

LEXINGTON CHAPTER — May, 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...

Every spring, to my great joy, purple phacelias cover my garden in wide swaths. Each plant produces a profusion of small lavender colored blooms with white centers. Prominent stamens, which rise above the rim of the petals, give the flowers a delicate look. But don't be fooled: this is one hardy and competitive plant.

I never quite know where they will emerge for *Phacelia bipinnatifida* dies as soon as it has set seed, and the seed drop is what keeps the annual spring show going. It is a biennial plant whose seeds lie dormant through an entire winter and emerge the following spring to form large beautiful semi-evergreen rosettes. Then, a full year after the seedlings have sprouted, they produce their flowers. This means the gardener who wants to achieve an annual bloom of purple phacelias, must plant or sow them in two consecutive years to get the system rolling.

Purple phacelias are native to our Kentucky River palisades, so they really seem to belong in our gardens. When growing on a forest floor that is densely covered in wildflowers, individual plants demurely settle into the narrow spaces that the competing flora permits them to occupy. However, bring them to the garden and forget about demure behavior. If there is an empty space in their vicinity, the phacelia seeds will find it to establish their rosettes and produce their sea of purple. Obviously it needs some management, but the plants are very easy to weed out. While their beauty will grace any garden spot, they also make a suitable cover for a tough out-of-the-way backyard area. They tolerate sun and shade, wet and dry, but can collapse in soil that gets too soggy. They attract the bees of spring.

A discussion of purple phacelia invites mention of its cousin: *Phacelia pusbii*, commonly known as Miami Mist, named after the Miami river in Ohio. Its flowers are equally dainty looking, but pale blue. To me they often appear light grey. It tends to be more of a wetland plant, at least in nature, but it accommodates itself to gardens. It's a great flower for stream buffer restorations and gives those "not-quite-park-like" areas a pretty look in late April and early May. A significant distinguishing characteristic between the two species is their reproductive cycle. Miami Mist is a winter annual which germinates in fall and flowers the following spring.

Try them. You will like them.



Beate Popkin

Floracliff Nature Preserve Acquires Trail's End Property

By Suzanne Bhatt



Photo courtesy of Beverly James

Floracliff Nature Preserve has undergone a recent expansion with the acquisition of 59 acres of neighboring woodlands, known as the Trail's End property. The purchase of this land along the Kentucky River Palisades brings the preserve's total size to 346 acres and also brings the final section of Elk Lick Creek, just before joining with the Kentucky River, under the Preserve's protection, ensuring that the creek and these rich, beautiful woodlands can be forever protected and enjoyed.

Trail's End has a long history of bringing people together with nature. From 1913 through 1935, the land was home to one of the first girls' camps in the South, where girls from surrounding areas could come to enjoy hiking, swimming, boating, horseback riding, crafts and other outdoor activities. Many photographs and original camp brochures, which can be viewed at Floracliff, quaintly document the history and participants' reactions of those times. The beautiful rustic camp lodge, which is still standing on the property, was constructed in 1919. Later, in the 1950s through the 1970's, the lodge and property were enjoyed by the Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and

members of Central Christian Church of Lexington. Most recently, the house was privately owned and cared for by the family who generously offered to sell the property to Floracliff to ensure that it remains wild and protected.

The land is home to a diverse woodland community of oaks, maples, beeches, Eastern red cedar and a multitude of wildflowers. While a full survey of plant and animal species has not yet been completed, several plant species new to Floracliff have been identified including shingle oak, pennywort and smooth blue aster, a species that may indicate that there has been little understory disturbance of the area. The trail leading down to the creek highlights many rock-loving ferns, including purple cliff break and wall rue. The cliff lines feature chinkapin oaks that, while not yet cored, have characteristics indicative of old age.

In addition to being a part of one of the central migratory flyways for birds, the forest and waterways are also home to bobcats as well as stream side salamanders and monarch butterflies, which are under petition for inclusion as threatened species. Wood ducks and bald eagles can be seen along the river and creek. The rock openings in the adjoining Palisades provide excellent habitat for bats. Acoustic sonar monitoring has indicated the presence of Indiana bats and gray bats, both federally endangered, as well as Northern long-eared bats, listed as federally threatened. Mist netting will be done in the future to confirm the presence of specific bat species. A portion of the funding for purchase of Trail's End was granted by the Imperiled Bat Conservation Fund, a joint project of the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Kentucky Natural Lands Trust.

Under Floracliff's stewardship, invasive species such as bush honeysuckle, garlic mustard and winter creeper will be controlled to allow for restoration of native wildflowers. A trail system already exists through the forest to Elk Lick Creek and the Kentucky River. Plans are underway to complete species surveys and to incorporate Trail's End in Floracliff's ongoing program of hikes, seminars and research studies. Future plans will also include creative uses of the historic lodge, such as regular open-houses, art displays, workshops or rental space for other groups.

For those who wish to contribute, donations are still being accepted to help fund the purchase and stewardship of this biodiverse addition to the Floracliff ecosystem.

Tammy Horn Introduces the Pollinator Protection Plan

By Linda Porter

“The intersection among pollinators and flowers is the “ultimate love story, the story that feeds the world.” Wings of Life

On Thursday, April 6, Tammy Horn Potter, Kentucky State Apiarist, spoke at the monthly *Wild Ones* meeting. Tammy has worked with major stakeholders across the state for the past two years to develop and implement a Pollinator Protection Plan for the state of Kentucky. *Wild Ones* was represented in the drafting of this Plan. At our meeting she provided an overview of the new Plan along with reasons for the need of such a plan.

Tammy began her presentation with some fascinating facts and data about honeybees and other pollinators in our state. Honey production in Kentucky, which almost disappeared in the first half of the 20th century, is rebounding. In 2015 the state produced 130,000 pounds of the golden liquid and each spring approximately 3,000 nucs (small colonies of honey bees) are sold. Agricultural crops such as tree fruits, berries and vegetables necessary for the growing truck farm market are dependent on insect pollinators, above all bees.

Tammy shared information about the sources for pollen that bees collected in a given area. She discussed several analyses that identified not only the native plants in a specific foraging area but also the contaminants in honey and pollen.

Some of the greatest challenges facing bees and other pollinators are pests, parasites, viruses, low genetic diversity, poor nutrition, pesticides and loss of habitat. Because unmanaged pollinators are equally sensitive to land use changes, the scope of the Pollinator Protection Plan was broadened to include them.

The Plan presents best management practices for beekeepers, pesticide applicators, habitat managers, land-owners and growers, governmental agencies and individual gardeners to protect pollinators. The appendix lists public monarch waystation locations in Kentucky and additional information about surface mine restoration efforts, as well as current research related to the health of pollinators. Resource lists are included to encourage large and small-scale plantings of native nectar sources to provide quality pollinator habitat.

Steps are already being taken to implement the state Plan which will encourage planting of more monarch waystations, highway and rest area plantings and service mining restoration projects. A key tool to protect both honeybees and native pollinators is an electronic alert system which will facilitate communication between pesticide applicators and bee keepers or special pollinator habitat managers. The Kentucky pollinator alert system should be in place by the end of this summer. It will be implemented on a voluntary basis. Once the alert tool is put in place, *Wild Ones* members who manage native habitat are asked to consider participating by registering to receive pesticide spray alerts.

The entire Pollinator Protection Plan can be downloaded at www.kyagr.com/statevet/documents/OSV_Bee_KY-Pollinator-Pro-Plan-2016.pdf. Anyone who has questions may contact Tammy Horn Potter at Tammy.Potter@ky.gov.



Several kinds of pollinators attracted by goldenrod. Photos from pollinators.blogspot.com

2017 *Wild Ones* Spring Native Plant Garden Tour

By Katrina Kelly

Spring is an exciting time of year with warm breezes, emerging spring flowers and the general greening of our landscape. Come celebrate the season with the biennial *Wild Ones* garden tour, which will be held this year on Sunday, May 7. This tour features native plant gardens with early season interest, focusing on spring flowering plants and shade gardens.

There are seven gardens on the tour including five residences, one business and one public site. Some properties are small urban spaces, others typical suburban lots and one is even a larger more rural space. Each garden is unique in the way its space is utilized. When these gardens were designed, the owners had specific ideas but all of them focused on providing wildlife habitat, especially for birds and pollinators. Another shared objective was to create some type of oasis where the owner or visitors can relax and simply enjoy the garden. Together these gardens prove that it doesn't matter what space the designer begins with; an ecologically beneficial garden can be created anywhere.

Most of the gardens had a common origin—an existing area filled with invasive species or covered by too much lawn. One owner began her adventure by removing 3.2 tons of honeysuckle. Now free of the invasive plants it contains over 230 species of native plants. Some gardens are more mature while others are brand new and some older gardens have been partially renovated.

As you tour you will see gardens that have utilized native plants in both formal and wilder areas. You will also see a “wabi sabi” garden inspired by the “forgotten rural south” and a bird sanctuary where the owner has counted over 70 different bird species.

We hope you will find inspiration, both ecologically and aesthetically, to take back to your own garden. As you travel from site to site, think about how each garden has utilized the given space to create habitat in aesthetically pleasing ways. How is each garden unique? How does it serve as an ecological landscape?

The *Wild Ones* garden tour will take place rain or shine on Sunday, May 7 from noon to 5 p.m. You may take the tour at your leisure, beginning at any one of the locations. Tickets are \$10 per person and include a brochure with maps. They are available at all sites. Additionally, there will be a raffle at the Family Care Center location where you will have a chance to win one of numerous garden and nature-related prizes. Raffle items will be displayed at the Family Care Center and raffle tickets, which are \$1 each or 6 for \$5, will be available at that site.

Garden locations:

Family Care Center - 1135 Harry Sykes Way (formerly Red Mile Place)

Suburban Bird Sanctuary - 992 Stonewall Road

Garden with Native Plant Rarities - 3809 Brier East Road

Mature Shade Garden - 1717 Palmyra Avenue

Kentucky Native Café at Michler's - 417 East Maxwell

The Wabi Sabi Garden - 122 Old Park Avenue

Formal & Wild Native Plant Garden - 308 Greenbriar Road



INVITATION TO ALL: After the tour join us at the **Kentucky Native Café** for food, drink and the opportunity to compare experiences. Raffle drawing results will be announced and winners notified.

Wild Ones May Gathering

On **Thursday, May 4**, our Lexington chapter will hold its annual plant exchange starting at **6:30 p.m.** behind the sanctuary at St. Michael's Episcopal Church, **in a space to be accessed from Libby Lane.** (We usually enter the parking lot from Bellefonte Drive.) This event has grown in popularity since it began eight years ago. Most participants bring plants and take away others. Some only contribute plants, having no need to make additions to their garden. Those who are new to native plant gardening may have no plants to donate but hope to take home a stash to get their garden under way; we ask that they contribute something to eat or drink. And then there are those who come for the food, the drink, the talk, the party.

It's best if donated plants arrive in pots, but if they are dug up on the day of the exchange, they may be wrapped in wet paper and plastic. Every plant must be labeled, either by common or scientific name. All plants must be native to eastern North America though we do accept cultivars and selections of natives. We cannot accept non-natives.

The plants are set out in categories: forbs, shrubs, trees, grasses and sedges, seeds and "other". The forbs, by far, make up the largest group and we subdivide them according to their flowering season: spring, early summer, mid-to late summer, fall. Participants have an opportunity to inspect the plants as they are being arranged and to ask questions about their growth habits and cultural requirements.

Everyone who wants to take plants home will have to buy a numbered ticket (\$5 for members, 7\$ for non-members). As the numbers are called out, the person with that ticket gets to choose one plant. We go through three rounds of picking plants by number. Then we declare the remaining plants to be available for a general "grab as you can" session. It is always astonishing how all plants disappear by the end of the exchange. Presumably they are on their way to new homes where they will be loved and give pleasure to all who see them.

ATTENTION—MICHLER'S KY NATIVE CAFÉ is open for the summer. Regular hours are 4 to 10 p.m. Mon. through Fri. and 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Sat. and Sun.

DOWN TO EARTH COMMUNITY BENEFIT NATIVE PLANT SALE

Saturday, May 13 from 9 a.m. to noon
At
Woodland Christian Church Parking Lot
530 E. High Street

Plants are donated by members from their own gardens and profits are distributed to gardening projects in the community.

RAIN OR SHINE!

Information at website: www.downtoearthky.com

Dunbar Memorial Garden Plant Sale

Sat., May 13 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Dunbar HS front pavilion, 1600 Man O War Blvd.

Over 20 varieties
of native flowers, shrubs, grasses, trees
Prices—\$3 to \$30 (Cash only, please.)

RAIN OR SHINE

May Calendar

Bernheim Arboretum

Sat., May 20, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.—Bloom Fest and Plant Sale. Artisans, musical entertainment, vendors, and wide variety of children's activities. Sale will feature plants propagated at Bernheim—trees, shrubs, grasses, perennial herbaceous plants and plants for the garden. Plant list is available on the website: www.bernheim.org.

Floracliff Nature Sanctuary

Sat., May 27, 11:00 a.m.—Host Plants of Butterflies and Moths. Moderate to strenuous hike led by Beverly James that will include the newly acquired Trail's End property. Suggested donation is \$5-\$10. **Pre-registration is required.** Email info@floracliff.org with name, phone number, and number of people you are registering.

McConnell Springs

Sat., May 3 and Sun. May 4 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.—4th Annual Bluegrass Birding Festival and Craft Fair. All things birding! Check out Bluegrass Birding Festival on Facebook.

Sat., May 20 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.—23rd Annual Founders' Day and Colonial Crafts Fair. Celebrate the founding of Lexington with historical reenactments, storytelling, and musical entertainment. Admission **FREE**. Located at 416 Rebmann Lane (off Old Frankfort Pike).

Natural Bridge State Park

Sat., May 13 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.—Trail Trek Series. This is the first of four different guided treks (varying 4-8 mi.). Groups depart from the lobby of the Hemlock Lodge at **9:00 a.m.** Cost is **\$8 per person/per trek.** For more information contact Drew Stevens at andrew.stevens@ky.gov.

UK Arboretum

Sat., May 20 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.—Addie's Day at the Children's Garden. Admission **FREE**. Call 859-257-6955 for more information about the event.