

LEXINGTON CHAPTER — October, 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@twc.com.

President's Message...

“In autumn you put your garden to sleep,” a former neighbor of mine used to say. And so we did. We cut down flower stalks, those that were definitely dead and those that were still in the process of making seeds, and we raked leaves out of our beds. We also added a bit of hardwood mulch to barren spots of ground. We wanted our gardens to look neat through the bleak winter and ready to show off our tulips and daffodils in early spring. For nothing makes a garden appear untended more than a bunch of cheerful spring bulbs struggling through dead stalks to make themselves appreciated as the harbingers of spring.

For the native gardener, this fall cleanup ritual poses a dilemma. We garden not just for our visual pleasure, but we also want to create places where nonhuman creatures can live and reproduce. The winter birds may need those seeds that I so casually used to bury in my compost. When they start breeding in early spring, they are in dire need of the larvae that might have hatched from eggs gone to the big city compost together with the leaf litter that was meant to protect them. Ground bees, anxious to see the early spring sun, may fail to emerge through the hardwood mulch that I put down in fall.

There are almost certainly butterflies, moths and skippers that overwinter in our gardens as pupae so carefully camouflaged that we won't spot them as we busily work with our clippers. It's one thing to admire the chrysalis of a spicebush swallowtail, pictured above in its transparent cage and formed from a caterpillar that got fattened up on a diet of leaves I conscientiously provided. But it's another thing altogether to spot that same chrysalis in nature.

The argument may be made—and some native gardeners do make it—that winter debris is an element of nature's regenerative power and should be left to fall and rot as nature decrees. This approach protects habitat, to be sure, but it puts a garden outside of the aesthetic goals that guide landscape practices in our communities. Most of us would like to draw our neighbors and friends into our vision of the natural garden. If we are to succeed at spreading the word, it seems that we cannot radically offend their sense of beauty and order. Nowadays I keep the leaves in my beds for winter mulch and I cut down the dead-flower stalks when they begin to look truly ugly and lay them out loosely in my compost area, just in case someone is hidden in there ready to hatch in spring. Then in early summer, it all goes on the compost. Okay, it's a bit more work, but then I have always thought the idea of a low maintenance garden is someone else's grandiose illusion.



Spicebush swallowtail chrysalis

Beate Popkin

Monarchs Rule!

By Linda Porter

Angels among Us

By Deborah Holloway

Ann Longworth is a *Wild Ones* angel. She and her mother Jean have been gardening with native plants in and around Berea for years. In addition, they have been selflessly helping to spread the word—and the plants—all around!

Ann recently planted some milkweed seed. She did not really think they would take hold, but they did. She soon had 500 plants and no idea what to do with so many. And then she thought, why a sale, of course! She sold 350 at one go and donated the profits to Monarch Watch. How wonderful is that?

She also discovered the very rare *Gentiana flavida*, or cream gentian, on her property. Using her plants, the biologists from Berea College who identified them are now doing a study on how and why these flowers are disappearing from our area.

Speaking of Berea College, I learned from Ann and Jean that there is soon to be a monarch waystation on the school's campus which is already a showcase for our Kentucky wildflowers.

I really enjoyed visiting Jean's streetside monarch garden (and certified waystation) as well as her streamside back garden just behind what was the old Berea Hotel. Jean and her late husband bought and refurbished that building 15 years ago.



Ann, on the right, and her mother Jean with their official monarch waystation signs.

Please note—

Ann is having another milkweed sale, along with an exhibit of the monarch butterfly's life cycle, in Berea.

Sat., Oct. 5th
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For more information, call **859-302-2069**.

CHECK THIS OUT!

Monarch Watch

Registry of Certified Monarch Waystations



Worldwide 6883
(September, 2013)



Missouri 154
Ohio 393
Tennessee 98
Indiana 267



Kentucky 85

*Surrounding areas =
6 Waystations
Paris, Versailles,
Nicholasville, Winchester

Louisville 9
Frankfort 5
Lexington and
***Surrounding**
Communities 27
Other Nearby 22
Communities

HELP US REACH 100!

A Few Facts about Monarch Migrations

By Deborah Holloway

An interesting aspect of monarchs is the variation in their migratory patterns. Here in Kentucky a lot of us know about the “eastern monarchs,” a population that travels from Canada and the United States to the Mexican state of Michoacan for the winter. There are also the “western monarchs,” a group that moves back and forth from the warm west coast of California to the colder Sierras in the eastern part of the state. A much shorter journey—which hardly seems fair!

Some amazing facts about the eastern monarchs—they gather from many areas to form a single stream as they travel down over the midsouth states and on through central Texas. No single butterfly can make the long journey and, therefore, multiple generations form a relay. The butterflies actually cover between 50 and 100 miles per day. It isn't yet known exactly how they find their course or how they locate the particular mountains in Mexico that are their destination.

For more information, here are a few excellent sources: Monarchwatch.org is the ultimate source of information. Google Earth has a *Migration Tour* you can watch and Journey North has interactive maps where you can report your sightings. The DVD called “Monarch Butterflies and Violins,” is a movie filmed at the butterfly sanctuary in Mexico.

Before Butterflies Fly

By Victoria Ligenza

Thursday evening, September 5, members of *Wild Ones* descended on Floracliff for a wonderful evening of hunting for caterpillars and their chrysalises.

Jennie Condra and Janet Lensing of the UK department of Entomology, along with Beverly James from Floracliff, led the group. Everyone was pleasantly surprised by the number of caterpillars spotted.

Floracliff has a butterfly garden and many chrysalises were found even on the buildings' eaves and railings. Displays inside the center provided an opportunity to study live specimens in their natural habitats.

The evening was truly an educational experience for all.



Dave Leonard with Janet Lensing (center) and Jennie Condra (right) from UK.

Photo by Vicki Ligenza

Certified Monarch Waystations

Wild Ones members with Monarch Watch certified gardens:

Ann Blevins	Dave Leonard
Ann Bowe	Victoria Ligenza
Ronda Carter	Ann Longsworth
Susan Cohn	Connie May
Oscar and Frankie Gerards	Josie Miller and Nathan Skinner
Betty Hall	Peggy Moody
Jean Horrar	Beate Popkin
Caroline Johnson	Linda and Jim Porter
Judy and Skip Johnson	Barbara Stemberger
Joanna Kirby	Steve Swift
Diane Leggett	Richard Weber-Springhouse Gardens

Wild Ones friends with Monarch Watch certified gardens:

Tom and Betty Adler
Jannine Baker
Susan Jonas
Sue Kirkman
Cheri Kuhn
Tamara Sanderson

Please note that some sites may have been certified after publication or listed under another name. Several of our members were involved with the creation of public gardens that have been certified. These also are not included in this listing.

Save Seeds and Celebrate Butterflies

The next meeting of the *Wild Ones* is scheduled for **Thursday, October 3**, at St. Michael's Episcopal Church, 2055 Bellefonte Drive. The instructional portion will focus on seed collection and propagation. Please join us at **6:30 p.m.** in the lower parking lot where Connie May, botanist, native landscaper and owner of Chrysalis Designs, will teach us how to collect, clean and store seeds; how to sow seeds and grow seedlings; and how to dig and divide native plants.

We will move inside the church promptly at **7:30 p.m.** to acknowledge those members who have created monarch waystations, received official certification through Monarch Watch and reported their certification to Doug Rigsby.

With her presentation on April 4, Betty Hall inspired our group to respond to the precipitous decline of monarch butterflies by creating waystations in our gardens. She suggested we celebrate our efforts at the end of summer by awarding prizes to waystation registrants, based on a drawing, and donated her honorarium to the purchase of those prizes. More than 30 waystations have been registered with us, thanks to her efforts.

Registration is still open until October 2. If you have not registered your waystation with us, email the certificate number to Doug at drigsby@gmail.com.

As always, our meeting will conclude with refreshments and social time.

AREA CALENDAR FOR OCTOBER

Bernheim Arboretum

Fri., Oct. 18 from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.—Full “Falling Leaves” Moon Night Hike—Short, brisk outdoor adventure combining night ecology, moon lore, history and nature's magic. Members \$10; non-members \$12. Register by 4 p.m. the day before. Call **502-955-8512** for more information.

Floracliff Nature Sanctuary

Sat., Oct. 12, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.—Venerable Trees: Lives of Ancient Trees in the KY Bluegrass—Workshop led by instructors Dr. Tom Kimmerer and Beverly James. Participants will visit several areas around Lexington with hiking rated moderate to difficult. Cost \$30. Go to <http://www.floracliff.org/events.html> for more information.

Food Forest: Garden Outside the Box

By Karen Lanier



Wintercreeper, tree of heaven and bush honeysuckle needed to be removed from property.

The problem often leads to the solution. This concept is shaping a new garden space featuring permaculture design and native plants in the West End area of Lexington. *Wild Ones* member Ann McCarthy and *Seedleaf* hope to turn what was considered a blighted urban lot into a self-sustaining food forest...and volunteers are invited to contribute time and ideas.

Seedleaf is a grassroots volunteer-driven nonprofit organization with a mission to nourish communities through growing, cooking, sharing, and recycling food. It is *Seedleaf's* ultimate aim to increase the amount, affordability, nutritional value, and sustainability of food available to people at risk of hunger in central Kentucky— all without owning any property.

That was until 2013. This year, the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government offered five lots where houses had been demolished to several nonprofits. *Seedleaf* accepted the gift of the five lots.

Ann McCarthy volunteered to lead the redesign of one site located at 330 Georgetown Place. Ann has studied permaculture for the past five years and sees this as an opportunity to practice what she has been learning. The shady, narrow lot measures 25 by 80 feet and presents some characteristics that most vegetable gardeners would find challenging. For native plant enthusiasts, however, the space sparks the imagination. Southern exposure on the long side of the lot, well-established sugar maples and good, old soil are the starting points.

The goal is to grow perennials, herbs or self-seeding annuals and to use no-till practices. The future of this small urban space could include layers of nut trees, berries, leafy greens, medicinal herbs and plenty of native flowers to attract and feed pollinators. Mushrooms should grow well in the shadier corners. If you need a place to try out what you learn at the November meeting's mushroom cultivation workshop, you may want to join this project.

Care of the earth, care of the people and return of surplus to the system are three basic permaculture principles that have already been applied to this site. Ann, her husband Jim and a few energetic volunteers have removed invasive species. Arborists cut down selected trees and left them on site with the surplus of larger stumps arranged to provide seating in a space called the Harmony Circle. Trees left standing provide shade for workers on hot days. Poison ivy has been removed to make the space even more welcoming, especially to children. Ann hopes the future food forest will be a place “anyone with completely no knowledge can walk in and know it's safe to nibble.”

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Community support and involvement are slowly gaining momentum. Members of Gethsemane Baptist Church and neighborhood children have been giving input as to what they would like to see growing there, like strawberries! As a long-time gardener and child of what she says were “organic gardening radicals back in the ‘50’s”, Ann is very selectively choosing plants. Ann is also *Wild Ones'* webmaster (see wildones.org/chapters/lexington/) and her tech savvy has helped in organizing volunteers via Facebook. Anyone interested in using native plants, permaculture design, and growing food can join the Facebook group called *330 GTP Food Forest*. *Seedleaf* will also host design meetings on **Tuesdays, Oct. 8, 15, 22, and 29**. Join the group at 6:00 p.m. at 330 Georgetown Place to help grow this food forest and take gardening outside the box.



Ann and Jim McCarthy take a break in the Harmony Circle.

Bees—the New Silent Spring

By Victoria Ligenza



Across the United States there has been a drastic die off of the honey bee population. This event will have dire consequences as approximately a third of our food crops are pollinated by bees and won't produce without them. The hard work of the bees increases the value of our food crops by \$15 billion a year. To lose the service of these bees would be a financial disaster for everyone. Last winter beekeepers in the U.S. reported losing between 40 and 90 % of their hives.

Beekeepers began noticing that honeybees were disappearing from their hives back in 2006. This phenomenon has been given the name colony collapse disorder. Research into possible causes points to several things ranging from mites to weather conditions to chemicals in the environment.

A new insecticide was introduced in the 1990s called neonicotinoid and the disappearance of bee colonies began to accelerate in the U.S. after the EPA allowed temporary registration of some neonics beginning in 2003. Today nearly 300 registered products containing a neonic are available. The neonics are systemic insecticides, that is, every part of a plant treated with them passes the insecticidal effect on to the organism that comes into contact with that plant. Not only are these products sprayed on crops but they are often used to pretreat seeds with the effect that the plants growing from these seeds are toxic to insects. Almost all genetically engineered Bt corn (corn that expresses insecticidal proteins from the bacteria *bacillus thuringiensis*) grown in the U.S. is treated with a neonicotinoid product. This is a double “whammy” for the bees as they are ingesting two products that react in the stomach. Neonics work by interfering with an insect's nervous system on contact and Bt corn proteins work by entering the insect's stomach and causing it to burst.

Two reported incidents are known to involve products containing neonics. In the first, on June 19 of this year 50,000 bumblebees were found dead in a Target parking lot in Portland, Oregon, when nearby trees were sprayed while bees were present. This was contrary to directions for product use. In the second incident, on July 1 an estimated 30 million bees were found dead in Ontario, Canada. Their deaths were thought to be linked to dust from neonicotinoid treated corn seeds being planted nearby.

Causes of bee deaths and disappearances are still under investigation. This investigation is often problematic because sick bees will sacrifice themselves by leaving the hive to avoid infecting the other bees. With no dead bodies to analyze it is more difficult to find the cause.

What can we do to help the bees?

- ◆ Make sure the flowers you are planting are neonicotinoid-free. A recent investigation by the Pesticide Research Institute found 7 out of 13 garden plants purchased from retailers contained neurotoxic pesticides. This included vegetable plants as well as flowering plants sold as “Bee Friendly” plants. Email the company headquarters of bigger stores whose plants you buy and communicate your concerns about the possibility of harmful pesticides having been used on plants you generally purchase. Ask their policy for suppliers' use of pesticides. The only way to bring about change is for enough people to express their concern.
- ◆ Keeping in mind we strive to be native plant gardeners, avoid using commercial pesticides.
- ◆ Plant more bee-friendly native plant gardens and keep them pesticide-free. Due to loss of habitat for the bees many beekeepers have started to provide supplemental feed for their bees. This increases their costs and is not ideal for the bees. Since bees can travel up to five miles looking for nectar, the flowers you plant can be helping beekeepers miles away.
- ◆ An interesting movie to watch for free online is “Silence of the Bees.” It can be found at http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=cU9ZunVI3o.