

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

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

--Aldo Leopold

March-April, 2015 — Contents

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Drawing by Amelia Hansen
from *Using Native Plants
to Restore Community*

Rick Meader, Ann Arbor Landscape Architect, Talks on Place of Small Trees & Shrubs in Your Landscape

The March 25 program for Kalamazoo Wild Ones features Rick Meader, Ann Arbor Landscape Architect, speaking on how "Small Trees and Shrubs Add Habitat and Interest to Your Landscape."

Rick is already familiar to many Wild Ones for his programs three years ago, for Kalamazoo Wild Ones and for Wildflower Association of Michigan, on integrating more natives into urban and suburban landscapes. He's once again on the Wildflower Association schedule this year with a program on incorporating native plants into both formal and casual landscapes.

"Herbaceous plants get a lot of attention," Rick explains, "because they usually signal a change in the seasons, and bring a continual stream of color and interest to a garden, especially to those who keep their eyes on the ground."

"Canopy trees provide shade and often dominate a landscape and create its environment with the amount of sunlight they allow to the ground. But when it comes to creating an intimate feel for a landscape, for feeding

birds and other wildlife, and for giving you a lot of bang for your landscape buck in a relatively short time, small trees and shrubs are pros.

“We'll learn about many small trees and shrubs that can help you diversify the look and feel of your landscape, for you and for critters who love shrubs and trees.”

Rick Meader is a licensed Landscape Architect based in the Ann Arbor area. He has experience in designing landscapes for businesses, subdivisions, churches, schools, hotels, and private residences. Whenever possible, he prefers to use native plants in his designs, and they usually dominate his plant lists.

Wild Ones will meet Wednesday, March 25, at First United Methodist Church, 212 S. Park, downtown Kalamazoo. Socializing at 6:30 p.m., **program promptly at 7.**

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Basic Skills & Hands-On Practice

Todd Barkman Will Lead Wild Ones on “Adventures in Plant Identification” for April Indoor Program

On April 22, WMU Biology Professor Todd Barkman will present the last Wild Ones indoor program this spring, leading us into “Adventures in Plant Identification 101: Principles, Practices, and Discoveries.”

“For the last 15 years,” Todd writes, “I have taught Plant Systematics courses in which students are trained in the practice of classification, identification, and nomenclature. In particular, these courses have been field courses that immerse students in the natural plant world around them. Whereas many students begin the class with only limited plant knowledge (usually only 50% know what a trillium is), they end up able to recognize and identify a wide diversity of plant families and species.

“In this presentation, I will introduce 25 commonly encountered Michigan plant families and the conspicuous species that are classified within them. In the second part of the presentation, I will conduct a crash course in the use of taxonomic keys with the hope of convincing you that they are to be embraced rather than feared!

“By the end of the presentation, I hope that participants will have the basic skills necessary to answer their own question, “What is that plant?” There will be a hands-on session during which plant specimens will be available for identification purposes.”

Todd will lead a follow-up outdoor field trip on Saturday, May 9, for practicing our plant identification skills. Details and location in April & May newsletters.

Currently a Professor of Biological Sciences, **Todd Barkman** first came to Western Michigan University in 2000. He teaches numerous botany courses,

including Plant Systematics. He received his BS and MS in Botany from Michigan State University and PhD in Botany from The University of Texas, Austin. His research has historically been focused on plants of Borneo, but currently he can't resist the lure of Michigan botany.

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Doug Tallamy Returns to Southwest Michigan for Pierce Cedar Creek Luncheon Program April 18

Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones will co-sponsor the return of our old friend and mentor, Doug Tallamy, in a program at Pierce Cedar Creek Institute, near Hastings, on Saturday, April 18, from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.



Tallamy will speak on “Restoring Biodiversity at Home: Why Your Garden Matters.”

Following a strolling tapas lunch by Institute Chef Richard Centala, Tallamy will discuss the ways in which garden plants can have a positive impact on local biodiversity.

Professor and Chair of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware, Tallamy won the Garden Writers' Association's Silver Medal for *Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants*. His most recent book, with Rick Darke, is *The Living Landscape: Designing for Beauty and Biodiversity in the Home Garden*. Following the program, Tallamy will be available for book signing. Tickets for the program and luncheon are \$40.

Located in rural Barry County, **Pierce Cedar Creek** is a nonprofit environmental education center committed to building awareness and understanding of the natural world. All proceeds from the event will support the Institute's Grow Native! Campaign. Through Grow Native!, the Institute works to promote the aesthetic and ecological benefits of native plants and to replace invasive weeds and non-native grasses in its main campus area with native prairie plantings, thus drawing attention to stewardship efforts taking place on more remote areas of its 661 acres of property.

For more information or to register for the event, visit cedarcreekinstitute.org or call (269) 721-4190.

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Other Programs of Interest to Wild Ones

Monday, March 16, 6:30 p.m.

Michigan Botanical Club, Southwest Chapter

Joshua Cohen, "An Overview of the Forested Systems of Northern Michigan"

People's Church, 1758 N. 10th St., Kalamazoo

Joshua Cohen is the lead ecologist for the Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI) and lead author of MNFI's new book *A Field Guide to the Natural Communities of Michigan*. He will present a comprehensive view of Michigan's northern forests and talk about their ecology and the threats that continue to affect our beautiful forests.

He will bring copies of the Field Guide to sell at a discounted price and will sign your book if you wish. The guide is an exhaustive inventory and description of the native vegetation types in our wonderfully diverse state.

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UN Declares 2015 International Year of Soils

By Tom Small

"The soil," Wendell Berry wrote, in *The Unsettling of America*, "is the great connector of lives, the source and destination of all. It is the healer and restorer and resurrector, by which disease passes into health, age into youth, death into life. Without proper care for it we can have no community, because without proper care for it we can have no life."

In declaring 2015 the International Year of Soils, the United Nations General Assembly affirmed that soils are "key to sustaining life on Earth."

Our soils, however, as Al Gore said in 2009, are a "planetary emergency." Degraded by development, the monocultures of conventional landscaping and industrial agriculture, erosion, contamination, and the vicissitudes of climate change, the very life of the soil is at risk. And so is the community of life on Earth.

Wild Ones is dedicated to the practice of natural landscaping, a practice which conserves and restores the soil food web.

During this year of the soils, it behooves each of us to devote extra time and care to



learning more about our own soil and taking greater care for its life—and ours.

Here are some possibilities:

● Attend the Wildflower Conference in East Lansing this Sunday and Monday, March 8 and 9; go to MSU Professor George Bird’s program on Sunday, “Soil Health Biology: With Special Reference to Listening to Nature.”

● Read David R. Montgomery’s *dirt: The Erosion of Civilizations*, a study of how past civilizations have undermined themselves by ruining their soil and how our civilization is on course to do the same. (The lower-case “d” in the book’s title is deliberate, part of Montgomery’s message: “We’ve got to stop treating it like dirt.”)

● Check out some UN Food and Agriculture Organization’s fact sheets—and other materials on the IYS (International Year of Soils): <http://www.fao.org/soils-2015/resources/fact-sheets/en/#c326621>.

● Redouble your efforts to support locally and organically grown produce and meat rather than industrially produced and processed food which degrades soil.

● Get an organization you belong to or work with to schedule my Powerpoint program, “Soil: The Web of Life in Your Hands.” Call Tom at 269-381-4946 or email at yard2prairie@gmail.com for more information.

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Dave Wendling says, “It’s time to think about a Site Visit”

Despite what you’re seeing outside, spring is coming and it’s time to start thinking about a site visit. If you’re a member and need some advice on native gardening, need to know what is growing in your yard, need to know how to control invasive plants, or need resources, we are here to help.

Whether you are a new or an established member, we will arrange for a more experienced native gardener to visit your property as a consultant to help you decide on how to use native plants in your landscape. We do not ask for money; our reward is seeing you succeed in creating beauty and native habitat in your yard.

To sign up contact Dave Wendling at 269-624-6946, dave.wendling47@gmail.com.
Sign up sheets will also be available at our next two programs.
If you have already had a site visit and need more help with your landscape, you can contact Dave about our mentorship program.

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Quotations for Contemplation

We may utilize the gifts of Nature just as we choose,
but in her books the debts are always equal to the credits.

--Mahatma Gandhi

Not everything that can be counted counts,
and not everything that counts can be counted.

--Albert Einstein

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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 current members. Field trips and plant exchanges are held rain or shine and canceled only in severe weather (like, raining cattails and dogwoods).

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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 **May-June, 2015**, will come early in May. **Deadline for submission is Thursday, April 30, 2015.** Please send submissions, comments, and suggestions to Tom at yard2prairie@gmail.com. For more information and news, check us out at www.kalamazoowildones.org and www.facebook.com/KalamazooAreaWildOnes