

LEXINGTON CHAPTER — October 2015

<http://lexington.wildones.org>

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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 <http://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 judydex@twc.com.

President's Message...

In the past, as my garden moved into fall, I have often been delighted with the purple-gold color combinations that occur when asters and goldenrods bloom in close proximity. For several years, a New England aster competed for attention with a rough-leaved goldenrod, each seemingly unaware of how handsomely they complemented each other.

This year, I am more enchanted with the eupatoriums. Of course, it is easy to like the various Joe Pye weeds for their regal stature or a mistflower for its soft bluish lavender hues. But it seems to me that the white-flowering thoroughworts also deserve attention.

Boneset is a beautiful plant with its large fleshy looking deeply veined leaves. It wants to be in a bit of a moist spot, but when that condition is met, it will be a stately presence in the late summer garden. Hyssop-leaved thoroughwort gets a rather luke-warm endorsement from William Cullina in his much acclaimed *Growing and Propagating Wildflowers of the United States and Canada*. He likes its “fine texture and small stature” but goes on to say that “it is no show-stopper and looks a bit muddy when the inflorescences brown after flowering.” In my garden it was planted, by sheer serendipity, next to a clump of black-eyed susans, which results every summer in a most pleasing vignette. And when have we ever held the aesthetic aspects of a plant's seed production against it?



Hyssop-leaved thoroughwort provides backdrop for black-eyed susans in Wild Ones garden.

The flowers of tall thoroughwort (*Eupatorium altissimum*) are very similar to those of *Eupatorium hyssopifolium*, but it is three times the latter's height. Perhaps these are not plants for the small garden, but the three clumps in our *Wild Ones* garden at Wellington Park have been a great hit. They have attracted large numbers of pollinators as well as many curious park visitors. The clumps form the background to our sign that explains the function of a pollinator garden. *Eupatorium altissimum* is ideally suited to illustrate the purpose of our garden, since it has always been a-buzz with bees and every imaginable pollinating insect.

Beate Popkin

KNPS Symposium Is a Bargain

By Beate Popkin

This fall, the Lexington chapter of *Wild Ones* is co-sponsoring the Kentucky Native Plant Society's **Second Botanical Symposium: Conservation, Restoration and Landscape in the Bluegrass**. The first Symposium took place in the fall of 2014 at Bernheim Arboretum and gave professionals who work with Kentucky native plants an opportunity to share their experiences and research results. The Second Symposium aims to bring together those who do restoration work or research in the natural areas of our Bluegrass region, and those of us who try to integrate the flora and fauna of that region into our urban environment.

This year's Symposium takes place in Lexington on **Friday, October 9 and Saturday, October 10**. On Friday, conference participants meet at the E.S. Goodbarn off Cooper Drive for presentations by researchers and land managers who work with native plants, combat invasives, and restore habitat in the Bluegrass. The Saturday meeting takes place at the Lexington Arboretum during the morning. Participants can choose between concurrent sessions that highlight different habitats like woodland or prairie, or different plants like trees, shrubs, grasses and forbs. The emphasis will be on the adaptation of habitats and plants to a residential, commercial or public landscape. On Saturday afternoon conference participants may join a field trip to native plant restoration sites in Fayette County.

Among the highlights of the Symposium is the presentation by Friday's keynote speaker, **Jennifer Ceska**, Conservation Coordinator at the State Botanical Garden of Georgia. Ms. Ceska is a co-organizer of the Georgia Plant Conservation Alliance, one of the best-integrated conservation programs in the country. Established in 1995 by three botanical gardens, GPCA now comprises 36 gardens, organizations, universities and agencies that work toward plant conservation in Georgia on many different levels, engaging both professionals and the general public with the native plants of Georgia.



Plant biologist Dr. Jennifer Ceska

The Symposium starts at 8:30 a.m. at the Goodbarn on Friday and at 9:00 a.m. at the Arboretum on Saturday. The conference fee is \$25 which includes lunch on Friday and membership in the Kentucky Native Plant Society. Payment will be made on Friday morning at the start of the conference, but pre-registration is encouraged. Participation on Saturday only is free. More information is available on our Lexington chapter website www.lexington.wildones.org and an on-line registration form is available through the Kentucky Native Plant Society website www.knps.org.

PLANT PUZZLE

By Deborah Holloway



I am native to much of eastern North America. I vary in color from white to red, purple to pink, mostly pink. My common name can bring to mind a certain fellow known for his lack of speed.

You may notice me in gardens at this time of year. I grow quickly to 2 feet and can spread just as far. I like dappled shade- and if you have a place in your garden that is poorly drained, I won't mind that at all! I play well with others, especially in the middle of a perennial border. I look nice next to other natives such as coral bells, golden alexander and lobelia.

Bees visit me often and my white variety is perfect for the Baltimore Checkerspot butterfly seen here.

Can you guess who I am? Answer is on page 3. Extra credit if you know my Latin name!



Baltimore Checkerspot butterfly

Who Weaves a Tangled Web?

By Karen Lanier

Have you seen the spooky drifts of webs that cover portions of familiar trees? What are they and should you be concerned? What is the web hiding? What kind of creepy crawlly is behind the ghostly costume?

The two most likely culprits are the commonly confused webworm and the tent caterpillar. Let's compare and contrast the two. Both are moths with their larval phase being hungry caterpillars that eat leaves of trees and excrete a silky web. That's where their similarities end.

Eastern tent caterpillars (*Malacosoma americanum*) get their common name from the webs they weave as soon as the young emerge from eggs in the crotch of a tree, spanning any expanse formed by trunk and branches. This is basically their daytime hangout. They venture out to eat leaves at night and return to the refuge of the tent during the day. They prefer host trees in the Rosaceae family such as apple, crabapple, plum, cherry, hawthorn, and sometimes poplar, willow, ash and birch.



(Spring) Eastern tent caterpillar

You don't see much action from tent caterpillars this time of year. The eggs, which the adult moths deposit in bundles on twigs, hatch in the spring just after buds open. The young caterpillars consume new leaves early on, which can be more damaging to the trees at that sensitive time when their growth is young and sparse.

Fall webworms (*Hyphantria cunea*), as their name implies, are more active in the fall. The caterpillars incorporate all their business into their webs – skeletons of consumed leaves, shed skin and frass (caterpillar feces). As



(Fall) webworm

they eat leaves, they spin more silk around the remains. They feed on over 100 species of deciduous trees and shrubs, preferring cottonwood, choke-cherry, mountain ash, pecan, elm, willow and various fruit and nut trees. Heavy webworm infestations can defoliate trees, but since this is the time of year to be shedding leaves and bringing energy into roots, it is not as harmful as springtime defoliation.



The work of fall webworms spans several branches

Depending on one's perspective, the web weavers could be thought of as good guys or bad guys. Naturalists could simply read an insect guide's description of how the caterpillars live communally in silken tents, eating only leaves, and wasting nothing. They could imagine a happy little utopian society that will ultimately metamorphose into lovely winged creatures. Bird and bat lovers could view tent caterpillars, webworms and their moths as a rich source of food throughout three seasons of the year. Horse lovers, on the other hand, may be concerned that the Eastern tent caterpillar has an even more devastating effect on young foals than on trees. The inadvertent ingestion of caterpillars by horses grazing near black cherry trees has been linked with Mare Reproductive Loss Syndrome. What if you are a naturalist who loves horses as much as birds and bats? As with most problems related to perceived pests, a good solution is more biodiversity to support a self-regulating system of predators and prey.

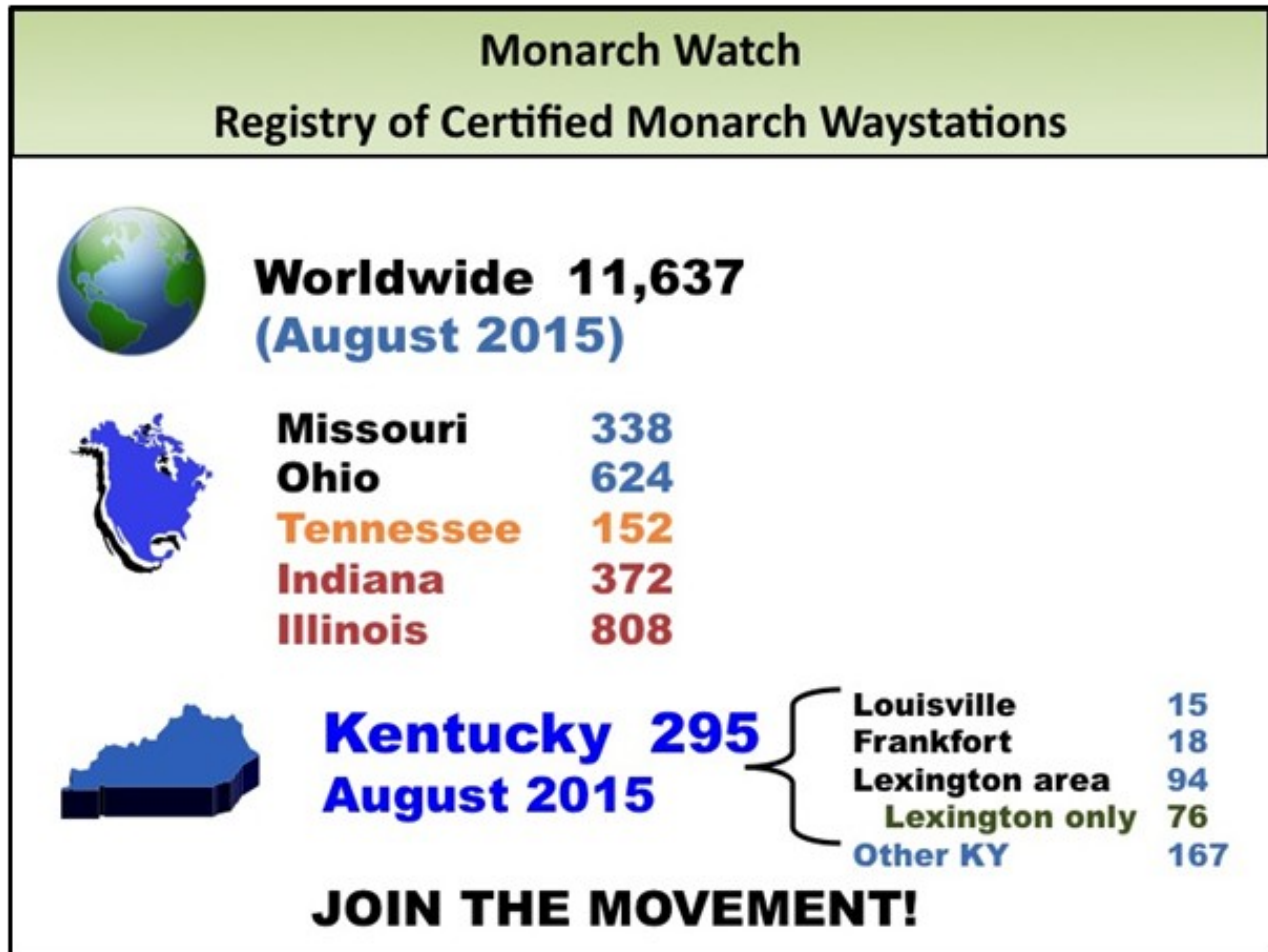


Answer to the Plant Puzzle:

***Chelone obliqua*, commonly known as turtlehead**

Look at the Numbers!

By Linda Porter



Well, the latest numbers are in from Monarch Watch and it is time to pat ourselves on the back. Kentucky is closing in on a total of 300 monarch waystations. As you can see, the Lexington area has the largest percentage of waystations in Kentucky by far.

What does this number of waystations mean? It means that the Super “Fifth” Generation of monarch butterflies, soaring over Kentucky in the fall on their way to their winter roasts in Mexico, will find the plants they need to fuel up on nectar. It means that monarch butterflies flying over Kentucky in the spring and summer will find the milkweed (*Asclepias* sp.) they need for sustaining their caterpillars. It means that Lexington is “on the map” for the monarchs and their offspring. With **733%** more monarch waystations than we had in 2013, we are also officially on the map for everyone studying the monarchs and their migration.

Thanks to everyone who planted a monarch waystation on their property and to everyone who worked with a business or organization to plant and certify a community waystation. You have made a difference. But there is more work to be done.

The call is out now to plant 500 million milkweed plants in the United States heartland over the next 5 years. Scientists predict that 500 million plants will be needed to support the 225 million monarch butterflies that will cover 15 acres of trees in Mexico. Federal agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Department of Agriculture, have pledged to plant milkweed and nectar plants on land they manage, but private landowners must join in if we are to reach this goal. Monarch waystations offer a wonderful way to help.

Look for more information at www.wildones.org/learn/wild-for-monarchs or www.monarchwatch.org.

Insects and Plants, Friends or Foes?

By Ann Bowe

Our September event was titled “Plants and Insects: Nature's Best Friends or the War to End All Wars?” Our speaker, Dr. Josh Adkins, is an entomologist who teaches biology at Transylvania University. His energy and enthusiasm for his topic must be contagious for students!

We learned that there are a lot of critter and plant species in Kentucky. We have at least 15,202 insects, 501 arachnids and 2,030 seed plants and ferns.

These native species have evolved together. This co-evolution is sometimes mutually beneficial and other times what occurs is a “co-evolutionary arms race,” says Dr. Adkins, “with attack followed by counter attack.” Plants develop direct defenses against insect attacks, such as thorns, hairs and toxic chemicals. Various insects will co-evolve to withstand these defenses and then the plant must respond. And on it goes. But, rather than an ongoing sparring match, plants sometimes team up with insects to mutual benefit. For example, parasitoid wasps lay their eggs on certain caterpillars and ladybugs eat aphids. Both the plant and the insects benefit from the arrangement

So now we can understand how a plant or insect becomes invasive. When an insect arrives from another part of the world, it suddenly has no enemies and the native flora and fauna may have no defenses against the intruder. Dr. Adkins calls this an “escape from biotic constraints.” We are now dealing with such problems with the emerald ash borer, the Asian longhorn beetle and the woolly adelgid.

October Calendar



Bernheim Arboretum

Wed., Oct. 7, 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.—Lunch and Learn: Autumn Trees from Top to Bottom at the Canopy Tree Walk—Meet Corinne at the Visitor Center short themed hike followed by lunch at Isaac's Café. \$15 for members; \$20 for non-members. Call **502-955-8512** to register and pay before 4 p.m. on Oct. 6.

Floracliff Nature Sanctuary

Sat., Oct. 24, start time is 11 a.m.—Forest Ecology Hike—Hiking level is moderate to strenuous 2.5 to 3 mi. over steep terrain. Check out some of the oldest documented trees in KY with Preserve Manager Beverly James. Suggested donation is \$5. More information at floracliff.org.

Gardeners' Lecture Series

Sat., Oct. 24 at 10 a.m.—Insider Secrets: Keeping Your Garden Beautiful All Year Long—Tracy DiSabato-Aust, lecture and book signing at Calvary Baptist Church, 150 E. High St. This event is presented by Extension Master Gardeners and UK Friends of the Arboretum. Check page 6 of this publication for details.

KY Native Plant Society 2nd Annual Symposium

Fri., Oct. 9 at E. S. Good Barn and Sat., Oct. 10 at UK Arboretum—Conservation, Restoration, and Landscape in the Bluegrass—More information on page 2 of this issue.

McConnell Springs

Sat., Oct. 9 at 11 a.m.—Guided Hike of the Springs—Join naturalist for hike and discussion of the history of the park and why it is unique. No registration necessary. Park is located inside New Circle off Old Frankfort Pike on McConnell Springs Rd. Follow signs to park.

Raven Run Nature Sanctuary

Sat., Oct. 3 at 1 p.m.—Language of Fall Wildflowers—Come learn about folklore, plant and insect interaction. Call **859-272-6105** to register for the program.

October *Wild Ones* Meeting to Feature Dr. Mary Arthur

The *Wild Ones* meeting on **Thursday, Oct. 1 at 7 p.m.** will host **Dr. Mary Arthur**, Professor of Forest Ecology. She will discuss UK's Urban Forest Initiative whose mission is to advocate for and elevate the function, value and perception of urban forests in the Bluegrass Region, from the UK campus to broader regional communities, by providing a dynamic framework for opportunities to partner across organizational and community boundaries to enhance urban forests.

Dr. Arthur is also chair of the Natural Resources and Environmental Science Steering Committee and co-director of the Greenhouse Living Learning Community.

The meeting will be held at St. Michael's Episcopal Church, 2025 Bellefonte Dr.



Gardeners Lecture Series

Brought to you by:

Fayette County Extension Master Gardeners, Friends of The Arboretum

Saturday, October 24, 2015 10:00 A.M.

Insider Secrets:

Keeping Your Garden Beautiful All Year Long

Tracy DiSabato-Aust

Every spring we are in awe of how gorgeous our gardens look, but then heat, drought or monsoon, weeds, sun and shade take their toll. Hear internationally renowned Tracy DiSabato-Aust provide her exciting and innovative techniques of pruning perennials for season long interest. Learn how to make your perennials flower longer and look their best when not in bloom. Impress your gardening friends with your knowledge about layering a planting, improving the habit, controlling pests or prolonging the life of perennials through cutting-edge pruning. Join us in this discussion that will help both novice and advanced gardeners enjoy their perennial gardens to their fullest. Meet and greet this top expert.



Doors open 9:00 A.M. Speaker's books available - signing before and after lecture

LOCATION: CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH

150 E. High Street Lexington, Kentucky

ADMISSION: Extension Master Gardeners/Arboretum Friends \$10

General Public \$15 Students with I.D. \$5

* pay at the door - cash or check *

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