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LEXINGTON CHAPTER — June, 2016

<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 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 Judy Johnson, newsletter editor, at judylex@twc.com.

Remembering...



We are saddened to share the news that Mary Carol Cooper, founding member of *Wild Ones* and environmental educator, died on May 17 after a relatively short illness. With her death the native plant and environmental community has lost a true champion—and those who know her have lost a dear friend.

An avid birder, hiker, canoeist and gardener, Mary Carol was seldom still, preferring to live life to the fullest in the outdoors that she loved. Her career in wildlife and native plant conservation echoed this passion. Many *Wild Ones* members got to know Mary Carol as volunteers at Salato Wildlife Center where she was director of the native plant program. There was never a moment at Salato when you didn't feel like you were part of something that truly made a difference in the world. In fact, somewhere, right now, in a

garden, a schoolyard, a prairie or a wetland in Kentucky a butterfly is laying an egg, a bird is feasting on a berry or a child is picking a flower from a native plant that was lovingly raised by Mary Carol and her volunteers.

Mary Carol also set out to become involved with as many environmental and native plant advocacy groups as possible. Such organizations as the Sierra Club, Kentucky Native Plant Society, Shaker Village educational programming and The Kentucky Exotic Pest Plant Council were touched by her presence and enriched by her knowledge. As her close friend Connie May said, Mary Carol was a hub around which many native plant and wildlife activities revolved in Central Kentucky.

For the Lexington chapter of *Wild Ones* Mary Carol Cooper was so much more—she was a protector, a voice and our conscience. For 18 years, Mary Carol guarded our finances as treasurer; recruited and mentored future leaders; traveled far and wide teaching others about trees, monarchs and pollinators; led countless hikes and outings and extolled the virtues of natives—and the evils of exotic invasives—to anyone who would listen.

But above all, Mary Carol grew and generously shared native plants. If Mary Carol were here today, she might hand us each a seed, or a native forb, and say with a laugh, "Here, this needs a home. Go plant it somewhere special." And, of course, we would.

It is our time now to make a difference. Thank you, Mary Carol, for showing us the way.

The board of our Wild Ones chapter decided to make a donation of \$100 to Floracliff Nature Sanctuary in Mary Carol's name.

Are You a “Wild One” ?



“What on earth is a wild one?” The desk clerk stood waiting for an answer from me as I stood with three other people from across the U.S. who were checking into her hotel near Appleton, Wisconsin, to attend the 2013 *Wild Ones* National Conference. I found myself saying what I always say, “*Wild Ones* is a group that helps people learn how to use native plants in their gardens.” But, beyond this simple definition, what is a “wild one” and why would anyone want to join such an organization?

In my opinion, *Wild Ones* membership is one of the biggest bargains available for people who are interested in native gardening and landscaping. For \$37 our members can claim to be part of a national organization that educates people to be smarter and more natural in their garden planning by incorporating native plants. On a local level, our member dues support excellent programming, an amazing on-line newsletter and outreach to take our mission into the community. In addition, Lexington chapter members are invited to participate in exclusive outings, hikes and garden tours.

While these benefits alone would be worth the investment, perhaps the most important, if less tangible, benefit comes from membership at the national level. The percentage of member dues that go to the national organization support such activities as the “Wild for Monarchs” program. Over the past three years, our chapter has received more than 1000 free Monarch Waystation brochures from the national office, in addition to many more free educational brochures with material on other native plant related topics. Member dues help pay the salaries of the support staff who educate members and the general public about native plant landscaping. An important publication is the informative members-only *Wild Ones Journal*. If you explore the *Wild Ones* website, wildones.org, you will find articles and blogs on such diverse topics as native trees, organic gardening, plant rescues and wildlife.

Wild Ones also looks toward the future. Each journal edition includes information on outdoor education programs for children and youth. These are offered as part of the Lorrie Otto Seeds for Education Grant Program, which provides small grants for youth-centered efforts to establish and maintain native plant landscape learning environments. *Wild Ones* also partners with organizations such as Monarch Joint Venture and the Pollinator Partnership to spread our influence beyond just our membership.

Your participation in *Wild Ones* is appreciated and important. If anyone asks you about *Wild Ones*, tell them that you are part of a large local and national movement that is making a real difference bringing back nature and native plants to gardens. Then ask them if they would like to know more—and perhaps join us in our efforts. You might be surprised at the answer!

Linda Porter

Membership and Community Outreach Chair

The First Visit to the Learning Garden

By Tee Bergman



Wild Ones members study the plantings as they completed the June visit to the Finucane-Podet garden. (Photo by Rick Clewett)

This year's chapter garden tour focuses on one garden that is open to registered participants three times during different seasons. The first of our three garden walks took place on April 16, a perfect spring morning at the end of a cold, stormy week. Fifteen enthusiastic members and friends were treated to the perfect tour.

Mike Finucane and Eve Podet, our "tour guides," began with a short history of their garden and their vision for the space, knowing they were going to plant only natives. As we progressed through the beds we were able to make notes about plants on the *Blooming Now* list Eve provided. We could see plants in groups and as individual specimens. We could learn from our guides' experiences with certain plants. We could see how the plants adapted to the site, assess ways to incorporate hardscape, ask questions and, most importantly, gain confidence in selecting plants for our own gardens.

Different plants appealed to different people with some more interested in the native shrubs and trees, others focused on the perennials. We all thought the phacelia was beautiful and made quite a statement as a mass of blooming purple flowers. However, we then had to ask ourselves if we wanted to add it to our gardens because it readily self-sows and moves around the beds unbidden.

Sample comments about the tour from participants:

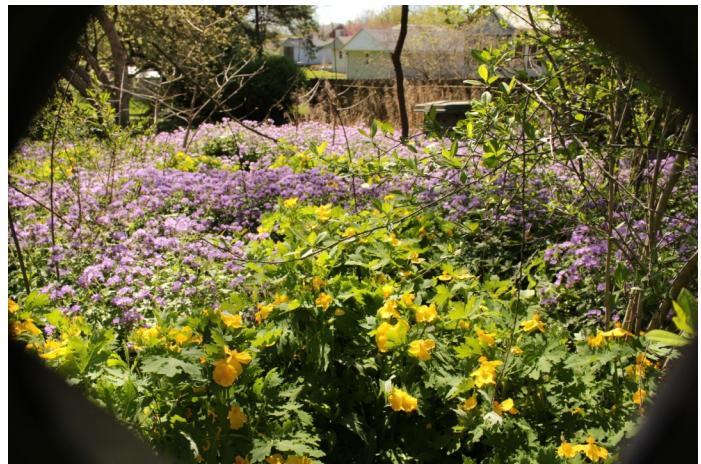
"This was not only informative but fun, and the generosity of the hosts added to the pleasant ambience." (Wendy DeVier)

"I enjoyed learning about new plants. I'd never heard of clove currant and maple leaf viburnum. These and other plants are ones I'll consider for a place in my garden." (Diane Leggett)

"It is rewarding to be able to share our garden with other gardeners who are enthusiastic about native plants. We have been inspired and encouraged by other native plant gardeners and we love being able to help others experience the joys (and overcome the challenges) of gardening with native plants!" (Eve Podet)

At the end of the tour we briefly discussed the challenges we all encounter when looking for natives. It's also a challenge for the nurseries. Richard Webber, owner of Springhouse Gardens, shared his perspective on the issue from the viewpoint of a retailer's frustration in trying to locate natives. Solutions are being explored.

The next walk through Eve and Mike's garden will be Saturday, July 16, starting at 10:00 a.m. Rain date will be July 23. There are still three slots open. Anyone interested in joining the garden tour group should contact Tee Bergman at teebergman@tvc.com.



Drifts of phacelia capture the visitors' attention. (Photo by Rick Clewett)

ANOTHER LEARNING OPPORTUNITY: Thursday, June 9 at 9:30 a.m.—**Trees in the Bluegrass: Roots to Canopy—the second of six Elmwood Stock Farm Tours.** This is a guided tour of the venerable old trees on the Elmwood property. Mac Stone will talk about why it is important to preserve these old trees and how the farm's organic commitment supports their health and well-being. More information and tickets are available at the website <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/trees-in-the-bluegrass-root-to-canopy-tickets-24622934861>.

A Small Bird with a Big Job

By Suzanne Bhatt



fineartamerica.com

One of my favorite joys of springtime is the return of the ruby throated hummingbirds to my native garden. They put on a delightful show with the figure eight motion of their wings that allows them to fly backward, sideways, upside down, and even come to a screeching halt from their lightening-speed flight.

The ruby throated is the only hummingbird that breeds in the Eastern U.S. They are tiny, weighing 1/8 ounce, about the weight of 3 paperclips. They are also fast, traveling at speeds of about 27 mph (although they can reach 60 mph in courtship flight), and can disappear in a flash. They are named for the flash of iridescent red visible on the male's throat. This telltale pattern is produced by a complex feather structure which amplifies

certain wave-lengths of light directly in front of the bird, visible to the viewer only when seen head on.

These hummingbirds are solitary and vigorously defend their territories, pirouetting and rocketing through the air like Star Wars characters as they chase off challengers. After mating, the female has full responsibility for building the nest and raising the young. Consider yourself blessed if you have had the fortune to see a hummingbird nest. About the size of a walnut shell, they are built of soft materials like plant down, woven together with spider webs and camouflaged with a covering of lichens, moss or bark bits, making them almost invisible high up on tree limbs.

Hummingbirds are important pollinators for many flower species. A number of plants have co-adapted to deposit pollen on specific sites on the head, throat or beak of the bird to maximize pollination when it lights on the next same-species flower. For example, jewelweed moves its pedicels to load pollen on the head, while silenes (pinks, royal catchfly) leave their pollen on the beak. Flower nectar is a major source of the hummingbird's diet and they are especially, though not exclusively, attracted to red and orange tubular flowers, using their long tongues to reach deep into the flower base.

In the spring, favorite hummingbird flowers are the pinks (*silene virginica*, *rotundifolia* and *caroliniana*), columbine, phlox, skullcap and penstemons. As the summer progresses, they feast on blazing stars, cross vine, passion vine, monardas (*fistulosa* and *didyma*), obedient plant, native mallows, as well as flowers of woody plants like buckeyes, azaleas and rhododendrons. The number one hummingbird magnet is trumpet creeper, which provides ten times more nectar than other flowers. Cardinal flower is a close second.

Surprisingly, small insects—including gnats, mosquitoes, aphids, spiders and ants—are also an important part of the diet for adults and their young. The birds can be seen perching on twigs and "hawking" for insects, flying into swarms to feast or exploring new leaves at branch tips for small caterpillars. They also use air from their wing beats to stir leaf litter on the ground in their search for bugs and eggs below.

Natural nectar sources can be supplemented with hummingbird feeders. Select one that is easily cleaned and red in color, but do not add red dye to the liquid as it can harm the birds. A mixture of 1/4 cup regular sugar to 1 cup water best mimics the sugar balance found in flower nectar. Anything sweeter does not smoothly flow up the tongue.

With some strategic planting to keep your native garden blooming continuously, you will be rewarded and entertained by hummingbirds throughout the entire growing season.



carolinabirdclub.org

June Wild Ones Meeting

On Thursday, June 2, the Lexington chapter of *Wild Ones* will meet at Michler's Kentucky Native Café. It might be wise to arrive at least by 6:00 p.m. to allow time to eat and socialize. The meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. Should it rain that day, check your email for changes to this plan.

John Michler will join our group to talk about the design concepts of the café garden and the plants that grow there. Topics will include the use of natural stones, path layout, manipulating the topography, preservation of existing plants, and allowing for the spontaneous growth of naturally occurring native plants.



Parking is at 446 East High Street next to Poage Engineers. The entrance to the garden area is at the rear of the parking lot. What a wonderful opportunity to enjoy friendship, good food and new learnings!



Wild Ones' Special Visit to KY Horse Park Gardens

On Thursday, June 16 at 6:00 p.m. *Wild Ones* member Vicki Reed will lead an after hours tour of three native gardens being developed in the park courtyard by KHP volunteers Vicki, Judy Johnson and Betsy Lang.

Wild Ones members are asked to park in the visitor lot close to the main gate (pictured above) and meet in front of the Visitors' Center just inside the gate. This is a unique opportunity to see *Wild Ones'* efforts in an extensive park setting that some members may not ever have visited.

The park is located at 4089 Iron Works Pkwy about 15 minutes from downtown Lexington. For more information Vicki's cell number is **859-494-0664**. Call or text.

June Calendar



Bernheim Arboretum

Sunday, June 5 from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m.—**First Sunday Nature Hike**—volunteer naturalist Joe Rogers leads an engaging 45-60 minute nature walk. Registration is not required and all ages are welcome. **FREE** but a \$5 environmental fee applies to non-members at the entrance to the arboretum.

Saturday, June 25 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon—**Four Seasons of Wild Edibles**—Join Interpretive Programs Manager Wren Smith for a workshop that will include an indoor presentation, a foraging expedition, recipes and a few samples from each season. \$20 for members; \$30 for non-members. Registration and payment of fee due by 4 p.m. day before. Call **502-955-8512**.

Floraciff Nature Sanctuary

Monarch Monitors Workshop: A Citizen Science Training Course (2 Sessions)

Session 1: Saturday, June 18, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Session 2: Saturday, August 27, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Program Leaders: Josie Miller and Beverly James
Workshop Cost: \$15/one session; \$20/both sessions; \$5/session for those 12 and under. Hiking level—easy to moderate. Check the website <http://www.floraciff.org/events.html> for pre-registration information.

McConnell Springs

Wednesday, June 22 at 6:00 p.m.—**Nature Workshop**—

Learn to make a worm composting bin that can be used at your home for basic composting. Call the park at **859-225-4073** to register.

Raven Run Nature Sanctuary

Friday, June 17 at 8:30 p.m.—**Creatures of the Night**—

Learn about the habits and folklore of wildlife active at night. Call the park to register for the event **859-272-6105**.

Shaker Village at Pleasant Hill

Saturday, June 25 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.—Bring the kids and explore Shaker Village's streams and ponds to identify some of the native species that you've probably not seen before. Learn how to safely study and handle these living creatures and how we can work together to make our waterways healthy habitats. Dress for adventure—be prepared to hike 1 mile round-trip to the creek and wear shoes that can get wet. \$15 per person. Fee includes 20% off dining voucher and complimentary admission to the Village. Call **800-734-5611, ext. 1545** for more information.

UK Arboretum

Thursdays, year round from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon—

Native Plants Workdays—Volunteers work with Todd Rounsville, the Native Plant Curator. The focus of the work is to improve the Walk Across Kentucky area of the Arboretum. Bring tools and meet at the Visitors' Center. More information at **859-257-6955**.