

***SEEDLINGS, the Newsletter  
of Kalamazoo Area WILD ONES  
Native Plants, Natural Landscapes***

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What more substantial service to conservation  
than to practice it on one's own land?

--Aldo Leopold

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**January-February, 2018  
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***For January Program, Chad Hughson Takes  
Wild Ones Through All the Steps of Assessing the  
Site and Preparing for a New Native Planting***

Chad Hughson, co-owner of Hidden Savanna Nursery, will open the Kalamazoo Wild Ones regular program series for 2018 with a presentation on choosing, assessing, and preparing the site for your native planting. So you've decided to take the plunge and install a new native planting. What's next?

Chad will discuss and illustrate the various assessment, planning and preparatory steps that you should undertake before installation. While there are many variables that affect the long-term success of a native planting,

proper site evaluation and preparation will certainly Improve your chances of succeeding.

Assessing a site involves a wide range of questions and observations. How much sun does it receive? What is the topography? How well does the soil drain? What is living there now?

We'll review these types of basic questions, but then we'll go into much greater detail. For example, your site might receive six hours of direct sunlight during the summer, but what about during early May? How does this impact your plant selection? Next, we'll review the planning phase, which includes finalizing your site selection, creating a plant list and layout, and determining what site preparation will be required.

Lastly, it's time to get hands on and prepare your site. We'll discuss topics such as weed elimination, soil amendments, and mulching.

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Chad is the co-owner, with his wife Kristin, of Hidden Savanna Nursery. Located in Oshtemo Township, the nursery will be celebrating its ten-year anniversary this spring. Chad has been propagating native species from seed for two decades, and the nursery is currently producing nearly 300 species of forbs, graminoids, shrubs, and trees. He received a bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering from Michigan Technological University and is a former President of the Wildflower Association of Michigan.

We will meet <b>Wednesday, January 24</b> , at First United Methodist Church, 212 S. Park St., downtown Kalamazoo. Socializing at 6:30; <b>program promptly at 7.</b>
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## ***February Program Features the Rich Possibilities of Plants for Shade, Savanna, & the "Wood-Wide Web"***

by Tom Small

When Nancy and I presented a Wild Ones program on plants for shade in January 2007, we offered a slide show that was basically an illustrated and annotated listing of "woodland wildflowers." I've learned a lot and thought a lot in the 11 years since that program, and what I hope to offer for Wild Ones this February will include such a listing but also delve more deeply and offer a much broader range of possibilities.

Part of what I want to suggest is that “plants for shade” is far too limiting a concept for what we need to know and the practice we need to follow in the “natural landscaping” of our urban-suburban environments.

As our friend Kim Chapman points out, up until fairly recently ecologists assumed that southwest Michigan, historically, was either heavily wooded or virtually treeless wherever they found remnant species of “prairie plants.” But in fact, intermediate “part-shade” levels of light predominated across southern Michigan’s ecosystems, with only limited areas of dense-shade forest, and full sun mostly in scattered, quite small prairies—either wet or dry.

We now know that the predominant ecosystem on the dry, flat-to-rolling landscapes of southwest lower Michigan was savanna, especially oak savanna or “oak openings,” where clumps and scatterings of Black and White Oak trees thrived side by side with a rich mixture of grasses, sedges, wildflowers, shrubs, and understory trees.

### **Neither Prairie Nor Forest**

Most of the urban and suburban landscapes where we live lend themselves pretty well to establishing some approximations of these historic savannas. So mostly what we want for our plantings are neither strictly prairie nor strictly forest plants but ones that thrive under or at least tolerate a broad range of conditions, from forest edge and woodland to prairie “openings,” from part-sun to part-shade, from dry to moist.

Another way of characterizing the wide range of “shade-plant” possibilities is in terms of “edges,” which, as Darke and Tallamy emphasize in *The Living Landscape*, are “a defining element of suburban residential landscapes.” Almost every feature in a suburban yard is an edge, between soil and pavement or structure, between turf and garden bed, between shady and sunny, between wet and dry, between your yard and the neighbor’s. I’ll try to suggest how we can both recognize the limitations and exploit the diverse possibilities of “edge environment.”

### **Intermediate Communities**

I’ll draw on my experience and observation and on my reading to suggest what plants are best suited to these kinds of “intermediate” communities, where ecosystems intersect and overlap. My illustrations will largely come from our own yard, which approximates the light and shade conditions of savanna (tree canopy cover 5% to 50%) and woodland (50 to 75%).

I'll touch on the possibilities for "layering" of savanna plants, from tall canopy trees, understory trees, and shrubs, down to the forbs, grasses, ferns, and sedges, so that in our gardens we take full advantage of both horizontal and vertical edges, where sometimes surprising transitions and juxtapositions occur.

Finally, since we're dealing not just with "plants for shade" but complex, ever-changing plant communities, I'll touch on the emerging recognition of what some are now calling the "wood-wide web," the wondrous networks of communication and mutual aid within and between plant species, fungi, microbes, and invertebrates. And that probably requires a word or two about restoration of the soil as an essential part of a savanna/woodland planting.

Does all this sound like a lot for 50 minutes? A bit too much like roller skating through the Louvre? Well, we'll have to see how it comes out. Stand by.

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Tom Small is co-founder of the Kalamazoo Area Chapter of Wild Ones and co-author, with his deceased wife Nancy, of *Using Native Plants to Restore Community*. He's a past board member of the Wildflower Association of Michigan, a member of the WMU Faculty Climate Change Working Group, and former clerk of the steering committee for Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW), the Quaker environmental organization for the Americas. His recent publications include the pamphlets "Talking About Climate Change: A Call for Dialogue" and "Contemplative Action in the Time of Climate Change," for QEW, and "A Garden Ethic for a Living Landscape," in *Wild Ones Journal*.

We will meet **Wednesday, February 28**, at First United Methodist Church, 212 S. Park St., downtown Kalamazoo. Socializing at 6:30; **program promptly at 7.**

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## ***Wild Ones 2018 Program Series Emphasizes The Practice of Natural Landscaping***

Here's the full list of programs and field trips for 2018. For details, check with the latest issue of *Seedlings*, the email newsletter for Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones, and the KAWO web site, [www.kalamazoowildones.org](http://www.kalamazoowildones.org). All programs are free and open to the public.

All indoor programs are at Kalamazoo First United Methodist Church, 212 S. Park Street. Socializing begins at 6:30; program begins promptly at 7:00 p.m.

**Saturday, January 13** *Native Plant Propagation Workshop* • Steve Keto,

Natural Areas and Preserves Director, WMU • 9:30 a.m. -12:00 p.m. *Note: Registration is closed, and there is a waiting list.*

**Wednesday, January 24** *Site assessment and preparation for Native Plantings* • Chad Hughson, Hidden Savanna Nursery

**Wednesday, February 28** *Native Plants for Shade and Savanna Conditions* • Tom Small, Co-Founder of Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones

**Wednesday, March 28** *Early Land Plants* • Dave Wendling, President, SW Michigan Botanical Club

**Wednesday, April 25** *Invasive Plants on the Move: What's New for Kalamazoo* • Nate Fuller, Stewardship Director, Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy

**Saturday, May 5** *Spring Ephemerals Field Trip* • Sue Hodapp, Master Gardener • Kal-Haven Trail, from F to G Ave. • 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

**Saturday, May 19** *5th Annual Plant Sale, People's Food Co-Op* • 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

**Sunday, June 3** *26th Annual Spring Plant Exchange, Ruth and Tom's Gardens* • 1:00-5:00 p.m.

**Tuesday, June 5** *Invasive Plants, Bow in the Clouds, Field Trip* • Nate Fuller, Stewardship Director, Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy • 6:30-8:30 p.m.

**Saturday, June 23** *Mosses and Ferns Field Trip* • Dave Wendling, President, SW Michigan Botanical Club • Dowagiac Woods • 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

**Saturday July 21** *Wetland Flowers Field Trip* • Tyler Bassett, Research Associate, Dept. of Plant Biology, MSU; Kal-Haven Trail, 48 1/2 Street • 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

**Tuesday, August 14** *Native Gardens in the Gull Lake Area Field Trip* • various hosts • 6:30-8:30 p.m.

**Sunday, September 16** *Wild Ones Annual Fall Plant Exchange, Ruth and Tom's Gardens* • 1:00-5:00 p.m.

**Wednesday, September 26** *Restoring Our Vanishing Soil Communities* • Mike Klug, Professor Emeritus, MSU

**Wednesday, October 24** *City Planning and the Environment* • Rebekah Kik, Director, Community Planning and Development for Kalamazoo, and Christine Anderson, Kalamazoo City Planner

**Wednesday, November 28** *Climate Change and Plant Communities* • David

Karowe, Professor of Biological Sciences, WMU

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## ***Can You Contribute Some of Your Time and Skill to Saving Native Species and Wildlife Habitat?***

by Mike Klug

Particularly at this time of the year many non-profit organizations ask for our financial support. Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones has rarely done this and relies on member dues and fund-raising activities to support our work. We also rely on our members volunteering their time and expertise to carry out the many activities that are required to keep us operating effectively and to carry out our mission.

A few years ago, a new member said that KAWO was the first organization she belonged to that did not ask her to do anything. Although this has mostly been the case, we are now in need of your help.

Our committees provide us with program planning, tabling at events, producing promotional materials and managing the organization. At this time, most of our committees are down to a few members who have carried these responsibilities for many years.

We need some of your time, expertise, ideas and skills to continue to move our organization forward and adapt to the changes presented by the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Our mission is critical to stem the tide of habitat loss and species decline.

One of our most important needs is volunteers for our Publication, Publicity, and Outreach committee (PPO). We currently are down to a few members who have carried the various tasks of the committee for a number of years. Kathy Fiebig, and Jennifer LaForest manage our website and Facebook account respectively. Tom Small has edited the chapter newsletter, *Seedlings*, for most of the Chapter's 19 years. Mike Klug and Cindy Vigneron have managed outreach activities such as maintaining promotional materials and arranging tabling events.

**Kathy, Jennifer, Tom, Mike, and Cindy need your help and new ideas to better reach new audiences and better communicate with our members and like-minded organizations.**

If you feel you could contribute to the PPO committee or would like to know more about other committees or opportunities, **contact Mike Klug**, by email,

[Klug@mei.net](mailto:Klug@mei.net), or call 269-623-6725. Or talk with him or one of the other board members at one of our meetings.

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## ***Are You Wild for Monarch Butterflies? There's a Wild Ones Committee Where You Can Help***

If you want to help monarch butterflies continue their wonderful annual migration and life cycle, then Wild Ones has a committee that **both provides you with an opportunity and also needs your help.**

A partnership between Wild Ones, Monarch Joint Venture, and Monarch Watch, the Wild for Monarchs Committee assists monarch butterflies through promoting the planting of nectar and host plants. The committee provides presentations on monarch biology and migration, provides monarch information booths at local events, assists individuals and organizations in establishing native plant areas which include milkweed, and assists in registering these areas as Monarch Watch Waystations.

The committee also collects milkweed seeds and prepares seed packets for distribution at presentations and events. These activities are promoted through press releases and articles in *Seedlings*, on the Wild Ones webpage, and in other publications.

**To volunteer** or for more information, contact Ilse Gebhard, the Committee Chair, at [gebhard.ilse@gmail.com](mailto:gebhard.ilse@gmail.com).

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## ***The Mystery of the Secretive Underground Feeder***

By Ilse Gebhard

Any day that I'm presented with a mystery of nature to be solved is a great day. One such day was May 23 when a friend brought me not only a native plant from her yard but also a caterpillar hiding in the soil that she dug up along with the plant.

The caterpillar was a rather drab tan and clearly wanted to be hiding in the dirt. Some moths pupate in the ground, so this species was either getting ready to pupate or it was one that hides by day and comes above ground during the night. Quart deli containers with holes for air in the lid make good homes for mystery caterpillars. I supplemented the dirt with some moist peat

moss and placed a dandelion leaf on top. When the host (food) plant is not known, dandelion is a good first choice to offer.

By golly, the dandelion leaf was gone the next morning. So I added two more leaves, and the next morning they were gone. Three leaves were more than the caterpillar could consume the next night as part of a leaf was sticking out of the dirt the next morning. After another night of consuming only part of the three leaves I had added, the caterpillar stopped feeding.



Variegated Cutworm pupa and moth (Pearly Underwing)

The pupal stage is always a waiting game. What and when will something emerge? Will it be a moth, a parasite, or nothing? Will it be this year or next spring? This moth was very obliging and emerged June 18. While the caterpillar was quite plain, it did have some small markings, and by its shape and texture, short and smooth, it corroborated my identification of the moth that emerged – *Peridroma saucia*, commonly known as Variegated Cutworm. Also known by the prettier name of Pearly Underwing, it has an off-white hindwing, and its wingspan is 1.6-2.2 inches. There are two generations per year in the U.S., and it can overwinter at the pupal stage.

*Peridroma saucia* is found worldwide, and its larva is a generalist feeder as it is known to feed on 100+ species of plants. It gets its “cutworm” name from its habit of cutting plants at ground level and pulling them underground to feed on. It can be an agricultural pest on crops such as cabbage, carrot, corn, potato, tomato, and wheat.

References:



*Peterson Field Guide to Moths of Northeastern North America*, David Beadle & Seabrooke Leckie  
*Caterpillars of Eastern North America*, David L. Wagner  
*Owlet Caterpillars of Eastern North America*, David L. Wagner *et al.*

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## ***Quotations for Contemplation***

Reality is that which, when you stop believing in it, doesn't go away.

--Philip K. Dick

Only through a moment of encounter does one's own character come fully to fruition. The world is not an aggregation of things, but rather a symphony of relationships between many participants that are altered by the interaction: a necessarily erotic occurrence.

--Andreas Weber, *Matter and Desire: An Erotic Ecology* (2017)

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## ***More Events of Interest to Wild Ones***

### **31<sup>st</sup> Annual Michigan Wildflower Conference**

**Sunday, March 4, and Monday, March 5, 2018**

**Kellogg Conference Center, MSU, East Lansing**

The Keynote speaker for this year's conference is Claudia West, co-author, *Planting in a Post-Wild World: Designing Plant Communities for Resilient Landscapes*. For a full schedule and information on registration and accommodation, go to [www.wildflowersmich.org](http://www.wildflowersmich.org).

### **Kalamazoo Wild Ones March Program: Early Land Plants**

**Wednesday, March 28, 7 p.m.**

**First United Methodist Church, 212 S. Park St., Kalamazoo**

Dave Wendling, President of the Southwest Michigan Botanical Club and past president of Kalamazoo Wild Ones, will discuss how the earliest land plants were able to move from water to land and what these plants look like today. He'll provide a brief overview of how to start identifying the liverworts and mosses. Finally, he'll discuss briefly how the vascular plants evolved and why they became the dominant plants on land. Stand by for more details in the March-April issue of *Seedlings*.

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### **Events Cancellation Policy**

If the weather is questionable and you're wondering whether a Wild Ones indoor program is canceled, please watch WWMT Channel 3 for a cancellation announcement of our

program. If time permits, an e-mail cancellation notice will also be sent to members. Field trips and plant exchanges are held rain or shine and canceled only in severe weather: i.e., raining cattails and dogwoods, mit donner und blitzten.

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**SEEDLINGS** is edited by Tom Small and appears five times a year, with a few additional brief supplements. The next regular issue, for **March-April, 2018**, will come early in March. **Deadline for submission is Monday, February 26.** Please send submissions, comments, and suggestions to Tom at [yard2prairy@gmail.com](mailto:yard2prairy@gmail.com). For more information and news, check us out at [www.kalamazoowildones.org](http://www.kalamazoowildones.org) and [www.facebook.com/KalamazooAreaWildOnes](https://www.facebook.com/KalamazooAreaWildOnes)