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February 2022

SEEDLINGS

Wild Ones|Kalamazoo Area Chapter

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



Juniper (*Juniperus communis*) M. Luna

Dear *|FNAME|*,

Frozen lakes, single digit temps - are your native seeds tucked in under a blanket of snow? I hope you, likewise, are doing the vital work of resting.

Hidden within the cold and white, the seed of spring is also present today as Tom reminds us in his piece on Pasque Flower. Although we won't be seeing these spring ephemerals for a couple more months, it warms the heart to meditate upon their emergence. Read more about plans for a bench in Tom's honor in an update below. On sunny days gear up and be on the look out for galls! Ilse shares some insight into the form and function of these growths that are so visible right now.

Our program at the end of the month, *The Once and Future Oak Ecosystems: Restoring the Culture*, is sure to be as inspiring as it is

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informative. Learn more and register to attend via Zoom [here](#).

Have you been digging in to that reading list from last month? I hope you'll enjoy my review and the link to Doug Tallamy's recent [webinar](#). Hearts and minds are opening - and our movement to restore natives continues to grow. It's an exciting time to be part of it with all of you!



Red Osier Dogwood (Cornus sericea)

Quiet moments and warm socks,

Mel Luna

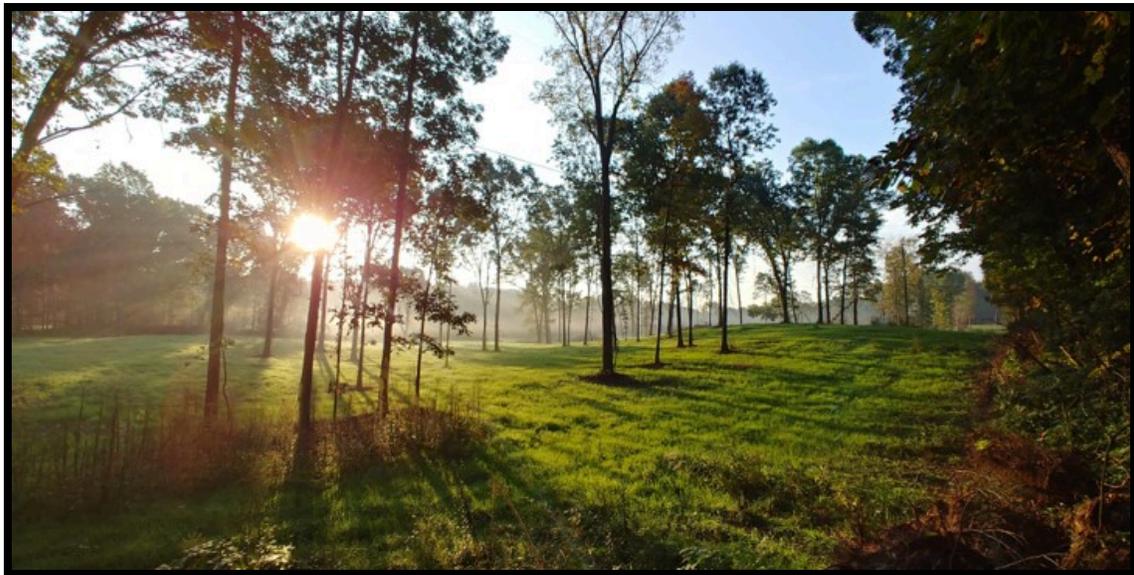
Editor

The Once and Future Oak Ecosystems:

Restoring the Culture

February 23, 7pm (on Zoom)

Tyler Bassett, *Michigan Natural Features Inventory*, and Tom Small, *KAWO*



Three Rivers State Game Area Oak Savannah Restoration T. Bassett

Learn more about the dynamic oak! Tyler Bassett, a botanist and plant ecologist with Michigan Natural Features Inventory, and Tom Small, co-founder of the Kalamazoo Area Chapter of Wild Ones and co-author of *Using Native Plants to Restore Community*, will be presenting our February program on Zoom **Wednesday, February 23 at 7pm**. Tyler will focus on the natural history of oak ecosystems in our area, and Tom will follow up with a brief survey of the important role oaks have played in our cultural history, from ancient times to the present. [Read more](#)

Zoom Registration for February 23 Presentation

Although this meeting is free (as always!) you must register ahead of time, so we can send you the online meeting information through Zoom.

Registration Instructions - Click >>>[Register Here](#)

When you click on the registration link above, it will take you to a Zoom registration page where you will see some meeting details. You will be asked to submit your name, email, and zip code. Then **check your email inbox for the meeting information**, and follow the prompts a few minutes before 7pm on Wednesday, February 23.

[Visit Our YouTube Channel](#)

If you've missed any of our previous presentations, not to worry. Visit the KAWO YouTube channel, where you can view our programs 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.

[What is That Round Swelling on the Stem of Goldenrods?](#)

Ilse Gebhard



Goldenrods and asters sustain our pollinators in the fall. Their nectar fattens-up the monarchs during their migration south to the overwintering sites in Mexico where they live off the stored fat all winter. Once done blooming, their seeds provide food for birds that spend the winter in our area.

But that is by no means all!

Monarch nectaring on Goldenrod. R. Schipper

There are many tiny insects that cause plants to grow tissues around them. These plant tissues are called galls and protect early life stages of insects as they develop from egg to adult and provide plant

tissue for the larval stage to feed on.

The Goldenrod Ball Gall protects the larva of such an insect, the fruit fly *Eurosta solidaginio*, appropriately named after the Latin Genus name for goldenrods, *Solidago*. The gall protects the larva of the fly throughout the winter until it emerges as the adult fly in spring. In addition, at least one midge* and five moth species cause goldenrods to form either oval or fusiform* stem galls.



But protection is not 100%. After the leaves drop from the stems and the galls have turned tan, they become quite visible and I have observed both Black-capped Chickadees and Downy Woodpeckers pecking away at Goldenrod Ball Galls in search of a fat morsel to help them make it through a winter day.

From left to right: Goldenrod Ball Gall in summer, worked over by a bird, after fly emerged in spring. R. Schipper

The importance of goldenrods to insects was brought home to me by John Eastman's *The Book of Field and Roadside*. He devotes 12 pages to goldenrods, 8 of them to insects that use goldenrods in some way in their life cycle. And the good news is that all that golden color is not the cause of fall allergies. The inconspicuous green flowers of ragweeds are the culprit.

Fusiform: spindle-shaped; broadest near the middle and tapering towards both ends.

Midge: a small two-winged fly that is often seen in swarms near water or marshy areas where it breeds.

Emblem of Spring: Pasque Flower (*Anemone Patens*)

Tom Small

Two unmistakable signs of Spring, in the sky and on the earth: the turning of the light, and the promise of the Pasque flower. Although February seems early to be anticipating Spring, the Celtic festival of Imbolc, on February 1, not the Spring equinox, was (and still is) celebrated as the beginning of Spring. The corresponding observance by the Roman church, Candlemas Day, on February 2, likewise celebrates return of the light.

Indeed, it's about this time that we first truly feel the lengthening of the day and the lightening of the morning sky. It's now that the groundhog may be startled to see his shadow. It's a time for stirrings of new life, "spring cleansing," and the perilous birth of farm animals, perhaps amidst a snowstorm.

We begin to search the ground and bare branches for signs of greening. And the earliest of wild prairie flowers to bloom, the Pasque flower (*Anemone patens*), begins her upward striving through cold earth, leaf litter, and granular snow. Her fragile blue flower is followed swiftly by a seedhead resembling gray hair or smoke. Together, they symbolize the entire cycle of life.



Pasque Flower (Anemone patens) T. Small

From very ancient times, Anemone has symbolized both the passing and the renewal of life, both fragility and endurance. In the early first century, the Roman poet Ovid's *Metamorphoses* immortalizes anemones in the story of Venus and Adonis. The goddess of love herself falls in love with the most beautiful of mortals, the hunter Adonis. He escapes from her embraces into his beloved forest, where he is castrated and slain by a wild boar that he wounds but fails to kill. Weeping over his body, Venus transforms his seminal blood into an ever-recurring memorial:

"Adonis, there shall be an everlasting token of my grief, and every year an imitation of your death will complete a re-enactment of my mourning. Your blood will be changed into a flower... But enjoyment of it is brief; for, lightly clinging, and too easily fallen, the winds deflower it, which are likewise responsible for its name, windflower: anemone." Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book 10

The story has been retold countless times. Shakespeare's version, in his early poem *Venus and Adonis*, was an Elizabethan bestseller, and Edmund Spenser's *Garden of Adonis* was *The Faerie Queene's* only true image of Paradise lost. "Gardens of Adonis" were immensely popular in 16th century England. Filled with short-lived plants, they served as reminders of *carpe diem*—seize the day and relish its beauty, which will not last.



Awakening of Adonis, 1899 John William Waterhouse

Anemone also has stories closer to our own time and place. When an old Dakota man encounters the first Pasque flower of the prairie, he sits beside her and invokes, with his pipe, the seven directions—East, South, West, North, Sky, Earth, and Center. While he smokes, he meditates on his youth, the transforming joys and sorrows of his time, and his hopes for guidance to ultimate fulfillment. He then plucks the flower and carries it home to his grandchildren, singing as he goes the Dakota Song of the Pasque Flower:

I wish to encourage the children of other flower nations
Which are now opening over all the land;
So, while they waken from sleep and rise from the bosom
Of Mother Earth, I stand here, old and gray-headed.

He learned the song from his ancestors; now he passes it on to his descendants. The great cycles of life continue.

How then might we, here and now, celebrate the return of the light, the anemone, the eternal beauty of Adonis, and all the beings of the garden who, as Spenser observes, “returne, where first they grew: So like a wheele around they runne from old to new”?

Based upon tradition, here are a few suggestions:

Both a Celtic goddess and a patron Saint of Ireland, Brigid presides over Imbolc and Candlemas Day. She is goddess of flame and transformation. On her days, meditate on a candle flame, its beautiful form and fragility.

Walk slowly in forest or garden. Rejoice in signs of renewal. Share food with other creatures.

Undertake some form of cleansing and renewal. Sweep out some old ideas and make new plans. Prepare seed for planting. Perhaps scatter some seed over the snow, to be carried by meltwater into the fructifying ground.

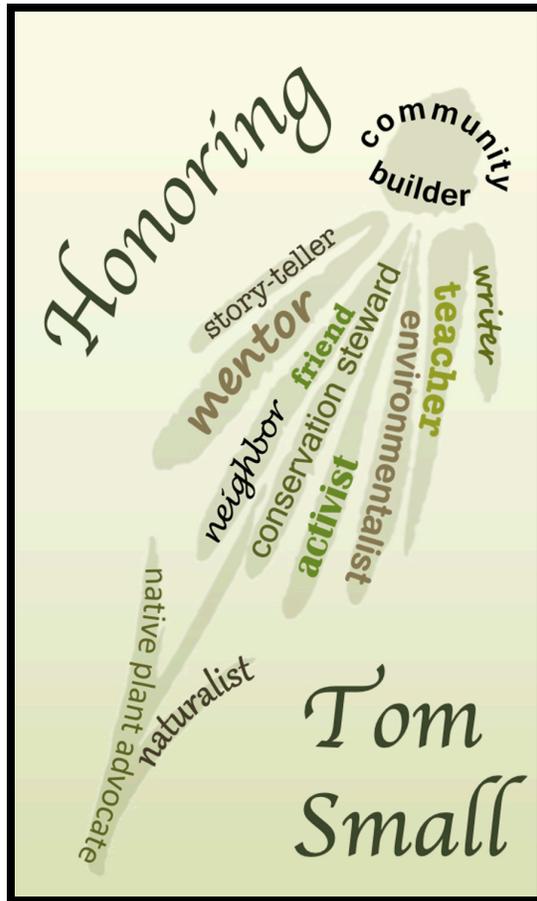


Candlelight Meditation M. Luna

Imbolc is a “liminal” time, when the veil between the living and the dead is thin. Hold in your remembrance the ancestors, both human and more-than-human, whose lives made possible your presence here, in this passing moment. All of them—and their stories—are still present, in you.

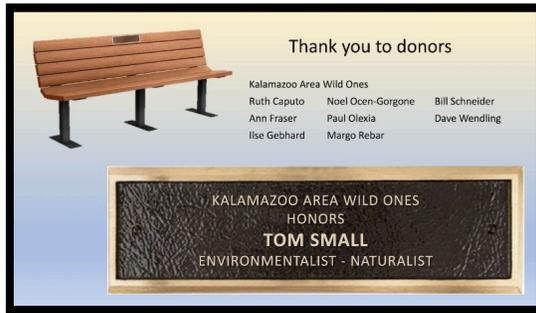
Honoring Tom Small With a Bench at Glen Park

Paul Olexia and Ilse Gebhard



Sixty people joined the Zoom meeting last month to honor Tom Small for his many contributions to environmental sustainability. This includes landscaping with native plants and co-founding our Wild Ones chapter here in Kalamazoo. The plan for a commemorative bench and plaque in his honor was unveiled. It will be placed in Glen Park, a pocket park located in the Oakwood-Winchell neighborhood just a few blocks from Tom's house, this spring.

In selecting the bench, we kept environmental sustainability in mind. The seat and back of the bench are made from recycled plastic with a 50-year warranty. The cast bronze dedication plaque is equally as durable. The bench will be assembled and installed by the Stewards of Glen Park and KAWO volunteers in the spring by setting the legs in cement in the ground. You can help with the installation and/or attend the in-person, on-site dedication by keeping an eye on Seedlings! Details to come.



Funding for the bench has been provided by KAWO and individual donors. If you would like to contribute toward the purchase of the bench, you may do so by check, payable to Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones, PO Box 20324, Kalamazoo MI 49019 or by credit card by clicking here: [DONATE](#)



Last, but not least, we would like to thank Mike Klug for his input on the bench selection and Ann Fraser for her help and technical expertise with the Zoom event. If you weren't able to attend, you can watch it on our KAWO youtube channel [here](#).

The bench to be placed in Glen Park in the spring.

A. Fraser, I. Gebhard, K. Larsen

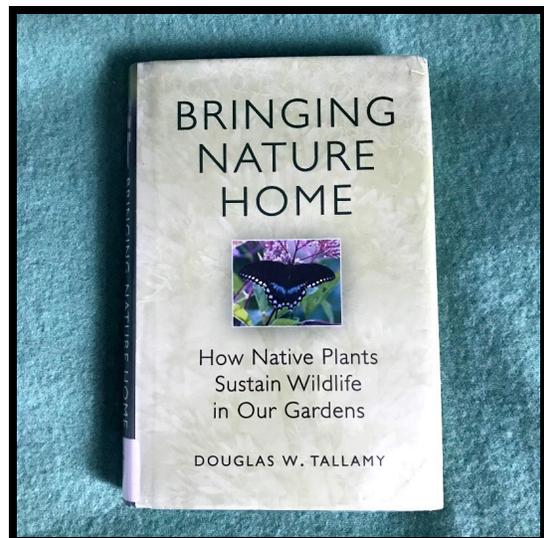
Bringing Nature Home: How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens

Mel Luna

Written in 2007, *Bringing Nature Home: How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens* is considered a seminal book in the ecological gardening movement.

Tallamy wraps the reader in an embrace of logic and wonder with his no-nonsense manner, experience, hard facts - and beautiful photographs!

A clarion call to restore native plants to our suburban landscapes, he lays out his crystal clear argument in one hundred and twenty-three spirited pages. The hundred pages that follow are devoted to profiling specific plants and insects to be aware of and curious about.



First he walks us through what to plant to increase the animal diversity in our gardens, ranked from their ability to support Lepidoptera (caterpillars). When it comes to the section devoted to insects, he says “Knowledge generates interest, and interest generates compassion.” Seeing them individually and learning interesting facts about their lifestyles builds a bridge of shared sentence that has been sorely missing in our attitudes towards these little world-builders.

Tallamy’s follow-up to this book is *Nature’s Best Hope*. In the [Tending Nature webinar series](#) sponsored by Ohio State University last month, he synthesized the message and updates of the two books into an inspiring one hour presentation - which I highly recommend watching with a friend! View the recording [here](#). If you are interested in reading *Nature’s Best Hope* with a group, check out the [Community Read](#) initiative down below!

Community Events of Interest

February 4 - 10:00am: Heather Holm presents *Bumble Bee Banquet: Selecting Native Plants for Bumble Bees* from the Tending Nature series sponsored by Ohio State University. [More details](#)

February 11 - 10:00am - Debra Knapke is the final speaker in the Tending Nature series with a Zoom talk entitled *Native Plants in My Garden? Absolutely!* [More details](#)

February 13 - 4:30pm-5:30pm - Social Hike at Chipman Preserve. Dress warmly for this casual hike with Pam Dalitz from SWMLC (Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy). [More info.](#)

February 14 - 18 - 2:00pm - Van Buren Conservation District presents a virtual *Backyard Symposium* on Zoom entitled “Building a Better Backyard: Bringing Your Yard to Life.” Join them for a week of live presentations! [More details](#)

February 16 - 7:00pm-8:00pm - Register for the *Genetic Diversity and Plant Preservation* webinar with Prairie Nursery ecologist, Neil Diboll. Presented by Wild Ones. [More info.](#)

February 17 - 2:00pm-4:00pm - Kleinstuck Preserve Volunteer Day on the second Sunday of every month. [More info](#) on their Facebook page.

February 21 - 6:30pm-8:00pm: River City Wild Ones (Grand Rapids) presents *Ken-O-Sha: Working for Reconciliation in a West Michigan Watershed* by Dr. Dave Warners. [More Info](#)

February 22 - 7:00pm: The Oakland Drive/Winchell Neighborhood (ODWN) invites you to participate in a "Community Read." Join with folks in your area to discuss *Nature's Best Hope* by Doug Tallamy at the Third Christian Reformed Church (2400 Winchell). [Learn more.](#)

February 23 - 7:00pm: *The Once and Future Oak Ecosystems: Restoring the Culture*, KAWO's monthly presentation on Zoom with Tyler Bassett and Tom Small. Register [here](#).

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!

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!

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SEEDLINGS is edited by Mel Luna. It appears mostly monthly.

The next regular issue will arrive in March. **Deadline for March issue is February 20.**

[Send Submission](#)

Contributing Editors:

Tom Small

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

and www.Facebook.com/KalamazooAreaWildOnes



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