

LEXINGTON CHAPTER — May, 2018

<http://lexington.wildones.org>

Wild Ones Board of Directors

Officers

President Beate Popkin
Treasurer Tee Bergman
Secretary Lee Meyer

Members

Beverly James
 Katrina Kelly
 Lee Meyer
 Josie Miller
 Nic Patton
 Vicki Reed

Committee Chairs

Finance Tee Bergman
Field Trips Janet James
Membership Linda Porter
Outreach Linda Porter
Programs Beverly James and
 Josie Miller

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.

Oscar Gerald's 1929—2018



The Earth lost a friend and ardent environmental activist on April 15 when Oscar Gerald's died. If you have hiked in the Red River Gorge and enjoyed the beauty of its flora and geological formations, you have a direct connection to Oscar. A local attorney, Oscar was one of the initial members of the state Cumberland Chapter of the Sierra Club, which formed during the fight against the damming of the Red River and the flooding of the Gorge. Oscar was a vocal participant in this battle. Fifty years ago Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas accepted an invitation to come to the Gorge to experience the immense beauty and environmental importance of this area. This became a turning point in the fight for the river. Oscar was there with his Boy Scout troop, accompanying Justice Douglas on the historic hike. In 1993 Oscar testified before a US Senate subcommittee supporting the designation of nearly 20 miles of the Red River as a "Wild and Scenic River," thus ensuring that it would remain protected for future generations.

Oscar remained active with the Sierra Club until his death at the age of 88. He chaired the state chapter on several occasions. He led countless hikes and canoe trips to foster in others a commitment to the environment. He edited the chapter newsletter and participated in the local group's program to get inner city youth into the outdoors. He opened his legal office and, later in retirement, his home for meetings and "happy hours" where friends and activists came together to socialize and work. In 2007, the Sierra Club and State Nature Preserves Commission honored his environmental legacy by naming a trail in the Pilot Knob Nature Preserve the "Oscar Gerald's, Jr. Trail." He was also active with the Nature Conservancy and the Kentucky Natural Lands Trust.

But while Oscar may be best known for his environmental work, he left his mark in many less publicized ways as well. He was a scoutmaster for Boy Scout Troop 3 for 25 years, introducing children into nature, and he served as a board member of the High Street Neighborhood Center, a childcare facility for lower income families. Beyond volunteering his legal skills to the environmental community, Oscar was an early board member of the Legal Aid of the Bluegrass and offered his services to newly arriving Haitian immigrants. During the civil rights era, when

(Continued on page 2)

Wild Ones Annual Plant Exchange Coming Up

REMINDER! We will hold our annual plant exchange on **Thurs., May 4**, at 6:30 p.m. The location is St. Michael's Episcopal Church at 2025 Bellefonte Dr., **but the space for the exchange should be accessed from Libby Lane**. We ask that participants unload their plants on Libby Lane, then park either on the street or in the upper church parking lot.

Items to be exchanged can be perennials, grasses and sedges, shrubs, trees, vines, and seeds. All plants must be native to the Eastern United States; cultivars of native plants are acceptable. Potted plants are preferred but if the plants are dug on the day of the exchange, their roots may be kept moist in wet newspaper within a plastic bag. **Each plant must be labeled.**

Participants who have no plants to offer may contribute a food item or something good to drink for the evening's social gathering in exchange for plants. Finger foods, beer, wine and juices are particularly cherished.

Our plant exchange is also a fund raiser and supports our programs. We ask that *Wild Ones* pay \$5 for a ticket to select multiple plants. Non-members are asked to pay \$7.



A Surprise Gift to our Chapter

In April our *Wild Ones* chapter received a \$500 donation from *Brokenfork Design*, a real estate development company closely affiliated with *Urbanize*, the property management company that oversees *Brokenfork's* rentals. These two companies have created a "Live to Give" program, a charity of which *Wild Ones* is the first recipient. The charity donates \$10 of the monthly rent collected from each unit to an environmental organization that helps "preserve local forests, plants, waterways and endangered species." We are immensely grateful to the owners of the two companies for their recognition of our chapter's work and their support of our future projects.

Brokenfork rehabilitates houses and apartment buildings in low-income neighborhoods with an effort to preserve important period elements while providing needed 21st century amenities. Their units stand out visually through the bold and attractive colors on their outside walls. They truly liven up our cityscape. *Urbanize*, the management company, aims to create a sense of community among its residents and to revitalize the neighborhoods where *Brokenfork* has made investments.

Check out their website at www.brokenfork-design.com and then go and look at their buildings. You will be amazed.

(Oscar Gerald's continued from page 1)

African Americans were restricted to balcony seats in the Kentucky Theater, Oscar provided pro bono representation to protesters arrested for sitting in the main floor seats reserved for white patrons. In honor of his legal career, he was awarded the prestigious Henry T. Duncan Award and the Access to Justice Award.

A lifetime Lexingtonian, Oscar was a fount of information about the area. For many years, he led local history walks pointing out the significant sites of downtown, including those that had been components of the Underground Railroad during slavery. He never slowed down even when a pronounced limp hinted at pain or when he broke a rib leading a hike and continued on without complaint or comment.

Oscar was both attorney for and friend to Mary Wharton and helped in the establishment of Floracliff, one of the gems of our Bluegrass region. When Connie May explored the idea of planting urban micro-forests to increase pollinator habitat, Oscar was the first to sign on in support.

His gruff exterior, for which he was notorious, constituted but a thin veneer for an inner soul that cherished his family, friends and the Earth for which he remained a devoted steward throughout his life.

Suzanne Bhatt

Three Useful Lawn Weeds

Article and photos by Katrina Kelly

Each spring, lawns begin to display yellow, purple and white blooms. While that is a lovely color combination, some homeowners prefer a smooth green lawn and may reach for their chemical herbicides. Usually considered weeds, dandelions, violets and clover do have some beneficial qualities for humans and pollinators.

As a landscape designer, I'm often asked how to remove common blue violets (*viola sororia*) from the lawn. While the native violet can spread vigorously, it can also be used in some useful products. I have made a healing salve from the leaves, a medicinal syrup that uses the flowers, and even a delicious violet jelly for my morning toast.

Violets are the host plant for fritillary butterfly caterpillars. Several species of fritillaries are found in Kentucky. (One example is the great spangled fritillary.) These butterflies lay their eggs on violet leaves and when the eggs hatch, the new caterpillars eat the leaves.



The dandelion (*taraxacum*) is an iconic weed with yellow flowers and fluffy white seed heads. It, too, has beneficial uses. An extract from the leaves of this herb is applied medicinally to treat everything from loss of appetite to bruises and joint pain. Its flower petals make herbal teas and they can even be fermented to make wine. Dandelion greens of young plants are used in salads or chopped and added to stir fry dishes.

The urban landscape is often a nectar desert in early spring for bees emerging from their nests. While many spring plants are flowering in woodlands, dandelions adorn urban lawns. Though their nectar isn't a complete nutritional source for honey and native bees, it provides early spring food at a time when nectar sources are limited. Dandelion seeds are a food source for rabbits and birds, including goldfinches and sparrows.

When, as a child, I would sit on the lawn and make clover necklaces for my dog and myself, I did not realize that white clover (*trifolium repens*) was considered a weed. Now as an adult I know how valuable clover nectar is to bees. Honeybee farmers appreciate it as well and often raise fields of clover that will add a distinctive flavor to their honey.

White clover flowers and leaves are edible for humans, too. Similar to the dandelion, the leaves can be eaten in green salads and the flowers used for tea. Its cousin, red clover (*trifolium pratense*), is often used medicinally. Clover is a nitrogen-fixing plant, which means it absorbs nitrogen from the air and releases it into the soil acting as a fertilizer. Therefore, it is often planted as a cover crop by farmers.



Perhaps we should remember that a "weed" may have benefits. Perhaps these three nemeses of the perfectly green lawn advocates aren't entirely a bad thing. Maybe we can tolerate some in our green space. Maybe we can support pollinators and explore new food tastes and products by welcoming the lowly violet, dandelion and clover to our yards.

2018—the Year of the Bird

By Vicki Reed

National Geographic has launched 2018 as the *Year of the Bird*, a yearlong celebration of our feathered friends. Birds are experiencing habitat loss from climate change and rapid expansion of manmade development. This is a great opportunity to think about what we gardeners can do to protect and feed the birds who visit our yards. Here are a few suggestions.



Window strikes kill millions of birds each year and we can do several things to make birds safer in our yards. We can purchase decals, tape and even a roll on glaze that reduce reflection. For the decals or tape, use the 2 x 4 rule. Apply them in rows two inches apart horizontally and four inches apart vertically. A cheaper and less permanent method is to use soap. Wet it and drag the edge of the bar down the window in rows. Drawing patterns with tempera paint is another inexpensive temporary option. Fine netting and, of course, window screens are also effective. Taking the precaution to reduce surface reflection even if just for the duration of the migration season will save birds' lives.

Homes with feeders can actually increase the number of window strikes because the feeders will attract birds. So feeder placement is important. Feeders should be situated far enough away from the house that birds won't fly into a window as they scramble for cover should a hawk fly into the yard. The opposite will also work. If feeders are placed right next to windows there is little chance that startled birds can gain enough speed to injure themselves if they come into contact with windows.

Our gardens, as we know, can provide natural habitat for birds and their young. Native bushes and trees like elderberry, serviceberry, winterberry, dogwood and others provide berries for robins, cardinals, bluebirds and thrushes. Twiggy shrubs and small trees provide shelter and nesting sites for songbirds. Trees like oaks, willows and birches and native herbaceous plants like milkweed, sunflowers and goldenrod host caterpillars and other insects that are a vital source of protein for birds, especially during the breeding season. Asters and coneflowers produce loads of tiny seeds that are favored by finches and sparrows. Red tubular flowers such as native columbine and penstemon serve up nectar for hummingbirds.



The Audubon Society recognizes the importance of native plantings and now has a new tool on their website: <https://www.audubon.org/plantsforbirds>. Just plug in your zip code and you will see plantings for your area and the birds that most benefit from them. There are several filters to customize your search.

Finally, no bird-friendly yard is complete without a pond or fountain or birdbath for drinking and bathing. The trick is to keep the water circulating. In a birdbath, the water should be changed frequently so it doesn't become a breeding site for mosquitoes. The sound of running water is particularly attractive to birds and will bring them flocking during migration as well as on hot summer days. No room for a large water feature? Even boulders or flat rocks pitted with hollow spots can catch rainwater.



Often homeowners think only of wide expanses of green grass with small beds of plantings to border or accent the lawn. Perhaps we can encourage a reverse trend of larger patches of habitat edged with lawn pathways. Less mowing and more color and texture for us; more shelter and nourishment for birds. Let's use the remaining months of 2018 to explore new ways of inviting birds into our yards.

Reaching Out

By Linda Porter

When the *Wild Ones* Lexington chapter was formed over a decade ago, it began with a small dedicated group of people from Lexington and Frankfort who came together to promote native plants in the Bluegrass. In 2018 we have over 100 members. Our goal hasn't changed but it is always a good idea to pause and take an inventory of the impact we are making outside of our membership.

Programming continues to be the most dynamic part of our outreach efforts. Our monthly programs are announced to our members and friends, as well as the general public. Each month we have an attendance of around 40 people. This is a great way to share our work but it is not the only way we reach out to the community. Over the years we have offered garden tours, special presentations and displays to the public.



Last year the Community Outreach Team was formed to act as a clearinghouse for requests for such activities. The number of requests varies by season, most coming in the spring and fall. There is a small and dedicated group of members who enjoy interacting with the public. These *Wild Ones* members have shared their experiences and expertise with native plants in presentations at libraries, parks, extension offices, garden clubs, schools, retirement homes, festivals, neighborhood groups and other non-profit organizations.

We like to say “yes” to as many requests as possible. This requires people power. Would **you** be willing to help with outreach? Here are some specific ways you can join the effort:

1. If you hear about a tabling opportunity or a group wanting a speaker, let the *Wild Ones* Outreach team know. Or tell the organizers to check out the Community Outreach link on our website **lexington.wildones.org**.
2. You can sign up to help at the *Wild Ones* booth or information table at special celebrations, such as Earth Day or Arbor Day and other community gatherings. Our chapter participates in five to ten tabling events each year. We try to announce all the larger events at our meetings and through the newsletter.
3. We also would love to have more members share information with the public as speakers or presenters of demonstrations. We have PowerPoint presentations and portable display material prepared on many topics that any interested member can use to spread the word about our work. If you are a teacher or simply someone who enjoys doing presentations, this would be a great way for you to help.
4. Finally, if you are working with another organization or group on a special community event, and would like to have *Wild Ones* materials to share, let us know. We can provide copies of *Wild Ones* brochures and handouts for you to display or to distribute.

5th ANNUAL BLUEGRASS BIRDING FESTIVAL AND CRAFT FAIR

May 12, 2018 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

at

McConnell Springs
416 Rebmann Lane

Wild Birds Unlimited and Lexington Parks and Recreation are hosting this event which will include bird walks, banding demonstrations, live raptor exhibits and many other activities for the whole family. Community organizations will have informational tables. Vendors will be on hand with food and nature-inspired crafts for sale. This event is free and will be held rain or shine.

Free Workshop on May 12 at Salato Wildlife Education Center

On **Sat., May 12**, from 10 a.m. to noon wildlife ecologist and horticulturist Jody Thompson will teach a free workshop entitled “*How to Create Attractive and Functional Natural Areas*” at the Salato Wildlife Education Center. This workshop will provide information on:

- basic principles of design and plant and animal behavior that work together
- examples of Kentucky native plants and how they function in different situations
- how to incorporate these design principles and plants into your landscape or natural areas project

For more information and to register:
www.thehabitatworkshop.com/.

Monarch Report

Monarch butterflies will soon be making their summer stopovers in Kentucky to find nectar and to mate. Last year was another year of losses for monarchs in the US with over a 14 percent decrease in their numbers from the previous year. Loss of habitat and climate change were major contributors to the decrease. Creating new habitat, such as monarch waystations, continues to be critical to sustaining the monarch butterfly for the future.

Kentucky now has a total of 542 monarch waystations. At least 48 of these waystations were installed by *Wild Ones* members. Thanks to all of you who are dedicated to planting for monarchs and other pollinators.

For more information on how to plan, install and certify a waystation in 2018, contact Linda Porter at prairiegirl7@mac.com.

CERTIFIED MONARCH WAYSTATIONS March 2018



March 2013 = 36

March 2018 = 542



Worldwide 19,026
(March 2018)

City Numbers:
Lexington = 122
Lexington Area = 152
Louisville = 72
Frankfort = 27
Bowling Green = 9
Other = 160



Missouri	1380
Ohio	965
Tennessee	258
Indiana	573
Illinois	1,412



It's MAY

Bernheim Arboretum

Sat., May 19 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.—BloomFest and **SPRING PLANT SALE.** Arts, crafts, garden faerie house construction and naturalist-led discovery stations as well as the sale of plants propagated from Bernheim’s own collection. **FREE** with \$5 per car environmental impact fee for non-members.

Down to Earth Garden Club **PLANT SALE**

Sat., May 12 from 9 a.m. to noon.—Annual Fund raiser Sale. Plant list is on the website www.downtoearthky.com. Funds support the club’s Waveland perennial garden. The sale takes place at Woodland Christian Church (corner of Woodland and Kentucky Avenue).

Floracliff Nature Sanctuary

Sat., May 5 from 7 to 11 a.m.—Global Big Day Bird Hikes. Hiking easy, moderate, and difficult depending on which hike you choose. Join one of three simultaneous hikes to count and identify birds as part of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology event.

- Trail’s End to Kentucky River—moderate to difficult
- Cooper Loop and Wilson Trail—moderate to difficult
- Trail’s End Driveway—easy

Suggested donation \$10/person; \$5 for those 15 and under. Registration required—email info@floracliff.org with your name, phone number and number of people you wish to register.

McConnell Springs

Sat., May 19 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.—Founders’ Day and Colonial Crafts Festival. Activities, demonstrations, music, storytelling, food and crafts. **FREE ADMISSION.**

Raven Run Nature Sanctuary

Sat., May 12 at 8 a.m.—Birds of the Bluegrass. Join a morning bird walk to look for many migratory birds of spring. Register by calling **859-272-6105**.

UK Arboretum

Sat., May 5—Friends of the Arboretum **SPRING PLANT EXCHANGE.** Plants unloaded at 9 a.m.; exchange begins at 10 a.m. **FREE** to Friends, otherwise \$2 per person.