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*Marsh Marigold (Caltha palustris) B. Bradburn*

April 2025

**SEEDLINGS**

# Wild Ones|Kalamazoo Area Chapter

"There can be no purpose more enspiriting than to begin the age of restoration, reweaving the wondrous diversity of life that still surrounds us." – E.O. Wilson



*Long-spurred Violet (Viola rostrata) B. Bradburn*

Dear \*|FNAME|\*,

Just like its namesake in nature, Seedlings starts growing every April. With so much going on, the newsletter is very full this month. To help you navigate it, I've enhanced the table of contents on the right. I've categorized the newsletter items and created links. Clicking on an underlined title will take you to that item. Depending on which email client you use, you may need to view this message in your browser to make full use of the links. The items are listed in order, so you can also find a particular

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announcement or article by scrolling down.  
Don't forget the native fauna ID Quiz!



**Beth Bradburn**  
*Editor*

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## **Our April Program**

*with Roger Labine*

**Wednesday, April 30, 6:30-8:00pm at Portage District Library**

Please note that our program is on the fifth Wednesday this month. To read about the speaker and the program, go to [the article below](#) or [to our website](#).

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## **Annual Plant Sale**

It's almost time for our annual native plant sale, our only fundraiser of the year. Proceeds from the sale make it possible for us to support multiple community projects and provide free educational outreach programs and field trips for the community.

Online ordering will begin May 3 and end May 16. Pick-up dates are May 28 and 29 at Hidden Savanna. We'll send more details in a separate email in mid-April, when we'll also preview the plants for sale on our website.

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## **Volunteer Opportunities**

Our new Volunteer Coordinator Haim Kenig looks forward to working with you on whichever projects and events you'd like to join us for. If you'd like to help out at our annual plant sale at Hidden Savanna Nursery (May 27th/28th/29th), please email him at [volunteerwithkawo@gmail.com](mailto:volunteerwithkawo@gmail.com) and he'll get you all the info you need to sign up. Please also contact him to be added to our email contact list for future volunteer opportunities throughout the year. Thank you for all you do!



## **Site Visits for New Members**

We offer site visits to new KAWO members! An experienced native plant gardener will visit your land and help you assess its conditions and figure out what to plant, with continuing mentorship available for up to a year. To arrange a visit, please contact [Ann Klobucar](#).

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## **A Change of Treasurer**

After serving as chapter treasurer since 2017, super-volunteer Margo Rebar has stepped down in order to focus on other roles in KAWO and in the community. We are so grateful to Margo for her dedicated work as treasurer and her continuing commitment to native plants. Ellie Shenker has kindly agreed to take over as treasurer for the rest of 2025. Treasurer will be one of the chapter offices voted on as usual in the November 2025 election.

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## **Kalamazoo River Cleanup**

The second annual Kalamazoo River Cleanup will take place at Mayors' Riverfront Park on May 17. The cleanup is from 10:00am to 2:00pm, with an afterparty from 2:00pm to 5:00pm. Download a flyer [here](#) or learn more and register [on the project website](#). Please note that this is a different event from the [Parks Beautification days](#) on April 12 and 13. We hope to see you at one or more of these events.

## **City of Kalamazoo Supports Pollinators**

The city of Kalamazoo invites residents to join Buzz in the Zoo, a summer-long initiative to "spread awareness about pollinators, inspire sustainable lawn care practices, highlight how planting native species and making pollinator-friendly choices can have a lasting impact, and engage our community with fun activities." Learn more about the program and sign up [on the city's website](#).

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## **Honoring Indigenous Voices in the Native Plant Movement**

The national Wild Ones organization has launched a fundraising campaign to help expand its commitment to supporting Indigenous communities and amplifying Indigenous perspectives on the native plant movement. On [their webpage announcing this initiative](#), Wild Ones cites our chapter's May 2024 program with Bethany Earl-Moody as an example of local commitment. We also recommend viewing [Wild Ones River City's March 2025 program](#) "Izhi-Minoging

Mashkikiwan/Place Where Medicines Grow Well," presented by Eva Roos, and attending our program on April 30, described in [the article below](#), and the [Kalamazoo Foodways Symposium](#).

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## **Manoomin—The Sacred Food That Grows On Water**

**Tom Small**



For Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones April 30 program, wild-rice expert Roger Labine will travel from his home territory around Watersmeet in the Upper Peninsula to speak to us on “Manoomin, the Sacred Food That Grows on Water.” An enrolled member of the Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa (Anishinaabe), Roger serves as Water Resource Technician for the Band’s Environmental and Planning Department.

*Manoomin-Wild Rice (Zizania palustris). For more photos visit [our website](#).*

Roger will tell the story of how his Anishinaabe ancestors migrated from the Eastern seacoast, over 600 years ago, in search of the prophesied “food that grows on water.” They found it here, in the Great Lakes, and it became a sacred part of their culture. He will tell us about the “first treaty,” before all others, which obligates all orders of creation—plant beings, animal beings, and human beings—to care for one another. “Nibi is life,” Roger affirms, “and Manoomin is how we live it.”

Roger has been a ricer and advocate since 1972, when he first saw wild rice during a visit to Wisconsin. At that time there was no manoomin in his home territory because a power-company dam had raised the water level of the lake. He fought for over 20 years to restore the original water level. “I believe,” Roger says, “Manoomin must have been sent to me by Creator to teach me patience and perseverance.”

Manoomin is an “indicator” species; if you find it growing vigorously, then the water must be pure. Part of a complex ecosystem, it provides food, shelter, and breeding habitat for many species. According to MNFI, there are more than 35 threatened and endangered species in its natural communities. Roger will cover some of the special associated species of plants.

Roger emphasizes that the same teachings which instructed the Anishinaabe people to live alongside Manoomin also prophecy that the “Time of the Seventh Fire” would come when humanity must choose between a scorched road of destruction or a green path of restoration. That time is now. Lighting the Eighth Fire, to restore the unity that has been lost, will require collective cleansing of our poisoned water and the healing of the natural world.

The Anishinaabe nearby us, in southwest Michigan—the Gun Lake Tribe, the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi, and the Huron Nottawaseppi Band of Potawatomi—are all engaged in Manoomin restoration on their ancestral homelands. Roger will suggest ways we all can support these efforts.

Roger LaBine is a founder of the Michigan Wild Rice Initiative, which received a \$100,000 grant from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy to develop a wild-rice stewardship plan. He received the “2019 Heritage Award” from the State of Michigan for his work with Manoomin restoration and preservation. Roger is an active member of the Three Fires Midewiwin Lodge, an Anishinaabe society of the keepers of healing knowledge and spiritual wisdom.

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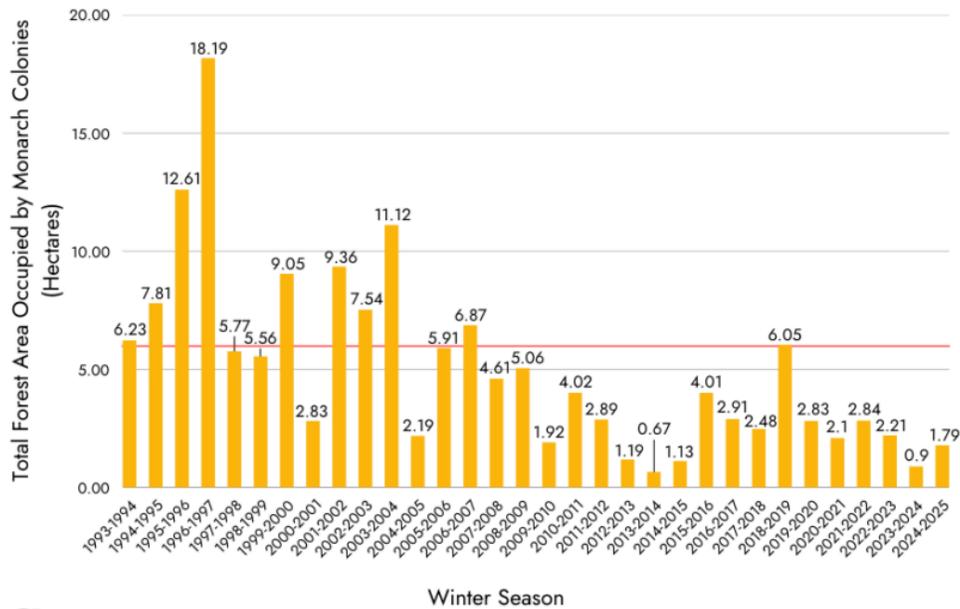
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## **Eastern Monarch Numbers Increase, But Conservation Efforts Still Critical**

**Nancy Caldwell, Executive Director, Monarch Joint Venture**

The eastern monarch butterfly population in Mexico’s oyamel fir forests this past winter occupied **1.79 hectares**, according to the latest survey released by the World Wildlife Fund-Telmex Telcel Foundation Alliance (WWF) and the National Commission of Protected Natural Areas in Mexico (CONANP). This represents a **99%** increase from last year’s 0.9 hectares in the 2023-2024 overwintering season.

**Total Area Occupied by Monarchs at Overwintering Sites in Mexico  
1993/1994 - 2024/2025**



Scientists estimate a minimum of 6 hectares of overwintering monarchs is needed to sustain the eastern populations (Semmens et al., 2016)

Data from 1994-2003 were collected by personnel of the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve (MBBR) of the National Commission of Protected Natural Areas (CONANP) in Mexico. Data from 2004-2025 were collected by the WWF-Telcel Alliance, in coordination with the Directorate of the MBBR. 2000-2001 number as reported by Garcia-Serrano et al. in 2004

Researchers survey the eastern monarch population each winter when the butterflies cluster together in their overwintering sites in Mexico. Instead of counting individual monarchs, scientists estimate the population size by measuring the area of the trees the butterflies are occupying (in hectares). Each hectare is approximately 2.47 acres or just over two American football fields. While the number of monarchs per hectare can vary, estimates suggest there are between 20-30 million monarchs per hectare (median of 21.1 million, according to [Thogmartin et al., 2017](#)). According to [Semmens et al., 2016](#) a threshold of at least 6 hectares of overwintering monarchs is recommended to support a sustainable eastern migratory population. The current population remains below this target, highlighting the need for continued conservation action.

Monarchs face many threats and stressors that contribute to their decline. Losses in habitat necessary for breeding, migrating, and overwintering have been a significant factor, compounded by weather and climate conditions unfavorable for population growth and unintended effects of pesticide use. Monarchs also face many risks from natural enemies such as predators, parasitoids, and disease.

Given the ongoing threats to its population, the monarch butterfly's legal status has been discussed for many years. In December of 2024, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [proposed to list the monarch as threatened](#) under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). While monarchs are not yet listed under the ESA, this proposal underscores the urgency of scaling up conservation efforts to support population recovery.

**A note from Ilse Gebhard:** If you did not see the IMAX film Flight of the Butterflies, you can now watch it on your computer, tablet, or phone. Not the fantastic IMAX experience, but an outstanding movie regardless. <https://tubitv.com/movies/476187/flight-of-the-butterflies>

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## **Collection of Plants on State Land Is Against the Law**

**Ilse Gebhard**

Last month, in my Seedlings article on raising caterpillars for research on Tachinid fly parasitism of monarchs, I mentioned that I would collect leaves from milkweeds, growing along roadsides and the nearby Kal-Haven Trail, to supplement what we had growing in the yard. My methodology was to remove a leaf or two from a 4-5 foot Common Milkweed stem (*Asclepias syriaca*) and let the plant continue to grow.



*Common Milkweed* Monarch Watch

While I knew that collecting entire plants from state land like the Kal-Haven Trail is illegal, it did not occur to me that collecting even a leaf or two from a stem could be considered damage and therefore illegal. See State Park rules below.

The rules are rightly set up to conserve our natural resources, among them to prevent poaching. Poaching of rare plants, or those believed-to have medicinal properties, is nothing new. But that is changing to include a wider range of species. In some ways our conservation efforts may have increased poaching on publicly and privately protected lands, often the only place where native plants still persist.

Take Wild Ones. The organization has raised people's awareness of the importance of native plants, which is good. But the higher the value of something, the greater the lengths some people will go to obtain it. Here is an example. Years ago, I put in a Monarch Waystation at Gilkey Elementary School in Plainwell with 2nd graders. Two very dedicated volunteers maintain it. For several years they planted Butterfly Weed plugs, grown by Mike and Carol Klug. The plugs never seemed to survive, and finally they gave up replanting, when they found the holes where they had been dug up.

Another example where hard conservation work may have backfired is the Wildflower Restoration Project on the Kal-Haven Trail headed by Sue Hodapp. As they removed invasives and the wildflowers rebounded, the plants also became more visible and easier to access. And while the beautiful signs of the wildflowers educate the public, they also make it easy for poachers. They don't have to figure out what is an alien weed or a desirable native.

*Sign along the Kal-Haven Trail, one of the plants poached S. Hodapp*



Yikes, it just occurred to me that I was also breaking the law when I picked Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) on my walks along the trail. I checked with Sue Hodapp and she said that when she started the Wildflower Restoration Project on the Kal-Haven Trail, she had to get special permission from the DNR to pull Garlic Mustard and has a permit that she carries with her when working on the trail and supervising others.



*Garlic Mustard I. Gebhard*

While it may be possible to get a permit to pull Garlic Mustard on state land, there are lots of opportunities in our area to join organized events. A real plus is that they provide the bags and take care of the disposal. Here are some contacts and an excellent DNR fact sheet on Garlic Mustard.

- Kal-Haven Trail Wildflower Restoration Project, Sue Hodapp, [kalhavenwildflowers@gmail.com](mailto:kalhavenwildflowers@gmail.com)
- DNR Stewardship for West Michigan State Parks, Tyler Lidgard, [LidgardT@michigan.gov](mailto:LidgardT@michigan.gov)
- [Garlic Mustard Fact Sheet](#)

Here is the excerpt from the State Park Rules concerning plants.

GENERAL RULES (History: 2001 AACRS; 2014 MR2, Eff. Jan. 29, 2014)  
R 299.922 - Unlawful acts generally. Rule 22 - On land owned or under the control of the department, it is unlawful to do any of the following:

(h) Destroy, damage, or remove a tree, including a dead and downed tree and woody debris, shrub, wildflower, grass, or other vegetation. Except in a wildlife food plot, this subdivision does not apply to picking and removing mushrooms, berries, and edible fruits or nuts for personal use.

## Who Am I?

A native fauna ID quiz from Ilse Gebhard



*Photo R. Schipper*

Click [here](#) for the answer!

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## Community Events of Interest

**Throughout April:** Earth Day 2025. Visit the [Kalamazoo Earth Day website](#) for a full schedule of events.

**Thursday, April 3 - 5:30pm-7:15pm:** The State of the River: A Community Forum on the Kalamazoo River, Fetzer Center, WMU Main Campus. [Learn more.](#)

**Friday, April 4 - 5:00pm-8:30pm:** Kalamazoo Foodways Symposium, Kalamazoo Valley Museum. This event is free and includes content of interest to Wild Ones. Visit [their website](#) for detailed descriptions of the evening's program.

**Saturday, April 5 - 10:00am-3:00pm:** Kalamazoo Foodways Symposium, Marilyn J. Schlack Culinary and Allied Health Building, Downtown Kalamazoo. This event is free and includes content of interest to Wild Ones. "What Does the Water Ask of Us? A Neshabe Elders Panel will be at **12:15pm** and a "Neshnabe Plant Walk" will be at **2:15 pm**. Consult [their website](#) for updates on Saturday's program.

**Monday, April 7 - 6:00pm-7:00pm:** Native Plant Gardening Workshop, Freeport Library. See the [Pierce Cedar Creek Institute online event calendar](#) to learn more.

**Saturday, April 12 - 10:00am-3:00pm:** Michigan Waterways Stewards Parks Beautification, Mayors' Riverfront Park, Kalamazoo. [Learn more.](#)

**Sunday, April 13 - 10:00am-3:00pm:** Michigan Waterways Stewards Parks Beautification, Verberg Park, Kalamazoo. [Learn more.](#)

**Sunday, April 13 - 10:00am-12:00pm:** Kleinstuck Community Read: Growing and Identifying Oaks with Randy Counterman, Kazoo School Pavilion. [Learn more.](#)

**Thursday, April 17 - 7:00pm:** Pints and Native Plants, an informal meetup at [Brewery Outré](#) in Kalamazoo. [Learn more.](#)

**Monday, April 21 - 6:30pm-8:00pm:** Wild Ones River City Event: "Eating the Plants We Love to Hate," with Lea Sevigny. Roselle Park Resource Building, Forest Hills, MI. [Learn more.](#)

**Monday, April 21 - 7:00pm-8:00pm:** Michigan Botanical Society Program: "Mitchell's Satyr Conservation," with Ashley Cole-Wick, People's Church, Kalamazoo. [Learn more.](#)

**Tuesday, April 22 - 5:30pm-7:00pm:** Signs of Spring Guided Nature Walk, Upjohn Park. This Kalamazoo Earth Day Event is co-sponsored by KAWO. [Learn more.](#)

**Thursday, April 24 - 10:00am-12:00pm:** Volunteer Training: Native Garden Orientation, Kellogg Bird Sanctuary. [Learn more and register.](#)

**Saturday, April 26 - 10:00m-12:00pm and 1:00pm-3:00pm:** Garlic Mustard Pull, Asylum Lake Preserve. [Learn more.](#)

**Monday, April 28 - 7:30pm-8:30pm:** Audubon Society of Kalamazoo Monthly Program: Oak Savanna Restoration at Gourdneck and Allegan State Game Areas, People's Church, Kalamazoo. [Learn more.](#)

**Wednesday, April 30 - 6:30pm-8:00pm:** "Manoomin--The Sacred Food That Grows on Water" with Roger LaBine, a monthly presentation by Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones at Portage District Library. [Learn more.](#)

*Editor's note: If you know of any local events pertaining to native plants that you feel may interest our readers, please send them along to us at the address below. Thanks!*

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Most of our past presentations are available on YouTube to view at your convenience.

[Click Here to visit our YouTube channel](#)

You can also click on the small red YouTube icon above,  
underneath the Table of Contents.

Past issues of Seedlings can be found [here](#), and by clicking the link between the  
Facebook and YouTube links above.

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## **What's Happening at the National Office**

Check out our [National Office web site](#)

To read the most recent reports from the board of directors,

[Log In to the Member Only Area](#).

**Thank you for your interest and support of Wild Ones!**

Not a member? [Click Here](#) for information on how you can support Wild Ones.

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SEEDLINGS is edited by Beth Bradburn. It appears mostly monthly.

The next regular issue will arrive in May. **Deadline for the May issue is April 20.**

[Contact the editor](#)

Contributing Editor:

Ilse Gebhard

**To share comments and suggestions, simply reply to this email.**

**We look forward to hearing from you!**

Find more information and news at [www.KalamazooWildOnes.org](http://www.KalamazooWildOnes.org)

and [www.Facebook.com/KalamazooAreaWildOnes](https://www.Facebook.com/KalamazooAreaWildOnes)



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