

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

=====

CONTENTS, JULY-SEPTEMBER, 2010

- * July Field Trip for Mary Ann's Trees and Shrubs
- * August Visits to Wild Ones Members' Rural Properties
- * See the "Bow in the Clouds" in September
- * Events Elsewhere—Far & Near
- * A Tribute to Lorrie Otto (1919-2010)
- * "Earthbound," a poem by Emma Pitcher
- * *Sightings and Insights*
- * Plant It and Hope That They Will Come
- * A Quotation for Contemplation

=====

Wild Ones Visit Mary Ann's Michigan Trees and Shrubs Saturday, July 17

Mary Ann Menck will host our Wild Ones field trip Saturday, July 17, at her plant nursery near Paw Paw, Mary Ann's Michigan Trees and Shrubs. In her program on "Placing Native Shrubs in Your Landscape," beginning at 10 a.m., she'll offer numerous ideas on how native shrubs could enhance your yard not just for you but also for your visitors: the butterflies, moths, and birds. Her program will include illustrations and live shrubs to demonstrate possible landscaping ideas. The one-hour talk will include time for discussion and questions.

The program will be outdoors, with a limited amount of seating provided, so you may want to bring a chair of your own. Cold water and lemonade will be provided. If you bring a brown bag lunch, that should allow ample time to browse through the nursery and choose native shrubs for your landscaping project. The field trip will be held rain or shine.

Mary Ann Menck established her native-plant nursery business, Mary Ann's Michigan Trees and Shrubs, eight years ago after retiring as an elementary-school counselor. She is an Advanced Master Gardener, a Master Woodland Manager, and a graduate of MSU workshops on "Tilling the Soil of Opportunity." She's a member and secretary of the Michigan Native Plant Producers Association, a member of the Wildflower Association of Michigan, and a member and secretary of Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones. For more information and plant lists, go to www.maryannstrees.com

Directions: I-94 to Paw Paw, Exit 60. Turn north on M-40 to the intersection of M-40 and M-43. Continue north on M-40. Look for the restaurant on the left (west) side. Two houses past the restaurant you will see a row of pine trees. Just past the pine trees, at the top of the hill, you'll see the nursery, Mary Ann's Michigan Trees and Shrubs, on the left. You may park in front of the barn basement.

Since many will want room in their vehicles for shrubs and trees, we'll not try to organize car-pooling; but we encourage you to carpool with friends who don't mind sharing space with plants.

+++++

August Brings Visits to Rural Yards of Long-Time Wild Ones Members

On Saturday, August 21, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Kalamazoo Wild Ones will visit two rural native-plant restorations at the homes of Wild Ones Ilse Gebhard and Russ Schipper and Becky and Kalman Csia, both quite nearby in northwestern Kalamazoo County.

We'll begin at 10 a.m. at **Ilse and Russ's, 6450 N. 2nd St.**, where there are both a variety of plantings around the house and a large 55-acre prairie planting, the Sand Creek Preserve, which they established on an old field adjoining their home property and which is now a Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy preserve.

Ilse reports that every year they replace more and more of their former lawn with rather wild areas of native plants, including a tall-grass prairie planting and a short-grass one. There's a fern bed with about 10 native ferns and several areas of shade-loving plants. Wetland plants are growing along the edge of Sand Creek and the pond, close by the house. This variety of native plants provides habitat for many insect species, which therefore attract more birds.

If there's time we might take a brief look across the creek at the Sand Creek Preserve prairie planting of 55 acres. For a longer look at the preserve, join the Michigan Botanical Club field trip on Saturday, August 28th.

Then, at about 11:30, we'll backtrack a bit to **Becky and Kalman's, 2831 N. 2nd St.** According to presettlement surveys, the 10-acre Csia property was once part of a sandy black oak barrens, remnants of which still existed when Kalman and Becky moved there 13 years ago. Since then, they've been working to transform a former pasture with scattered oaks & pines into a wildflower meadow featuring wild lupine, goat's rue, leadplant, blazing star, butterfly weed and three kinds of coreopsis. We'll see gardens near the house and then walk the meadow (on paths) as they describe their management objectives, techniques and challenges in their ongoing efforts to protect and restore plants associated with sandy oak-dominated communities.

DIRECTIONS TO ILSE AND RUSS'S: Drive west on M-43 (West Main) past US-131 until you get to 2nd St. Turn right (north) and go about four miles. There's a slight jog in the road at G Ave., but keep going north on 2nd past FG Ave. on the right. The driveway is the last one **on the right** just before you get to EF Ave. (which goes off to the left). There are two driveways next to each other; take the

second one (furthest north). The house is not visible from the road. Number (6450) is by the driveway.

DIRECTIONS TO BECKY AND KALMAN'S: From Russ and Ilse's, return south on 2nd St. About 0.3 of a mile south of H Ave., turn right into the driveway at 2831, marked by little orange flags. If you're joining the tour at 11:30, without first going to Russ and Ilse's, take M-43 west, go about 1.7 miles north on 2nd St., and turn **left** into the driveway shortly after you pass J Ave. There will be little orange flags by the driveway.

+++++

Wild Ones Visit the Bow in the Clouds Preserve in September with Nate Fuller

The final Kalamazoo Wild Ones field trip of the season, on Saturday, Sept. 11, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., will take us to a nearby nature preserve that has long been under the care of the Sisters of St. Joseph at Nazareth on Gull Road, and is now under the care of the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy. Our leader will be Nate Fuller, Conservation and Stewardship Director for SWMLC.

Although located within the Kalamazoo city limits, the 60-acre Bow in the Clouds Preserve has many wild corners. There's an extensive boardwalk system - approximately 1000 feet - which traverses a pristine stream and wetland, enabling close viewing without a strenuous slog through marsh grass and damage to a sensitive wetland system.

Sister Virginia "Ginny" Jones, of the Sisters of St. Joseph, has been the preserve's lead caretaker for most of 40 years, and she views the boardwalk as a rare concession to the forces of development. She'd much rather see Bow in the Clouds become an increasingly wild and even sacrosanct place. "Managing a preserve doesn't mean that you go around and whack everything with a machete," Sr. Ginny said. "That's not the kind of consciousness, or energy, that governs this place. We want to be part of nature, not masters of it."

The name Bow in the Clouds comes from the Bible (**Genesis 9:13**) where God set a "bow in the clouds" as a sign of the new covenant between Him and the earth. The preserve property was once part of the Nazareth College campus, a Catholic liberal arts school that closed in the early 1990s.

The Sisters dedicated Bow in the Clouds as an environmental preserve in 1973. They donated Bow in the Clouds to the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy in 2007, in order to insure its care and preservation in perpetuity. "We want the public to use it for what we call 're-creation,'" said Sr. Ginny. "We know many people today are separated from religious tradition, and we respect that. We also know that before formal religion existed, people encountered something of the holy in the

natural world. And that something - that peace, solitude and wisdom - is what we believe people can still find here."

There will be more information about the Bow in the Clouds field trip, including directions, in the August supplement to SEEDLINGS.

+++++

EVENTS ELSEWHERE—FAR & NEAR

SATURDAY, AUG. 14, noon to 10 p.m.

First Annual Water Festival

Arcadia Creek Festival Site, Kalamazoo

A celebratory festival and call to action by watershed citizens concerned about local water resources and the Great Lakes.

Sponsored by Kalamazoo River Watershed Council; co-sponsored by many organizations, including **Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones**.

Music all day, exhibitors, food, festivity, family activities. Celebrate water. Learn about local waterways and watersheds, local, regional, and global water problems and crises, how they affect you and how you can help.

Free admission during the day; admission charge in the evening. Beer and wine available during evening hours.

For more information: www.kalamazooriver.org and www.thewaterfestival.com

SUNDAY, AUG. 29, 1 to 5 p.m.

Fall Wild Ones Native Plant Exchange

At the home of Tom Small, 2502 Waite Ave., Kalamazoo

Strictly an exchange, not a sale; but you need not bring plants in order to take plants home. Please bring only plants native to Michigan, carefully dug up, **potted**, and labeled. If in doubt about what's native, e-mail Tom at yard2prairy@aol.com, or call 269-381-4946.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 19, 11:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Southwest Michigan Harvest Festival

Tillers International, Scotts, Michigan

Featured presenter this year is Richard Heinberg, speaking on Sustainability: How to Make the Transition

Heinberg is the author of nine influential books, including **The Party's Over** and **Peak Everything: Waking Up to the Century of Declines**. Heinberg has a powerful message about the converging crises of climate change, the end of cheap fossil fuel, and the decline of just about everything we've come to depend upon. He also has recommendations about how we can manage the difficult transition to a different way of life.

There's a great musical lineup, programs, growers & vendors, food, family tent for youngsters, and activities for the whole family.

Exhibitors include farmers, artisans, eco-villagers, sustainability and natural wellness experts, and **Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones**. Hayrides, demonstrations, helpful food tips, and more.

More information & directions: www.tillersinternational.org

TUESDAY, SEPT. 21, 7:30-8:30 p.m.

Michigan Prairies

A program by Dr. Doug Landis, Professor of Entomology, MSU
Kellogg Biological Station—Academic Center Auditorium
3700 Gull Lake Drive
Hickory Corners, MI 49060

For directions: www.kbs.msu.edu

+++++

Lorrie Otto, Wild Ones Founder and Natural Landscaping Movement Pioneer, Dies A Tribute to Lorrie Otto (1919-2010)

We've lost one of the founders of Wild Ones, Lorrie Otto.

In 1977, nine people in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, attended a natural landscaping workshop led by Lorrie Otto and became intensely interested in the new concept of landscaping with native plants. Their enthusiasm blossomed into Wild Ones Natural Landscapers, originally based in Milwaukee.

Lorrie was born in 1919 near Madison, Wisconsin. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin, married Owen Otto, a psychiatrist, and moved to Bayside, a north Milwaukee suburb, a block from Lake Michigan.

In the 1950s and 1960s, it was common practice to spray for mosquitoes on a weekly basis with DDT. After each run, Lorrie found birds strewn about, twitching, soon to die. She became a founding board member of the Wisconsin Chapter of The Nature Conservancy and the Citizens Natural Resources Association (CNRA) and led the assault on DDT, often taking a basket of dead robins to community meetings in Bayside to show to officials.

At first she was met with hostility, since DDT, despite Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962), was still widely considered safe and indispensable. But Charles Wurster, one of the founders of the Environmental Defense Fund, who was a young scientist when he first met Lorrie, said her help made a landmark Wisconsin lawsuit over DDT use possible. It was a case that set others in motion.

In 1970, Wisconsin became the first state to outlaw it. Wisconsin's Senator Gaylord Nelson, initiator of Earth Day, carried the battle along to Washington, D.C., and by 1972, DDT had been banned nationally.

Lorrie was the inspiration for the natural-landscaping movement, which first brought her into conflict with her neighbors and the city of Bayside as she let her grass grow long and cut down nonnative trees in her yard. Later, her back-to-nature landscaping was so beautiful that her garden was included in a book of prominent American gardens, nearly all on estates.

Lorrie viewed the typical suburban monoculture of lawn as "immoral" but believed the vast expanse of land occupied by suburban development could, instead, be considered an environmental opportunity: "If suburbia were landscaped with meadows, prairies, thickets, or forests, or combinations of these, then the water would sparkle, fish would be good to eat again, birds would sing and human spirits would soar."

She was the voice for "the little things," the bugs, the butterflies and the birds. And she spent her life campaigning against lawns and pesticides. There was no living thing that was insignificant to Lorrie Otto, and in her role as educator, writer and environmentalist, she often told people, "We have to care. Nothing is too small."

A tireless campaigner and educator, she was the inspiration for the Wild Ones Seeds for Education Fund, which is named for her.

Lorrie died in Bellingham, Washington, on May 29 at age 90 after a brief illness. As she wished, she was buried at the Greenacres Memorial Park's "green" cemetery where only biodegradable materials are used and embalming isn't allowed.

Engraved on a river rock will be one word only: Lorrie.

For more information about Lorrie Otto, go the Wild Ones web site:

www.for-wild.org/people/otto.html

+++++

Earthbound

A poem by Emma Bickham Pitcher

High above me a lark floats
On blue nothingness
and sings and sings – and sings.
Fragile wings suspend frail bones in space.

Such magic cannot be for me
I know not the ways of the sky
I cannot soar hawklike
Rising on unseen thermal
Nor can I wheel in great arcs
Above a woodcock mate at dusk.

My feet cling to maple-shaded paths
They tread velvet moss cushions

Dotted with Kalm's lobelias.

My feet know the two-steps-up
One-step-back
Of sunny sand dune trails
But some part of me
Soars with the lark.

Emma's poem was read at her memorial service on June 20 by "grandchild #6," Heather McGregor.

+++++

Sightings and Insights

Canoeing Southwest Michigan's Waterways: Three Haikus

Paddling noiselessly
A ghostly Great Blue Heron
Emerges the mist

Floating down the creek
Myriad of damselflies
On gossamer wings

Duckweed inches deep
Impeding canoe's progress
Visions of starving

--Ilse Gebhard

"Morning's at Seven"

I'm fortunate to have a stage right outside my second-floor bathroom window. About ten feet from the window, there's a fork in the trunk of an old honey locust tree, favored by birds—summer and winter—for eggs and insects harbored under edges of the long, concave flakes of its bark.

I get up in the morning, stumble to the bathroom, and there's almost always a little drama, a lively performance, to greet me and gladden the beginning of my day.

One morning, there's a chickadee, dropping straight down from one twig to another, rotating his wings so swiftly (as opposed to beating them rhythmically for forward movement) that he appears to be only a perfectly round, plunging blur, out of which rematerializes, suddenly, a perfectly still chickadee.

Another morning, there are two vivid red-bellied woodpeckers, male and female. The male brings a choice bit of suet and quickly, as in a pecking kiss, tucks it into the beak of his mate. They lean towards then away from each other. The male flies back down towards the suet, the female flies off in the opposite direction. Quickly, the male is back, with another morsel of suet. The female is gone. He cries sharply, shifts, waits a moment, cries again, then flies straight off in the same direction as the female, still with the morsel of suet, perhaps determined not to be denied his role as provider of treats.

Another morning, a large cast: FIVE downies, congregated, seemingly two pairs and one smaller one, perhaps an offspring. One of the males flies repeatedly to the suet feeder, returns, and feeds the female, who waits calmly. The other three watch briefly, then return to their inspection of the tree for a breakfast of insects and eggs.

There are frequent interludes of upside-down nuthatches and occasional mammals. Since there's not only a fork in the tree just at this level, but also a curved shelf, the stub from a branch cut off several years ago, it's a resting place for a squirrel or a chipmunk. Often, it's from here that a chipmunk, the one who seems to be responsible for sounding alarms, chip-chips insistently until I go out, locate the neighbor cat, and chase it away. Then all returns to quiet. The day is well begun.

--Tom Small

Paw Paw River Preserve, 1998

At the woods' edge, a single stalk of Foxglove penstemon, its sparse white flowers luminous against the green shade.

--from Nancy Small's notebook

++++
PLANT MILKWEEDS—The Monarchs Need Our Help

This year, the number of Monarch butterflies is the lowest it's been since they started keeping records 16 years ago. Loss of habitat in Mexico, weather conditions, and loss of habitat all along the migration routes are contributing to the losses. Help out. Plant more milkweeds.

++++
A Quotation for Contemplation

The world is watching: one cannot walk through a meadow or forest without a ripple of report spreading out from one's passage. The thrush darts back, the jay squalls, a beetle scuttles under the grasses, and the signal is passed along. Every creature knows when a hawk is cruising or a human strolling. The information passed through the system is intelligence.

--Gary Snyder, *The Practice of the Wild* (1990)

++++

SEEDLINGS is edited by Tom Small and appears five times a year. The next regular issue, for October/November, will come early in October; **deadline for submission is Thursday, September 30.**