plants have to be at least five years old and must be harvested between September 1 and December 1. Ginseng can only be sold through dealers licensed by the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

How can you tell how old a plant is? A seedling has a single compound leaf, called a prong. Juvenile plants have two prongs and adult plants have three to four prongs, rarely more. Age can also be determined by counting the stem scars on the rhizome. Each year of growth adds a stem scar when the leaf stem dies back in the autumn. A five year old plant will have four stem scars.

Ginseng takes three to eight years to reach sexual maturity, producing a single cluster of flowers in early spring. Fertilized flowers develop green berries that turn red at maturity. Any berries harvested must be planted within 50 feet of the plant that produced them using no tools, just fingers.

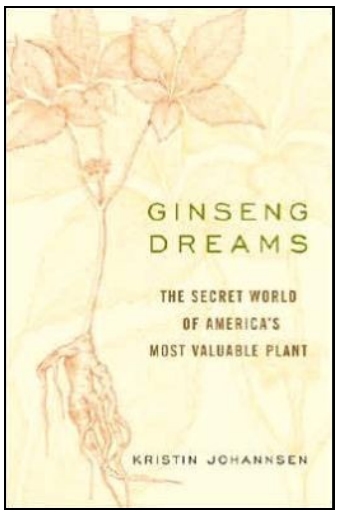
Ncagr.gov photo of ginseng

Cultivation is a way to meet market demand without endangering or reducing native wild populations. Wild-simulated ginseng is grown in untilled soil in a favorable forest location. Minimal human interventions is required – just push the seeds into the soil, cover with leaf litter, and wait. Woods-grown ginseng is produced in tilled beds under the

Continued next column.

Ginseng cont'd from column 1.

shade of hardwood trees. Maintenance can include pesticide applications. Cultivated ginseng is grown in raised beds in an open area, with artificial shade provided by wooden lath or shade cloth. Fertilizers and pesticides are used. However, true wild ginseng is organic, looks different from cultivated, and is more valuable.



Local author Kristen Johannsen has written a wonderful book titled— *Ginseng Dreams: The Secret World of America's Most Valuable Plant*. Highly recommended read!

August Calendar

Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest

All registrations must be paid by 4 p.m. of day prior to event. For information call 502-955-8512.

Wed., August 6 from 10:30 a.m. to 12 noon—Life in the Prairie. Bernheim's Big Prairie is a rich biological community and a haven for wildlife. Volunteer Naturalist Corinne Nasty will lead an investigation of some of the plants and animals that are a part of this diverse ecosystem. **Members $5; non-members $10.**

KY Association of Environmental Education

Fri. and Sat., September 12 and 13—Annual Conference at the Clarion Hotel. Early bird registration due by **August 15.** More details at **kaee.org/conference/registration/.**

Raven Run Nature Sanctuary

Sat., August 16 at 9:00 p.m.—Voices in the Night. FREE.

Sat., August 23 at 9:00 p.m.—Stargazing. FREE.

For information on both programs and to register, call **859-272-6105.**

UK Arboretum

Thurs., August 21 from 12:15 to 1:30 p.m.—Urban Forests to Improve Water Quality, Part I: Ecosystem Service. Using the Arboretum Woods as a living example, Todd Rounsaville will lead this workshop to address benefits our urban trees provide in reducing sedimentation and stream bank erosion and improving water quality, with a focus on the threats to forest health from invasive organisms. **FREE.** Pre-registration is required for classes. Call **859-257-6955**.