

LEXINGTON CHAPTER — July, 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...

This year I am spending the summer in Berlin, a city of over 3 million people and the seat of one of the most functional governments in the world today. It is easy to live here. Public transportation -- dependable, affordable and clean--takes me wherever I want to go. The streets are safe and the cafes are ubiquitous. Tourists flock here in large numbers--the young for the street life, the music and the art; the older ones for the museums, the biergartens and the shopping.

Berlin is resolutely multicultural. The second most frequent language is Turkish and English may well be the third, but I often hear East European languages spoken as well. In my wanderings today, on June 14, I stumbled on a large African street fair in Alexanderplatz, probably the most significant public square in the city.

Despite its urban ambience, Berlin is a very green city. Many suburbs are studded with natural lakes and public forests. Well cared for shade trees line every street that can accommodate them. Huge residential apartment buildings on the outskirts of the city, where many working people live, are embedded in parkways, walkways and bike paths. Many parks in the inner city provide opportunities to picnic, walk, bicycle, push baby carriages and generally seek refuge from the urban hubbub. Urban parks are about trees first and about lawns for sun-bathing secondly. Athletic fields do not belong in the parks. They are constructed elsewhere.

My husband and I visited the International Garden Show which the city of Berlin is hosting this year. Such exhibitions tend to have two objectives: they aim to give pleasure to visitors through spectacular horticultural displays, and they provide examples and instruction to gardeners. The first purpose seemed well served. Large numbers of people ambled through the extensive exhibits obviously enjoying the beauty and variety of it all. But I doubted that the garden show achieved its second purpose for few of the visitors seemed to be gardeners.

Indeed, where would gardeners eager for horticultural instruction come from? Germany is a highly urbanized country where most people live in apartments. As elsewhere, their lives revolve around their work and shopping. Beyond that they eagerly seek out the amenities of the urban culture that their prosperity affords them--music and theater shows, hours spent in street cafes talking with friends, and relentless travel, to places both near and far. Moreover, there are the demands of the internet--the pleasure of surfing the web, the engagement of social media.

Berlin may well provide as good a life as can be had in the kind of large metropolitan areas where people all over the world increasingly live. The city's residents value nature and their taxes support many environmental efforts. But the urban life does not seem to draw future generations toward ornamental gardening, the activity that stirs my heart and engages my creativity.

Beate Popkin



Berlin Flower Show: design suggestion for a residential prairie garden.

Kentucky A-Buzz for Pollinator Conservation

By Linda Porter



June is *Pollinator Month* all across the U.S. and now the designation is official in Kentucky. On June 19, pollinator enthusiasts met at the Kentucky Department of Agriculture in Frankfort to celebrate the introduction of the new “Kentucky Pollinator Protection Plan” and the governor’s declaration that June 19 to 23 would be Kentucky’s official Pollinator Week. (The photo to the left: Linda Porter of *Wild Ones*, KY state apiarist Tammy Horn Potter, KY state agriculture commissioner Ryan Quarles, and Joanna Kirby of the KY Garden Clubs.)

Tammy Horn Potter, along with many other individuals, has worked for the past two years developing the plan to help protect Kentucky’s honeybees and native pollinators. Those of you who attended the April *Wild Ones* meeting heard the basic principles of the plan, but it is so much more than just a document.

While it is true that the plan primarily outlines best gardening, educational and communication practices for pollinator conservation, the most powerful elements of the plan are not its written goals or action plans. It is the willingness of diverse groups to come together to reduce pollinator loss. From the beginning Tammy and the plan’s executive team sought input from major stakeholders in the state. This group included more than conservationists and beekeepers. The team also consulted with universities, the Kentucky Department of Transportation, U.S. and KY Departments of Fish and Wildlife, public utility companies, garden clubs, pesticide manufacturers and appliers, nature preserves, family farmers, seed producers and large-scale farming operations.

At the meeting on June 19, these stakeholders shared pollinator protection efforts already underway in the state. For example, the University of Kentucky has established 18 new monarch waystations for nectar plant and milkweed research. Columbia Gas has put aside acres along existing pipeline routes to be planted for native pollinators. The U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife is helping to fund large-scale pollinator restorations across the state. The Kentucky Farm Bureau is encouraging the planting of nectar corridors on farms. Roundstone Native Seed Company is installing demonstration pollinator gardens at their Union, KY headquarters. The state Department of Transportation is turning rest areas into pollinator havens and the UK Agricultural Extension Office is planning new pollinator gardening classes.

As implementation of the plan continues into the future, it will be interesting to see what other creative cooperative strategies are implemented statewide to develop and protect pollinator habitat. *Wild Ones* will be there, ensuring that native plants are always recognized as vital to healthy pollinators and to healthy ecosystems.

The Effects of Light Pollution on Wildlife

By Katrina Kelly

One October night, I was standing on the balcony of a second floor motel room looking out across Myrtle Beach to the ocean. Out there I saw true darkness but where I was located complete darkness was made impossible because of the glare of an outdoor light. Bugs and moths were buzzing all around it. A monarch butterfly fluttering around it caught my attention. I wondered why it was also attracted to the light. As I stood there watching the monarch flitting around the light, I thought back to a film I had recently seen, *The City Dark* (2011). The film deals with the effects of light pollution on us and on wildlife.

In the film, there is a discussion of sea turtle hatchlings. The eggs are laid underneath the sand. When the sea turtles hatch at nighttime, they begin crawling toward light. Naturally, the light they move toward is the safety of the ocean because its surface reflects the light of moon and stars. The hatchlings have only a few hours to make it into the ocean or they will perish of starvation. Yet often the turtles crawl in the direction of land because of light pollution.

Light pollution affects other wildlife, such as migrating birds that use the night sky as a travel map. Light pollution in urban areas confuses them, causing an estimated billion birds a year to fly directly into buildings. Reflective materials used in the construction of city buildings and lights left on at night in completed structures cause birds to confuse artificial light with open sky. In our own backyards, light pollution is one cause for a decline in fireflies. Light pollution causes communication problems for them. Their own flashes of light transmit mating calls, which are less discernible in an artificially lit environment.

There are actions we can take to be good stewards of nature around us. We can encourage business owners to let their buildings go dark at night. We can advocate with local government for ordinances to reduce light pollution. At home we can turn off unnecessary outdoor lights. We can use motion-automated security lights and lower wattage bulbs. We can close curtains at night to cut down on escaping indoor light. Finally, we can use landscape lighting minimally and very intentionally or omit it entirely from our yards.

We humans can enjoy the natural darkness of the outdoors and, at the same time, promote the survival of some of our most fragile wildlife.



Long exposure photo of fireflies in Japan from Fstoppers.com.

KENTUCKY NATIVE PLANT FUNDRAISER SALE

**Saturday, July 8 from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Memorial Park on Jefferson Street in Berea, KY**

RAIN OR SHINE

ALL PLANTS ARE \$5.00 EACH.

All plants are seed grown in large pots by *Wild Ones* member Ann Longworth using local seed.

Sale will benefit Monarch Watch and other nature groups.

The Reliable Ninebark

By Vicki Reed



If you are looking for an all purpose shrub, look no farther than the ever charming ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius*) common to eastern North America. This is a four season native. In spring its white or pink blooms present a long lasting showy display that draws butterflies, bees

and hummingbirds. The blooms are a valuable source of nectar for many pollinators, especially native bees. The green foliage is attractive all summer and in fall the leaves turn to yellow. The red capsules of its fruit, which ripen after the flowering stage has passed, are favored by birds. In winter the exfoliating bark exposes reddish brown layers underneath, hence the name.

Ninebark is a fast growing shrub that tolerates a wide range of soils. It is drought tolerant, doing best in full sun although it can handle some shade. It is great for erosion control where less hardy plants do not thrive. Its only requirement is good air circulation, so do not let other plants crowd it. No serious insect or disease problems bother ninebark.

This true native grows to about eight feet with a six foot spread but new cultivars are smaller. "Seward" Summer Wine only reaches five feet and Little Devil reaches just three or four feet. Ninebark can be pruned as needed immediately after blooming but no later than mid-August. It may also be cut to the ground in winter to rejuvenate.

Ninebark can be used as a native alternative to Japanese spirea.

It works well in mass plantings or hedges, mixed with grasses or as a specimen plant in a bed of mixed perennials. What more could you ask for?



Visit to Trail's End

By Suzanne Bhatt

On the first of June, about 50 *Wild Ones* members gathered at the new Trail's End property of Floracliff Nature Preserve to share a potluck dinner and explore the area. Old friends and some new members socialized in the old lodge, on the front patio and the back deck, while sampling a bountiful supply of salads, casseroles and desserts. Throughout dinner we were serenaded by the "ticky tucky tuck" call of a pair of summer tanager who had taken up residence in the trees surrounding the lodge.

After dinner, we were introduced to the new Trails's End land acquisition. Beverly James, *Wild Ones* board member and Floracliff preserve director, presented a history of the lodge and surrounding property. In the early 1900s the lodge served as a private summer camp for girls and later as a scout camp, a church camp and a private residence. We admired the large walnut tree on the edge of the front patio as arborist Dave Leonard explained that the huge burl growing on one branch was formed as the tree adapted to grow around the penetrating roots of mistletoe.

The high point of the evening was a hike led by Beverly and Josie Miller, Floracliff stewardship director, to the location of the old tennis courts and through a portion of the dense woodlands that characterize the Trail's End property. We examined slabs of fresh wood that had been scattered by a lightning strike on a nearby tree, some of the smaller shards protruding from the ground like daggers. There were opportunities for plant identification and a search for snakes under warm pieces of metal covering. The work of volunteers who have cleared large stands of honeysuckle, constructed new trails and labored to clean and restore the lodge was evident to all of us. This work is ongoing and volunteers are always appreciated.

The weather was perfect, the food delicious and the company and surroundings memorable. Thanks to the Floracliff folks for hosting a wonderful evening.



Photo by Vicki Reed

Enemies in the Garden

We spend so much time on lovely, beneficial native plants, perhaps a few words about three damaging non-natives and their control might be in order.



Bush honeysuckle is widely recognized as a prolific invader. It decreases light availability, depletes soil and possibly releases toxic chemicals that inhibit native plants in the area. Small sprouts can be hand pulled but the most effective control is to cut shrubs to the ground and treat cut stumps with a glyphosate herbicide within five minutes. The herbicide should be applied according to its label for cut-stump application.



with an herbicide.

Climbing euonymus, commonly called wintercreeper, is still often used in landscaping. It aggressively outcompetes natural vegetation, forming dense thickets that climb over native plants and block sunlight. Large vines can be cut and treated like honeysuckle. In dense ground cover patches a weedeater can be used to break up the waxy cuticle of the leaves. Then foliar sprayed



Japanese hops is an annual vine that climbs by twining. Fairly new to Kentucky, it can rapidly cover open ground and low vegetation, including understory trees. Hand weeding in April and May seems to be the most effective control for it in gardens and yards. Various herbicides are currently being tested for effectiveness with this invasive.

More information about these and other invasive plants can be found at nps.gov/plants/alien and forestry.ky.gov/foresthealth/Pages/InvasivePlantThreats.aspx/.



McConnell Springs

Sun., July 9 at 2 p.m.—Explore the Springs! An opportunity to meet the education animals: Peanut, Leroy, Sally, and the boys up close and have a guided hike through the park. This 1 hour program will be suitable for all ages.

Sat., July 22 at 10 a.m.—Weekend Workout. An opportunity for everyone to help clean the park and maintain the trails.

Shaker Village at Pleasant Hill

Sun., July 16 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. BYOS (Bring Your Own Shovel) Free gardening workshop. Learn about tools and techniques and then get your hands dirty working alongside their experts. Call **859-257-6955** for more information about the event.

Every Fri. and Sat. in July from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m.—All admissions (all ages) are **\$5 after 5 p.m.** Access to all activities including live music.

July *Wild Ones* Meeting

At **6:30 p.m., Thursday, July 6**, *Wild Ones* members are invited to meet at Gardenside Park, 1835 Yorktown Road, to tour a stream restoration project which was begun in the spring of 2014. This restoration was a joint endeavor of Gardenside neighbors and Friends of Wolf Run. Their plan—to remove bush honeysuckle and replace invasives with native plants. As of this year, invasives have been removed and more than 2,000 trees, shrubs and perennials have been planted. In the process homeowners along the creek have learned about the advantages of restoring a stream buffer zone and replacing invasive growth with native alternatives.

Come see and hear details about what has been accomplished in just three years!