

LEXINGTON CHAPTER — April, 2017

<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...



The *Wild Ones* pollinator garden our chapter planted at Wellington Park in 2014 has given joy to park visitors year round. In spring the new green and the first color burst are always exciting. Then there are the summer vignettes, often involving coneflowers, the signature plant of the eastern native plant garden.

In late fall, at the end of the growing season, the oohs and aahs of park visitors seem to have no bound. The pink Muhlbach grass at the front of the garden provides a stunning backdrop for the delicate seed heads of smooth beard-tongue.



During winter most flower stalks retain their upright posture and continue to complement each other in form and even color, which is anything but a uniform brown or grey.

One would think that there must be a down time for this garden, a moment, probably in late winter or early spring, when it is truly uninspiring. Not so! On March 4 this year, with temperature in the 40s, nine



Wild Ones members volunteered to cut down the winter stalks and ready the garden for a new growing season.

The work was completed in an hour and the community spirit was gratifying, fueled by the anticipation of aesthetic pleasures to come.



Beate Popkin

Todd Rounsaville's Marvelous New Adventure

By Suzanne Bhatt



Changes are in the wind for Lexington's Arboretum and for Todd Rounsaville, who has served as the Arboretum's Native Plant Curator for the past six years. Upon completion of his Ph.D. in biology with an emphasis in forest ecology, Todd will be moving next month to Massachusetts to take a position as Curator of Living Collections at the Polly Hill Arboretum at Martha's Vineyard.

Todd has supervised dedicated volunteers and staff who provide for upkeep and expansion of the native plantings. This collection has seen a number of changes during his tenure. The "Walk Across Kentucky," representing the flora of the state's seven regions, was completed with development of the Cumberland Mountain section, a large mound on a gradient with the region's lowland beech and hemlock trees at the base, mixed mesophytic plantings throughout the midsection, and uplands chestnut/oak trees crowning the area. Seeds from the Cumberland region of Eastern Kentucky were gathered and nurtured into seedlings for this area. Over time, as the resulting 150-200 trees mature, visitors will be able to observe the natural succession process as current grasses are replaced by shade-loving understory plants.

Many new mulched trails have been constructed allowing visitors to leave the pavement behind and explore the diverse plants and birds found throughout the Arboretum in a more leisurely and intimate way. A new meadow with native grasses and flowers that now host a variety of bees, butterflies and birds has been cultivated.

These physical changes are visible evidence of Todd's time at the Arboretum. However, much of what he has accomplished to fulfill the Arboretum's research and conservation missions has occurred behind the scene. Todd and his staff have made numerous trips across Kentucky gathering seeds from the seven major regions in order to make the Arboretum a repository for the state. Todd estimates that about 80% of our state's trees and shrubs are represented here, including all varieties of hickories, oaks and maples. Each specimen is carefully catalogued as to its location of origin, along with its elevation, proximate flora growing nearby, size of parent plant and other data. In the event of a natural disaster, the repository and database will allow a damaged area to be replanted with native progeny that are exactly suited to the site. This project also includes a collection of ash trees from each region which are being treated to withstand the emerald ash borer. The hope is that, at some future date, as the insect's population levels diminish due to ash die-off and lack of food source, efforts at regeneration can be undertaken across the state.

Relating to visitor education, each tree in the Arboretum has been tagged and all the data entered into the Arboretum Explorer database. This program allows members of the public to search for any plant, locate it on a map, view pictures and test their tree identification skills using the tree tags.

Todd believes education and research are an important aspect of the Arboretum's future, setting goals of interpreting existing data, educating the public about the mission and projects of the Arboretum and increasing public knowledge about the ecological importance of native plants in general. He hopes to see an expansion of volunteer tasks to include not only planting and upkeep, removal of wintercreeper and other invasives and restoration of native groundcover, but also participation in data interpretation and logging as well as recording observations through photography.

We join Arboretum staff and volunteers in thanking Todd for his consistent promotion of native plants, his efforts apparent in the development of exhibits that reflect the diversity of Kentucky's regions. We wish him well in his new home and future endeavors.

An Attractive, Versatile Native to Consider

By Vicki Reed



Golden ragwort plants is a reliable groundcover.

Ragwort is one of the earliest plants to emerge in the spring and it provides a nice ground cover that lasts most of the year. Stalks can be cut back for a neater appearance or to control self-seeding if it gets a bit too profuse. This native also sends out runners underground so it can quickly cover an area. It is easily transplanted from one area to another if you want to control where it spreads out. Ragwort can almost become “green mulch.”

In the early spring the basal leaves can look somewhat like the invasive garlic mustard so be careful not to yank it up if you are intent on removing mustard. The leaves of the mustard smell like garlic so that is an easy way to be sure you are removing the weed, not the ragwort. If you have a spot where you have been fighting garlic mustard, golden ragwort is a great plant to use in reclaiming the site. Finally, it is a good plant to try if deer are a problem. The leaves contain a low toxicity alkaloid which deters most mammals from eating the foliage.

The nectar and pollen of the flowers attract and are beneficial for native bees as well as other small bees and flies.

Because of its common name this plant needs a public relations campaign. It sounds too much like ragweed and rag anything just doesn't sound good. But get past that and this golden ragwort (*Pacera aurea*) is a gem not as well known as many of the other spring wildflowers.

Its virtues are many. It can tolerate more sun than most other spring wildflowers and it blooms later in the spring when many other native bloomers have ended their show. This carefree plant does prefer light shade over deep shade. It is more tolerant of soil variation and will do fine in regular garden soil in drier areas and even in a boggy area with constant moisture.

The yellow blooms are delicate and make a good display when plants fill out a larger space. But it is the foliage, a glossy dark green, that makes it a standout.

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Ragwort in bloom in early summer

REQUEST FOR *WILD ONES* SUPPORT

By Suzanne Bhatt

There will be a city council zoning hearing concerning the area known as the Peninsula on Tuesday, **April 18, at 5:00 p.m.** in the Fayette County Urban Council Chamber, second floor of the government building at 200 E. Main Street. The city council will make its final decision on Ball Homes' proposal to rezone and densely develop the Peninsula, an area in the Jacobson Park ecosystem containing riparian woods that supports bald eagles, osprey, egrets, owls, deer, fox and many other species of birds and wildlife. Ball Homes plans to remove most of the tree buffer along the reservoir not only destroying the wildlife habitat but also removing the barrier that protects this component of the city's water supply from runoff of lawn chemicals. The planning commission approved the rezoning and development in January despite widespread opposition from the community and environmental groups, including the local chapter of *Wild Ones*. A big thank you goes out to all who attended the last hearing, signed letters and offered support.

Once again, we need a huge presence to show the council that we oppose the destruction of this unique and sensitive wildlife refuge. **Please attend the council hearing to voice support for environmentally sustainable development in the Bluegrass.** For more information, go to Squires Road Development on Facebook.



**Sunday
May 7th
Noon to 5 P.M.**

WILD ONES GARDEN TOUR

Information and photo provided by Katrina Kelly



On **Sunday, May 7**, *Wild Ones* will be hosting its biennial garden tour. This date is earlier than in previous years in order to focus on emerging plantings, rather than displays in full bloom. In other words, this year's tour will feature native plant gardens with early spring interest.

Several private and public gardens will be included on the list of sites, including Michler's Native Café and the Family Care Center. Highlights of the tour include spaces with spring blooming plants, native plant shade gardens and a garden incorporating the Japanese tradition of wabi sabi. Visitors will have the opportunity to explore a variety of gardens, each incorporating its own unique style.

The tour will begin at noon and end at 5 p.m. Tickets with a brochure and map will be available at each location. Visitors can begin the tour at any garden and take the tour at their own leisure. There will also be a raffle drawing featuring interesting and useful garden related prizes.

Invite family or friends and plan now to enjoy this *Wild Ones* event rain or shine. It offers a great way to celebrate springtime in Kentucky! Full details will be available on the *Wild Ones* website and in the May newsletter.

Put on Your Walking Shoes and Support Science

Two major events are planned for April related to the field of science, drawing attention to concerns about climate change and environmental safeguards.

First up, **Saturday, April 22, The March for Science** will be a call for politicians to implement science-based policies as well as a public celebration of science. This is a non-partisan, inclusive movement to advocate academic freedom and the ability to publish scientific findings without penalty or threat. The event will begin at the Fayette County Courthouse Plaza at 1 p.m. For more information go to <https://www.marchforscience.com/event-details/>.

On the following **Saturday, April 29, The People's Climate March** is planned for Washington, DC. People from across the country will be gathering to speak out for solutions to climate change, protection of our environment and an end to social and ethnic injustice. Again, this is a non-partisan, inclusive event.

Busses will leave from Louisville, stopping to pick up participants in **Lexington Friday, April 28**. For more information go to <https://peoplesclimate.org/>. For bus tickets, go to <https://actionnetwork.org/ticketed-events/ky-buses-to-peoples-climate-march?referrer=drew-foley&source=direct> link.

Sister marches are planned in cities across the county. **The Lexington rally will begin at 2 p.m. at the Fayette County Courthouse Plaza on April 29.**

Bees the Topic of April Meeting

On **Thursday, April 6**, Tammy Horn, Kentucky state apiarist, will speak with *Wild Ones* about the Kentucky pollinator protection plan adopted last November by major stakeholders concerned about pollinators. Dr. Horn is the author of two books about the history of bees in America and the industry that has grown up around them.

Our meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. with refreshments and social time and our program starts at 7. We will meet at St. Michael's Church, 2025 Bellefonte Drive.



Dr. Nina Bassuk to Be Featured Urban Forest Initiative Speaker



On **Wednesday, April 5**, Dr. Nina Bassuk, professor and program leader of the Urban Horticulture Institute at Cornell University will talk about “Moving Beyond the Native/Exotic Debate: Best Practices for a Healthy Urban Forest” at the Fayette County Extension Office, 1140 Red Mile Place.

The schedule for the evening will be:

6:00 to 7:00 p.m.—displays, light refreshments and conversation

7:00 to 8:00 p.m.—presentation

8:00 to 9:00 p.m.—discussion

Dr. Bassuk is on the technical advisory committee of the Sustainable Sites Initiative (SITES) and works closely with municipalities to help implement best practices in urban forestry management. She helped develop the Student Weekend Arborist Team (SWAT) to inventory public trees in small communities.

Dr. Bassuk also co-authored “Tree in the Urban Landscape,” a text for landscape architects and horticultural practitioners on establishing trees in disturbed and urban landscapes.

This event is free and open to the public.

SIERRA CLUB OFFERS TWO MOVIES

The Bluegrass Sierra Club is sponsoring two free films to celebrate Earth Day. The location for both will be the Farrish Theater in the Central Branch of the Lexington Public Library at 140 E. Main Street.



On **Wednesday, April 12**, at 6:30 p.m. “The Nature of Cities” explores nature in our backyards and a journey of possibilities for cities of the future.



On **Wednesday, April 19**, at 6:30 p.m. “The Future of Energy” features communities and individuals across the country that are at the forefront of the clean energy revolution, taking practical steps to transition from fossil fuels to renewable power sources.

April Calendar



Bernheim Arboretum

Sat., April 15 from 2 to 3:30 p.m.—Spring Wildflower Stroll: The Business of Blooming. Members: \$10; non-members \$12. Reservations and payment by 4 p.m. on the day prior to event. Information at 502-955-8512.

Sat., April 22 from 2 to 3:30 p.m.—Spring Wildflower Stroll: Wildflowers of Rock Run Loop.

Sat., April 29 from 2 to 3:30 p.m.—Spring Wildflower Stroll: Wildflowers and Ecology.

Floracliff Nature Sanctuary

Fr., April 21 at 1:30 p.m.—Wildflower Hike at Trail’s End. Moderate to difficult hike led by Josie Miller. Check out new addition with staff. Suggested donation of \$5 to \$10 per person. To register email info@floracliff.org with name, phone number, and number in party.

KY Native Plant Society Weekend at Natural Bridge State Park

Fri. and Sat., April 28 and 29—Wildflower Weekend. Guided walks, programs led by plant specialists, activities for children. Registration: \$10 for adult; \$20 for teens 13-17; free for children 12 and under. Registration on site prior to hikes and programs. Hikes start at Natural Bridge Lodge. Programs are in Woodland Activities Center. Complete schedule for each day can be found at www.knps.org.

McConnell Springs

Tues., April 11 at 6 p.m.—Author Speaker Series: Sue Kelly Ballard, author of “*My Blessed, Wretched Life: Rebecca Boone’s Story*.” Location is McConnell Springs, 416 Rebmann Lane. The event is free and open to the public.

Raven Run Nature Sanctuary

Sat., April 15 at 1:00 p.m.—Spring Wildflowers Hike. Call 859-272-6105 for more information.

UK Arboretum

Fri., April 21 —Birdhouse Display Opens. View birdhouses throughout Arboretum and vote on your favorite. Exhibit remains open until May 7. Call 859-257-6955 for more information about the event.

Sat., April 29—ARBOR DAY! 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.—Opening Ceremony at 10 a.m. featuring Cassidy Elementary 1st and 2nd grade chorus. FREE admission to Children’s Garden all day. Three exhibitor tents, tree giveaways, birdhouses on display. Park in UK’s Orange Lot on University Drive and ride FREE shuttle to the Arboretum.