



Great Blue Lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*)

August 2019

SEEDLINGS

Wild Ones|Kalamazoo Area Chapter

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

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Annual
Fall Plant Exchange



Our hosts for the Fall Plant Exchange:
(l to r) Noel Ocen and Jessie Davis.

KAWO Annual Fall Plant Exchange

Sunday Aug. 25, 1pm-4pm

Don't miss the information on our New Location for this exchange, and read our Plant Exchange Etiquette Guide to find out how it works. [*More Info*](#)



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Spring or Fall, Spring or Fall; Which Is The Better Time To Plant?

Noel Ocen, Master Gardener

Everyone loves planting in the Spring. The fresh earth smells so wonderful and inviting. Farmers are planting crops, and life is popping up all over. It's exhilarating!

We want to join in, so that's when most of us grab our shovels and start planting; but, is it really the best time to put new perennials in the ground? More and more experts suggest that Fall has some



measurable advantages over Spring for putting in new plants.

Here are 4 reasons why Fall Planting gives your new little treasures the absolute best chance of thriving:

- **Root Growth.** In the fall, plants are no longer expending all of their energy adding foliage and producing seeds—all of their energy goes into root development before the ground freezes. After resting through winter, they are ready to burst forth in spring with renewed energy. It's like getting an extra year of growth in only a few weeks.
- **Less Stress.** Transplanting is always stressful, and some plants never recover from the shock. Transplanting in fall greatly reduces the added stress of summer heat on new plants and increases their chances of survival. 'Less Stress' also applies to the gardener who doesn't have to monitor the growing conditions quite as closely.
- **Free Watering.** Cool, rainy days provide perfect conditions for root growth. Again, less stress on plants and gardeners.
- **Warm Soil.** Soil in Fall is actually warmer than Spring. Roots can get a good foothold and store nutrients in preparation for their winter rest.

These are all good reasons to consider adding new plants to your Native garden this Fall.

As in past years, Wild Ones is giving you an opportunity to adopt some lovingly-grown Native plants for your garden at our [Fall Native Plant Exchange on Sunday August 25th.](#)

From Brownfield To Butterfly Garden **A Garden Tour at the People's Food Co-op (PFC)** **Saturday, August 10 @1:00 PM**

Dave Wendling

Join Native Plant Expert and past president of Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones Dave Wendling to find out what is blooming in the gardens at PFC. The garden beds include a berm and swale with over 40 species of native plants including wildflowers, shrubs, trees, grasses, and sedges.



Dave will give a brief history of the prior uses of the site where PFC is located and will explain the special value of these plants for holding storm water, cleansing the soil polluted by previous industrial development, and providing food and shelter for birds and the many pollinators and other insects endangered by human methods of industrial farming, urban/suburban development, and landscaping.

In addition to his involvement with Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones Dave is president of the Michigan Botanical Club SW Chapter, co-owner of the PFC, and land steward for the Michigan Nature Association.

Note: The gardens are maintained by Steve Allen and Gina Frasson-Hudson of Geum Services.

Help On The Plant Sale Committee 2020

Dave Wendling



Our Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones Native Plant Sales are more successful each year.

While they have been growing, our plant sale committee hasn't. We need a few more people to help with the various tasks involved in keeping this event going. Some of the tasks include ordering the plants and working with the plant producers, contacting and working with our sponsors, preparing plant order forms and keeping track of the pre-orders, and promoting the plant sale.

If you can help, contact Dave at dave.wendling47@gmail.com or call 269-366-8857.

An Unexpected Pleasure From My Native Plant Garden

Tim Tesar

Several years ago, I purchased some native plants at the Wild Ones Native Plant Sale. As a reward, Ilse Gebhard presented me with a free swamp milkweed seedling.

I planted the seedling and it has flourished. It attracts more butterflies than any of my

other plants.

I did not expect that it would also attract birds to harvest nesting material from the dried stems. But for several days now, a Baltimore Oriole has been stripping off strands from the stems for its nest.

Now I am really glad I neglected to cut down the swamp milkweed stems last fall when I cut down the stems from all the other plants!

Photos below by Tim Tesar



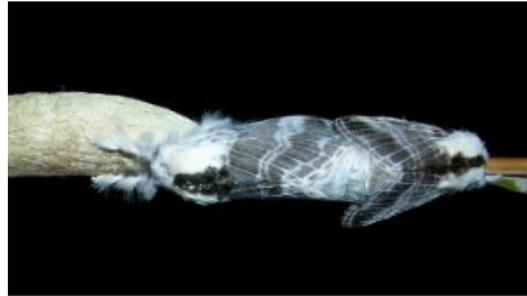
Large Tolyte Is A Slow Grower Among Moths

Ilse Gebhard

One of the fascinating aspects of raising caterpillars is to observe their “lifestyle”. For example, the Monarch caterpillar lives in the fast lane. It eats ravenously day and night for about two weeks, completing its caterpillar stage in that time and its overall metamorphosis from the day the egg is laid to the date the butterfly emerges is about one month. This fast development allows it to have several generations each summer, depending on the weather. Warmer weather means shorter development time. Since the Monarch female can lay 500-700 eggs, an extra generation means a much larger population to migrate to Mexico in the fall.

On the other end of the developmental spectrum that I have come across is the Large Tolyte moth I called “Slowpoke”. It has just one generation a year and the caterpillar in question was already 1.5 inches long when I found it on July 3rd. “Slowpoke” grew only another half inch in the next 6 weeks when it made its cocoon on August 13th. The cocoon stage then took another 6 weeks before the moth emerged on September 22nd.

I found “Slowpoke” on a leaf of a crabapple tree by our front door. It was almost dark and I was watering a pot of Impatiens hanging in the tree. I would never have found it during the day when this species rests on bark and its coloration and texture make it blend in extremely well. Inside its jar home, it would rest during the day hugging the twig I provided. Even though I knew where it had to be, I always had to look close to see it. The cocoon was equally well camouflaged, looking even more like part of the twig.



Tolyte caterpillar, left; mating tolytes with cocoon in background, right.

“Slowpoke” never ate during the day, but most nights it would consume at least part of a crabapple leaf. Although I don’t have numbers to back up my impression, I suspect that overall the consumption of leaves is not that different between the Monarch and the Large Tolyte – just their rate of consumption and growth differs.

So what makes the Large Tolyte caterpillar so invisible to us when resting on bark? Well, its body is grayish, downy, and somewhat flattened with fleshy lateral lappets covered with hair called setae. The dictionary defines lappet as any fleshy or membranous part hanging loosely or in a fold and gives our earlobes as an example. On the dorsum (top of the body) of the third thoracic segment (caterpillars have 3 thoracic and 10 abdominal segments) are found two reddish knobs. Right behind the knobs is a black band in the intersegmental area concealed at rest but exposed when the caterpillar is alarmed.

Not only are the caterpillar and the cocoon well camouflaged on bark, but so are the eggs and the moths. The moth has an extremely hairy body, with the head and front and sides of thorax white and the middle of thorax black. The abdomen is white to gray and the wings are pale to dark gray with white veins and lines.

The eggs, which overwinter, are laid down in a chainlike series along a branch or trunk and are covered with black scales from the female’s abdomen. While humans are highly unlikely to find these eggs, the Brown Creeper going up a tree trunk and the White and Red-breasted Nuthatches going down are surely to find some of them. And so will the chickadees, titmice, and woodpeckers as they forage along branches for food in winter. These and other birds will also find the caterpillars and cocoons in summer and the moths in fall. And that is a good thing, and one of nature’s checks

and balances. We only know too well the devastation the Gypsy Moth can cause as it defoliates trees over large areas unchecked by natural enemies.

What's Happening at the National Office

Check out our [National Office web site](#)! To read the June & July reports from the board of directors, [log in to the member only area](#). Thanks for your interest and support of Wild Ones!

Community Events of Interest to Wild Ones

August 25 - [KAWO Annual Fall Plant Exchange](#); Note New Location

September 25 - 7:00pm - History of Great Lakes Forests, speaker Larry Cornelius at KAWO September indoor program.

October 4-5 - [Bailey Conference](#) - Bailey Museum & Gardens, South Haven, MI

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!

SEEDLINGS is edited by Tom Small and Kim Patrie. It appears mostly monthly. The next regular issue will come early in September. **Deadline for September issue is August 15.** Please send submissions to Kim at safiraraks@gmail.com

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 and www.Facebook.com/KalamazooAreaWildOnes



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