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*Plot of Rosinweed/ Silflower at MI Wildflower Farm. (*Silphium integrifolium*) M. Luna*

August 2022

**SEEDLINGS**

# Wild Ones|Kalamazoo Area Chapter

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



*Monarch on Joe Pye (Eutrochium maculatum) M. Luna*

**Dear \*|FNAME|\*,**

Fireflies are giving way to sunflowers as nature passes the baton of light from one source to another. August is still ablaze with blooms in gardens and land preserves throughout the region. Please plan to pot up your extra plants for our native plant exchange next month. If you are overwhelmed by that idea, you can sign up for the matchmaking service below to address this need! Send me an [email](#).

This month Ilse shares her adventures raising mysterious baby caterpillars to adulthood, and Paul introduces us to one of their host plants, the Wild Black Cherry. Be on the lookout for them both.

We have the results from this year's plant sale, and an update on the Children's Nature Playscape. Also, two calls to action - one to photograph bumble bees in the region, and another to gather seed for Project Wingspan.

Finally, according to [Bryan Pfeiffer](#), August is the time to start looking for Primrose moths (I am obsessed with them), and you can hear a

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talk on the imperiled Monarchs by Karen Oberhauser on NPR [here](#).

With love for the bugs,

**Mel Luna**

*Editor*



## ***New Matchmaking Service! People + Plants***

Do you have established native plants that are getting out of bounds?  
Are you looking for someone to come over and dig some up who will appreciate them?

OR

Do you have a passion for native plants but are just getting started?  
Are you willing to visit other native gardeners, dig up plants, and transport them to new homes?

If you answered yes to any of these questions - ***send me*** your name, address, preferred contact method (text, call, email, letter), and what you have/are looking for. Your information will never be published or shared without your permission. I will get in touch with you to discuss possible matches. This is a fun way to meet new people with a shared interest to exchange resources and labor. Let's make a (plant) love connection!



*Uprooting a member's wayward Stiff Goldenrod (Solidago rigida) to plant in my home garden. M. Luna*

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## **Here Comes the Annual Fall Plant Exchange!**

Sunday September 18, 2022 1-5pm

Speaking of digging up extra plants, it's time! Time to get plants potted up that you no longer have room for, want, or plants that you have extras of to share. Our exchange is next month, so this is a quick reminder to get things into pots *early* so they will be healthy and happy for their journey to new homes.

*Fall Plant Exchange 2021 M. Luna*



As sad as it is to acknowledge that summer is winding down in August, the exchanges are always joyous and festive occasions that I very much look forward to. So let's gather in the bounty to share with our wider community. Mark your calendars for Sunday, September 18 from 1-5pm. [Details](#) are on our website.

Fall Plant Exchange 2021 M. Luna



## Red-spotted Purple or Viceroy or Maybe Both?

Ilse Gebhard



Red-spotted Purple (*Limenitis arthemis astyanax*) M. Reese



Viceroy (*Limenitis archippus*) R. Schipper

In Michigan we have three butterfly species in the genus *Limenitis*. Two of these species, the Red-spotted Purple (*Limenitis arthemis astyanax*) and the White Admiral (*Limenitis arthemis arthemis*), have some resemblance as adult butterflies but the 3<sup>rd</sup> butterfly in the genus, the Viceroy (*Limenitis archippus*), looks totally different from the other two.



Viceroy Caterpillar, green. I. Gebhard



Viceroy Caterpillar, brown. I. Gebhard

On the other hand, the caterpillars of all three species look very similar in shape and pattern, indicating close relatedness despite their different appearances as adults. That they are very closely related is also shown by the fact that the Red-spotted Purple is known to hybridize with both the Viceroy and the White Admiral. Latin names are a bear but this is a good example of how the names show relatedness. The common names don't give you that same clue.



The caterpillars of our *Limenitis* species are described in appearance as bird droppings with horns. When I found five caterpillars fitting that description on a Sandbar Willow next to the creek on our property, I eliminated the White Admiral as a possibility right away. Its normal range in Michigan is mostly the Northern Lower and the Upper Peninsula.

*White Admiral (Limenitis anthems arthemis) R. Schipper*

My butterfly books agreed that willows are the preferred host plant for Viceroy's. There is less consensus on what Red-spotted Purple caterpillars prefer to eat. Mogens C. Nielsen in *Michigan Butterflies and Skippers* says that "eggs are usually laid on Wild Black Cherry" but willows are mentioned as possible host plants in other books. Conclusion based on host plant- my five caterpillars could be either species or maybe even both.



Three of the five caterpillars that I had found were blotchy with greens predominating and two were blotchy with browns predominating, in a bird-dropping sort of way. Looking through my caterpillar books and on the internet, I quickly came to realize that it was hard to distinguish the two species by color, as both are quite variable.

*Red-spotted Purple Caterpillar I. Gebhard*

Conclusion based on color - my five caterpillars could be either species or maybe even both and the easiest way to find out for sure was to raise them, feeding them willow leaves.

The results were definitive!!!!

First of all, it can pay off if you take a closer look at bird droppings. Secondly, much to my delight, all five individuals made it to the butterfly stage. This is not a given since many Lepidopteran larvae are parasitized and instead of an expected moth or butterfly, a wasp or fly emerges. As for the butterflies, all three of the blotchy green caterpillars turned out to be Viceroy's, while the two blotchy brown ones turned out to be one Viceroy and one Red-spotted Purple.



*Red-spotted Purple in chrysalis stage. (Limenitis arthemis astyanax) R. Schipper*



*Viceroy in chrysalis stage. (Limenitis archippus) R. Schipper*

The close relatedness of Viceroy and Red-spotted Purple is not only expressed in their similar looking caterpillars but also in the similar appearance of their unusually shaped chrysalis. Other common characteristics are that in Michigan they have two broods and that besides obtaining nectar from flowers, they frequently take moisture and nutrients from damp soil, carrion and dung.

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## **Wild Black Cherry: Host to *Limnitis* Species and Many More**

**Paul Olexia**

Wild cherry trees are a valuable resource for a wide diversity of wildlife. Douglas Tallamy ranks members of the Genus *Prunus* (includes all native cherries) as third behind oaks and willows in terms of numbers of insects they support (over 400). And for total ecological value, (including all ecological services) he ranks only oaks as more valuable.



*Wild Black Cherry Fruit P. Hanlon*

Wild black cherry (*Prunus serotinus*) is a tree within what is referred to as the Eastern Deciduous Forest Biome, a large section of the country that, in general, tends to be dominated by deciduous trees – those that lose their leaves in the fall. In the broadest sense there are two major types of deciduous forest in this part of Michigan. Oak woodlands of different specific types tend to be more prevalent on drier sites with more coarse sandy soils such as found in Allegan State Forest. Sites that retain a bit more moisture in the soil, referred to as “mesic” (between wet and dry) tend to be dominated by sugar maple and beech historically. Once an old growth forest has been cut, the process of ecological succession begins if there is no further significant disturbance. In the case where a beech-maple forest has been cut over, a diversity of trees will begin to grow. Typically these will include, elms, ashes, cherries and, if left undisturbed, these will normally give way to beech and maple over a period of 100 years or more. So wild black cherry can be an indicator of a forest in the mid-successional stages of development. They grow fairly quickly and tend to lose their shade tolerance as they get older. These trees can get quite large (often 80 feet tall or taller) and can live for almost 200 years, although the average age is close to 100.

Wild black cherry can be distinguished by a number of characteristics. In mature trees, the bark is almost black and is scaly or flakey. The leaves are rather shiny on the upper surface and are tapered to a point at the tip, have small “teeth” along the margin (edge), and on the underside there is a distinctive “tuft” of fine rust-colored hairs near the base of the leaf. Like commercial cherries, wild cherries are a “stone fruit” with one large seed or “pit” inside that ripens in August to almost black, giving the tree its name.



*Wild Black Cherry Bark D. Cameron*

The flowers, emerging in spring, are small, white, and produced in dense cylindrical clusters. They are insect pollinated, mostly by bees, flies, and beetles. Around June (after pollination) they produce a small pea-sized fruit. The ripe seeds of this cherry are consumed by a wide diversity of birds (over 70 species) as well as mammals ranging in size from chipmunks to black bears.



*Wild Black Cherry in Bloom S. Wasaowski*

While the “fleshy” part of the cherry provides nutrition, the seed is indigestible and passes through the digestive tract of the animal. And, since it is common for song birds to sit on fence posts along fields, it is not surprising to find cherry trees often growing along these fence rows.

Wild black cherry trees produce a compound in their leaves called “prussic acid”, also known as hydrogen cyanide. When leaves are injured or wilted, the prussic acid is converted to cyanide which is lethal to all mammals. This can be detected as a fragrance described as “bitter almond” from branches lying on the ground that still have green leaves on them.



It has been reported that 1-3 pounds of wilted cherry leaves is enough to kill a 1,200 pound cow within a few hours, and even smaller amounts can be lethal for sheep and goats. Consequently, livestock farmers must remain vigilant of any cherry trees in fields or fencerows where limbs get

broken off in storms making leaves available for consumption. Interestingly, and without much explanation, John Eastman reports that deer and moose do not seem to suffer from consuming the leaves. The cyanide produced when insects eat the leaves does not seem to affect their metabolism and does not accumulate in their bodies, as do the toxic compounds in monarch butterflies.

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## **Our Annual Plant Sale: An Update**

**Jason Ballew**



*Margo and Ann, checking you out.*



*Volunteers busy tagging each plant.*

It was a beautiful day and a successful event, with over 1,000 plants sold; a number of new members signed up; many information brochures distributed; and lots of free milkweed plants sent to new homes! It would not have been possible without the assistance of our volunteers.

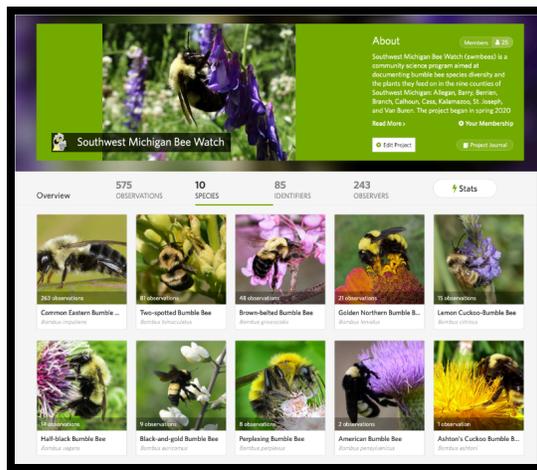
A warm round of applause goes out to **Ann K., Ann W., Beverly, Bill, Catherine, Chuck, Diane, Earl, Harry, Haim, Katherine, Katie, Kira, Liz, and Shane**. Thank you also to the many members of the executive committee who were present as volunteers. It takes a lot to organize this event, and the plant sale committee put in untold hours to plan and strategize the many moving parts. A special thank you goes out to **Kathy McGoff** and to our host, [PFC](#). We couldn't ask for a more perfect location, surrounded by examples of fully established native plants.

The plants that were most popular and sold out the fastest were Columbine, Woodland Phlox, Blue Lobelia, Maidenhair Fern, New Jersey Tea, and Witch Hazel. We raised just over two thousand dollars, and donated all the unsold plants to the Children's Nature Playscape and KPS (Kalamazoo Public School Administration Building). Next year's sale date is already set for Saturday, May 20, 2023 - so if this is something you would like to be involved with please [reach out!](#)

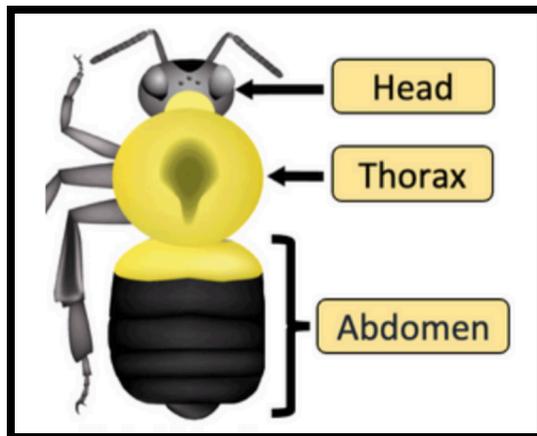
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## **1-2-3 Bee: A Citizen Science Project**

**Lizzy Silber**



Bees are vastly important as they are pollinators for almost 80% of animal-pollinated plants. Bumble bees are the charismatic 'flying teddy bears' of the bee world. Of the twenty different types of bumble bees recorded from Michigan, six have been given special concern status in the state of Michigan because of significant range declines over the past century. An example is the rusty-patched bumble bee (*Bombus affinis*), a species once common to southwest Michigan but one that has not been sighted in Michigan now for over 20 years.



### A new Kalamazoo-focused project

This summer, I'm adding to the larger swmbees project through my own undergraduate research project that is looking at how bumble bee diversity and abundance compares along the urban-rural development gradient in and around Kalamazoo.

[Read more.](#)

## Wild Ones at the Children's Nature Playscape

Kira Griggs

My dad and I helped plant native plants at the [Children's Nature Playscape](#) in downtown Kalamazoo in July! Wild Ones donated 10 flats and seven 1-3 gallon pots of a variety of wildflowers, grasses, and milkweeds. The plants were a combination of full sun/dry sandy soil for flat or hilly areas and water loving plants near the water feature, or in the water. Most of the plants were donated from KAWO members and unsold plants from the plant sale.



*KAWO member, Chuck Jordan. K. Griggs*

While not all of the plants at the playscape are native, this space will help educate children and the community about the beauty and importance of native plants.

The Children's Nature Playscape opened to the public on July 15th and will be open Tuesdays and Thursdays 11-3, Saturdays 10-3, and Sundays 12-4 during the summer. Thank you to the Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones for the generous native plant donations!

*The Playscape, open to the public. M. Luna*



## **Project Wingspan**

**Connie Crancer**



Project Wingspan (PW) is a grassroots, Pollinator Habitat Enhancement Project with [Pollinator Partnership](#), sponsored by the Fish and Wildlife Foundation. [Read more.](#) This is a grassroots effort because we rely on volunteers to collect the seed of target native flowering species that we distribute to shovel-ready pollinator habitat projects. In particular I am interested in finding more volunteers and a Team Lead to collect at the Kalamazoo Nature Center. If you are interested in helping with this project, please visit our [Seed Collection Training website](#) to access our training modules to learn best management practices of native seed collection and signup as a PW volunteer by filling out the volunteer waiver and contact form. For more information please visit our [PW website](#) or contact [Connie Crancer](#), Michigan Project Wingspan State Coordinator.

## Community Events of Interest

**August 1 - 6:00pm-7:30pm:** Garden Tour and Fundraiser with River City Wild Ones (Grand Rapids) at the Native Plant Education Garden and Brewery Vivant. [Learn more.](#)

**August 10 - 6:30pm-7:30pm:** "Pollinator Garden Tour: Monarch Waystation" with KAWO's Quyen Edwards at the Portage District Library. [Info](#)

**August 11 - 9:00am-11:00am:** KAWO's Community Projects work day at Axtell Creek. [Info](#)

**August 15 - 6:30pm-8:30pm:** "Prairie Flowers and Ecology" field trip to the Hudsonville Nature Center sponsored by River City Wild Ones (Grand Rapids). [More details](#)

**August 18 - 9:00am-11:00am:** KAWO's Community Projects work day at Glen Park. [Details](#)

**August 18 - 3:00pm-5:00pm:** "BioBlitz Hike: Your Guide to Grasses" at Pierce Cedar Creek Institute. [Register here.](#)

**August 25-27:** Public Sale Days at Wildtype Native Nursery. Register in advance. [Learn more.](#)

**August 27, 28 - 10:00am-4:00pm:** Retail Sale Days at Hidden Savannah Nursery. [Info](#)

**August 30 - 9:00am-11:00am:** KAWO's Community Projects work day at KPS. [More info](#)

**September 3 - 9:00am-11:00am:** "Weed Pulling Party" at the Portage District Library's Monarch Waystation. Check out the native plantings. Help them thrive by bringing a bucket and leaving with some weeds. Contact [Quyen](#) with questions.

**September 18 - 1:00pm-5:00pm:** Annual Fall Native Plant Exchange. Hosted by Jessie, Bill, and KAWO. [Details](#)

*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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## 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 Mel Luna. It appears mostly monthly.  
The next regular issue will arrive in September. **Deadline for September issue is August 20.**

[Send Submission](#)

Contributing Editors:

Ilse Gebhard

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

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

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