

LEXINGTON CHAPTER — July, 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.

President's Message...

Imagine yourself reaching a point in your life where you have really mastered your native plants. When you go on a hike you can identify most of the flowers, trees and shrubs you see. A large variety of native species grow in your garden and you can name them all by common and scientific name. Where would you go from here?

Of course, there are options. You could take up bridge; or you could travel more often and to more interesting places, like Antarctica (no plants there, so no temptations); or you could run for political office (less qualified people than you have tried and succeeded). But if you are a true plant aficionado, chances are your new frontier will be sedges. You will become passionate about these stepchildren of our native plant consciousness, these unassuming plants that populate our woodlands in many species and large numbers.

On guided nature hikes I have sometimes marveled at the passion a hike leader brought to the task of correctly identifying one of those little grass-like plants that most of the rest of the group would simply overlook. And recently, the organizer of a three day conference about prairie restoration emailed me that, in order to decompress from the strain of conference organizing, he was taking a group of students on a week-long trip to the Virginia forests in order to identify and learn about sedges.

Shopping for plants at one of our local nurseries, I was shown a little container of *Carex plantaginea*, a broadleaf sedge with slightly crinkly bluish leaves. I knew immediately that I had to have it and bought five small plants. A few days later at a local wholesale nursery, I was shown an assemblage of at least 10 species of sedges, all represented by 50 to 100 specimen. The display was intriguing. Forget about ferns; one can make a garden in a shady area with nothing but different sedges. Or one can attempt a sedge lawn, mowing it once or twice a year. Or one can incorporate sedges among other shady plantings to make one's garden more like a natural woodland. Sedges can even fill the space that ephemeral flowers open up by early to mid-summer.

I knew I had been bitten by the sedge bug. And a good thing it is, since I am convinced that, should I ever feel I have reached the point of native plant saturation, bridge would bore me, and I have never wanted to go to Antarctica, and I can't run for political office since I am not an American citizen. But sedges remind me that there are truly no limits to appreciating nature or to reinventing ones garden.



With his back to camera, noted Ohio botanist Daniel Boone (that really is his name) examines a sedge while leading a hike

Beate Popkin

Wild Ones June Meeting

By Judy Johnson



The rain did not dampen appetites!

they are in the woods somewhere, surprised by the plants. He wants visitors to be struck by the whole plant community, not just the individual plants. The contrast between urban setting and wild foliage should foster the pleasure of that surprise. The narrow gated entrance and carefully curved board walk allow visitors to step “from one world to another.”

Healthy growth of plants is important to the garden so there must be gentle but firm control of foot traffic. Substantial rocks and sturdy plants direct children’s activities to safe play space stocked with toy trucks they can steer through the dirt piles. One of the



Designer John Michler responded to questions.

themes emerging in the garden is “vines on ruins”—trumpet vines now with the possible addition of hops later that climb old railings and walls. Natural leaf litter is left in place for insects like lightning bugs. Berms of old discarded plants and pots form a natural topography and native poke, river oats and hibiscus add to the secluded feel of the garden spaces.

It is clear that John is just beginning with this project. He has a long “to do” list—plants to cut back and plants to add, arrangements to design that will allow the natural movement of children in circles through the area, an “ode to the ash” made from the remains of the old trees and always he will be attentive to the appearance of spontaneous reproduction of the native plants. No orderly English garden here!

The Kentucky Natives Café is a delightful treat and it will be entertaining and instructional to watch this product of John Michler’s imagination continue to develop.



The greenhouse provides shelter for the evening presentation.

Wild Ones Spread the Word



April, May and June were busy months for the new Community Outreach Committee. Thanks to everyone who helped out at one or more events and who stepped in to substitute when needed. Our volunteers deserve special thanks for persevering despite the cold wind and rain that seemed to plague all of our spring events this year.

In April *Wild Ones* representatives participated in a wide array of events—Earth or Arbor Day activities in Garrard, Boyle, Scott, Madison, Jessamine and Fayette counties. We gave out so much material on native plants, monarchs, pollinators and rain gardens that we had to order more for the rest of the year! It was heartwarming to see how much interest there was in our displays and information. May found us at a very rainy Bluegrass Bird Festival, held this year at McConnell Springs. We had a good group of visitors in spite of the weather.

There was real enthusiasm on the part of many who came to our events and presentations. Special thanks to Tina Elliot, Hannah Helm, Joanna Kirby, Ann Longworth, Connie May and Vicki Reed who joined me giving presentations at several Kentucky libraries, club meetings or events and extension offices in locations as far apart as Boone County and Pine Mountain. Russ Turpin and I are also reaching out to provide consultations on several monarch-related projects on the University of Kentucky campus.

Spring is always our busiest time but we still have a few events coming up in the summer and fall. If an organization you belong to is seeking a speaker or a display, please let us know. We will do our best to help. AND, if you would like to be a speaker or sign up to help with a display in the future we would love to have you join us. Contact me at prairiegirl7@me.com.

Linda Porter

Community Outreach Chair

Wild Ones Garden Honored



Our pollinator garden at Wellington Park won first place in the “Lexington in Bloom” competition sponsored by the Lexington Council Garden Clubs. We were recognized in the category of *Community Gardens*. Please check it out and know that it will be even more beautiful next year!

Plant a Seed

Wild Ones national has begun a competition to encourage new *Wild Ones* memberships. All *Wild Ones* chapters are challenged to see which can sign up the most new members before **July 31, 2016**. The two leading chapters receive promotional prizes. Right now the Lexington chapter is tied for third place with 8 new members (Tennessee is in second place). If you know someone who has been thinking about joining *Wild Ones*, why not encourage them to join right now. Plant that seed and we will all benefit. Potential members can contact Lexington Chapter Membership Chair, Linda Porter (prairiegirl7@me.com) for a membership form, join at the July meeting or sign up online at wildones.org.

Plants for Late Summer

By Vicki Reed

Gardens, as we know, continually evolve. At one time I concentrated on plants that bloomed in the spring, culminating with a big show of blooms in June when summer hit its stride. But once I began gardening with butterflies and birds in mind I found myself gravitating to natives that bloom in late summer and on into the fall. I began to search for plants that could handle drought and would not require a lot of coddling while I am out of town on summer trips or overcome with the desire to while away the afternoon beside a neighborhood pool.

We all are familiar with Joe Pye weed, boneset, New England aster, aromatic aster and other strong low maintenance candidates. It is difficult to select just a few to recommend but here are three of my favorites.

Wild senna (*Senna hebecarpa*)—Attributes include attractive foliage, showy blooms and nice seedpods. Wild senna does grow quite tall (up to 6 ft.), so for a small garden you might consider pre-blooming pruning. A horizontal root system provides strength against wind, allowing it to remain upright even through storms. Bumblebees love the blooms and it is a host plant for the caterpillars of several kinds of moths as well as sulphur butterflies. It likes full sun to partial shade and moist to mesic conditions. Once established senna is very drought-resistant. It will produce lovely yellow flowers for about four weeks beginning in July and tapering off in late August.



Tall coreopsis (*Coreopsis tripteris*)—If you want to spend your fall watching the antics of goldfinches swaying in the breeze, clinging to the ends of stems as they devour seeds, this is your go-to plant. The characteristic I like most about this coreopsis is that it will grow practically anywhere other than deep shade. I had already killed many plants under the light dry



shade of a 50 year old pin oak before this migrated from another spot in the yard on its own. I think it felt sorry for me. During long hot spells it will droop in the afternoon but give it a night's respite and it perks up again. Tall coreopsis plants are flowering by late June and bloom for several weeks. However, I like to cut back some of them in the

first part of June to keep them shorter and to delay flower formation so the whole patch doesn't bloom at once. And while they spread quickly and will volunteer here and there, I don't consider this native at all invasive as it is easy to pull the new starts if you find them wandering too far and too profusely.

Turtlehead (*Chelone glabra*)—These plants are most often found in wet, rich, shady areas like stream banks but, once established, can flourish in dry garden soil in sun or part shade. The pink or white blooms are borne in upright terminal spikes atop plants that reach 3 to 4 ft. in height. These are hooded, snap-dragon-like flowers, said to resemble the



heads of turtles. As cut flowers in a vase they remain fresh a long time, but I prefer to leave them in the garden where hummingbirds and butterflies flock to them. They will bloom from August to October. Good companion plants are cardinal flower, swamp milkweed and Joe Pye weed.

July Wild Ones Meeting

Instead of the usual meeting at St. Michael's Church, *Wild Ones* members will gather on **Thursday, July 7 at 6:30 p.m. at the Millcreek Elementary Stream Buffer Restoration Area** for a citizen science activity led by Russ Turpin. Russ is a *Wild Ones* member and part of the EcoGro team in Lexington. He is a native plant specialist who manages native plant restoration, weed control and ongoing maintenance programs.

The small stream behind Millcreek Elementary was once hemmed in by eroding stream banks and flanked by acres of turf lawn. In 2009 earthwork was begun to rebuild the stream channel and establish over two acres of a natural stream buffer. We will see how the landscape has changed in six years.

We will make observations and learn how to evaluate the ecological conditions of the site as Russ leads us through a stream habitat assessment. Our observations will be compared to previous assessments and used to track how the ecosystem has evolved over time.

The activity will take us through tall vegetation and, depending on the weather, wet areas. You will want to wear long pants and possibly boots and a hat. You may also want to bring some bug spray.

DIRECTIONS: The school is located at 1212 Riva Ridge Way off Appian Way between Armstrong Mill Rd. and Man O War Blvd. We can meet in the lower parking lot/bus loop at the front of the building.

PLEASE NOTE:

Our *Wild Ones* excursion to the Floyds Fork Parklands near Louisville, originally scheduled for July 9, has been rescheduled for Saturday, August 6. Please consult our website, under Excursions, for details.



July Calendar

Bernheim Arboretum

Sat., July 2 from 7 to 8:30 p.m.—Nature as Muse: Writing Workshop and Discussion—Bobbi Buchanan, author of *Tiny Little Beauty*, will lead the workshop and help participants jump start their imaginations writing about the natural world. **FREE** but participants must register by calling **502-955-8515** by 4 p.m. the day before the program. **\$5 per car environmental impact fee still applies for non-members.**

Raven Run

Sat., July 2 at 9:30 p.m.—Stargazing—The Bluegrass Amateur Astronomy Club gathers once a month April to October to set up telescopes for visitors to view binary stars, nebulas and the planets. The event lasts one to two hours. Bring a flashlight to navigate the area. Event is weather dependent. **FREE** but register for the event at **859-272-6105**.

Shaker Village

Sat., July 2 from 5 to 7 p.m.—Honey Extraction—Come witness the first extraction of honey from hive to jar at the Village's beehives. Meet on steps of Trustees' Office. One lucky visitor will go home with the first jar of honey for the season. **FREE** with admission. For additional information call **800-734-5611, Ext. 1545**.

Sat., July 16 from 2 to 4 p.m.—Creek Critters Hike—Part of the Discovery Treks program to inspire new perspectives through Shaker lessons of community, sustainability and ingenuity. Bring the kids and explore the streams and ponds at Shaker Village. Learn to identify and safely handle some native species living in the water. One mile round trip hike. Wear shoes that can get wet. You can pre-purchase your ticket(s) online at <http://shakervillageky.org/event/creek-critters-2/>.

UK Arboretum

Wed., July 13 through Sun., July 31—"July Is for the Birds" Annual Birdhouse Display—Take a walk through the botanical gardens at the Arboretum and see some unique, artistic and weird birdhouse displays. These birdhouses are made by the public and will be up for bid in a silent auction. The closing reception will take place on **Sun., July 31 from 2 to 3 p.m.** All are welcome!

Native Plant Sale (*Wild Ones* member Ann Longworth's effort for MonarchWatch)

Sat., July 9 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Memorial Park on Jefferson St. in Berea, KY
Over 50 species of plants including 5 kinds of milkweed. All seeds locally collected and grown. Hundreds of plants available, \$4 and \$5 each. RAIN OR SHINE! For more information, contact Ann at 859-985-0309.