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*American Tree Sparrows visiting a backyard native garden B. Bradburn*

February 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



*Rattlesnake Master (Eryngium yuccifolium) M. Luna*

Dear \*|FNAME|\*,

KAWO has just submitted its formal report to our national organization describing our activities in 2024. We are grateful to President Noel Ocen for managing all the pixelwork and meeting the deadline with time to spare.

Bureaucratic as it can seem, this annual process reminds us of what we did last year (a lot!) and brings our goals into focus. We look forward to planting, directly or indirectly, more native flora in the Kalamazoo area in 2025.

**Beth Bradburn**

*Editor*

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**February Program: Garden Design from the Ground Up**  
*with William Kirst, Adapt*

**Wednesday, February 26, 6:30-8:00pm on Zoom**

William Kirst, founder of [Adapt: Community Supported Ecology](#), presents “Garden Design from the Ground Up: Using Your Native Soil to Inform Your Native Plant Choices.” You’ll learn how to assess your soil’s unique characteristics and choose native plants that will flourish in your environment. Gain practical tips to create a beautiful, low-maintenance garden that supports local ecosystems. Whether you’re a beginner or seasoned gardener, this program will help you build a garden that works with nature, not against it.



This program will be on Zoom. Click [here](#) to learn more and register. Or, view the event [on our Facebook page](#).

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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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## **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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## **Kalamazoo Parks Beautification Planned**

Michigan Waterway Stewards is collaborating with the City of Kalamazoo Parks and Recreation Department and BCK CISMA on a community-wide project to beautify Kalamazoo's flagship riverside parks and to enhance the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail. The project is of interest to Wild Ones because the beautification will include planting of native trees, shrubs, and grasses to increase biodiversity. There will be a spring volunteer work weekend April 12-13 — save the date! Find more details [here](#) and look for updates in the March and April Seedlings.



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## Hyperparasitism - Parasitism of the Parasite

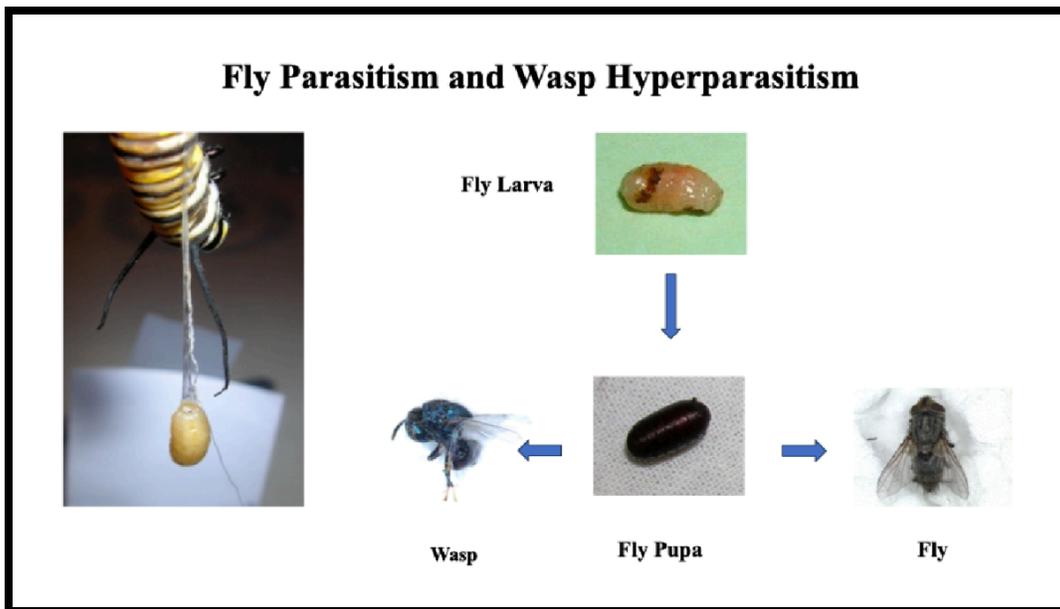
**Ilse Gebhard**

It had been documented in the past that fourth and fifth instar monarch caterpillars in the wild can be parasitized by Tachinid flies. The fly lays its eggs on a caterpillar and when the eggs hatch, the fly larvae burrow into the caterpillar. As the caterpillar grows, so do the larvae, consuming the inside of the caterpillar and eventually killing it. Instead of a butterfly emerging from the chrysalis, fly larvae emerge, which pupate and two weeks later produce flies.

Theoretically monarch eggs and instars 1-3 could also be parasitized in the wild but no such study had been done. So I set out to do this by collecting monarch eggs and caterpillars at all five larval stages and raising them.

Over a period of several years, I found that Tachinid flies indeed parasitize monarch eggs and all five larval stages. I also found an interesting phenomenon called hyperparasitism. Instead of flies emerging from some of the fly pupae, tiny parasitic wasps did. Somehow these wasps had laid their eggs in the fly larvae that were inside the monarch caterpillar. The wasps then underwent metamorphosis inside the fly larvae/pupae.

## Fly Parasitism and Wasp Hyperparasitism



*Photos I Gebhard*

The reason I discovered this wasp hyperparasitism was that I was so busy raising the monarchs and keeping track of all the data that once the flies had emerged from their pupae, I just set aside the containers with fly pupae from which no flies had emerged. When things slowed down late in the season, I got around to dealing with those containers and to my surprise discovered the wasps. Interestingly, some caterpillars yielded just flies, others just wasps, and some yielded both flies and wasps. Also, only caterpillars collected at the fifth (last) larval stage were hyperparasitized by the wasps. Data for the 2005 study year shows an overall Tachinid fly parasitism rate of 8% and only 1.3% of hyperparasitism, so it is quite rare.

I set out to identify the wasp, and by comparison with pictures in my *Peterson Field Guide to Insects* by Donald J. Borror and Richard E. White, I thought it might belong in the Eucharitid family. On reading the text I quickly decided this identification did not fit. The larvae of the wasps in this family are parasites of ant pupa. These wasps lay their eggs in large numbers on vegetation and the larvae on hatching attach themselves to a passing ant that carries them to its nest, where the wasp larvae leave the ant and attack the ant pupae. Interesting, but nonetheless back to the drawing board.

The other wasp species pictured in the book that resembled mine is in the Perilampid family and its habits fit mine – these wasps are mostly hyperparasites, attacking *Diptera* (flies) and *Hymenoptera* (ants, bees, sawflies and other wasps) that are parasitic in caterpillars. With the help of Kalamazoo College biology professor Dr. Ann Fraser, I was able to confirm it as a Perilampid. Unavailability of a reference work prevented us from pinning down the exact species.

On further reading I found a paper by Michelle D. Prysby in the book *The Monarch Butterfly: Biology and Conservation*, edited by Karen S. Oberhauser and Michelle J. Solensky, that reports a hyperparasitoid wasp, *Perilampus hyalinus*, identified to emerge from *Lespesia archippivora*, the very same Tachinid fly that I had been finding. Chances are excellent that the wasps I found are this species.

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## 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

**Thursday, February 6 - 7:00pm-9:00pm:** Regenerating Natural Landscapes, Kalamazoo Conservation District Annual Meeting and Election, 601 W. Maple Street. [Learn more and purchase tickets.](#)

**Sunday, February 9 - 10:00am-12:00pm:** Volunteer Day, Kleinstuck Preserve. Meet at the Maple Street YMCA tennis courts.

**Wednesday, February 12 - 6:00-7:00pm:** Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy Winter Seed Sowing Workshop, Chipman House, Galesburg. [Learn more and register.](#)

**Saturday, February 15 - 1:00-4:00pm:** Birds & Blooms Celebration, Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery. Co-sponsored by KAWO. [Learn more.](#)

**Monday, February 17 - 6:30pm-8:00pm:** Wild Ones River City Event: "Minimizing the Error in Trial and Error" with Mike Weis. Online. [Learn more.](#)

**Monday, February 17 - 7:00pm-8:00pm:** Michigan Botanical Society Program: "Glacial Geology of Michigan," with Dr. Nathan Erber, People's Church, Kalamazoo. [Learn more.](#)

**Thursday, February 20 - 5:00pm-6:00pm:** Kalamazoo Conservation District Monthly Hike, Kleinstuck Preserve and Nature Trail. Link to KCD event calendar [here](#). Navigate to February 20 to view event description.

**Thursday, February 20 - 4:30pm-6:00pm:** Winter Tree Identification, Kalamazoo Nature Center. [Learn more and register.](#)

**Thursday, February 20 - 7:00pm:** Pints and Native Plants, an informal meetup at [Brewery Outré](#) in Kalamazoo. [Learn more.](#)

**Wednesday, February 26 - 6:30pm-8:00pm:** "Garden Design from the Ground Up: Using Your Native Soil to Inform Your Native Plant Choices" with William Kirst, a monthly presentation by Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones. **This month's program is on Zoom.** [Learn more and register.](#)

**Thursday, February 27 - 11:00am-1:00pm:** Healthy People, Healthy Planet Lecture Series: "Sustainable Behavior Change" with Dr. Susan Schneider, Pierce Cedar Creek Institute. Register by February 19 to reserve lunch. [Learn more and register.](#)

*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 Beth Bradburn. It appears mostly monthly.  
The next regular issue will arrive in February. **Deadline for the March issue is February 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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