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January 2021

Maple in Winter K.Patrie

SEEDLINGS

Wild Ones|Kalamazoo Area Chapter

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



Golden Alexander (Zizia aurea) K.Patrie

Dear *|FNAME|*,

January is the month to cozy in with seed and plant catalogs and a good gardening book. If you need suggestions, we have some below.

If you are missing our yearly publication of the KAWO programs bookmark, please be patient. We are working on how to best get that information to you. If you'll scroll to the bottom of this email and click on the 'update your preferences' link to include your mailing address, we'd be ever so grateful! In the meantime, check our [programs web page](#) for up-to-date information. Thanks for your help!

With thoughts towards spring,
Kim Patrie
Editor

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Bumble Bees, Blossoms and Boots on the Ground:

Propelling Pollinator Conservation Through Citizen Science

Nikoli Nickson, Nicole Bailey, and Ann Fraser of Kalamazoo College

January 27, 2021 7pm via Zoom

On local and global scales, pollinator populations are declining. How can we help reverse this trend? Dr. Ann Fraser and undergraduates Niko Nickson and Nicki Bailey from Kalamazoo College will present an overview of the research they have been doing to monitor and promote pollinator health in the Kalamazoo area. [Read More](#)

Black-and-gold bumble bee (Bombus auricomis) on wild bergamot (Monarda fistulosa). Photo:D.Wendling



Zoom Instructions and Information

Please join us ONLINE in the [Zoom app](#) this coming **Wednesday, January 27 at 7pm**. As always, this meeting is free.

This is a joint meeting hosted by Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones and the Audubon Society of Kalamazoo. The host will be available to let you in beginning at 6:50 pm. **Please be aware that our Zoom attendee limit is 100 participants.** If you are not able to get into the meeting because it is at capacity or for any other reason, the meeting will be recorded and posted to the [KAWO You Tube channel](#).

There is no need for registration this time around (yay!) just click the link below a few minutes before 7pm, and enter the meeting ID number if prompted:

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86832908068>

Meeting ID: 868 3290 8068

If you have questions during the meeting, please use the Chat function (tap or click on your screen to find it) as your microphone will be remotely muted. We will collate your questions and direct them to the presenter who will address them after the formal portion of the presentation.

[Did You Miss Last Month's Presentation?](#)

No worries! [KAWO now has a YouTube channel](#), where you can view our programs at your convenience.

In the coming months we'll be adding videos of our upcoming [Monthly Programs](#), as well as curated how-to videos about native plants, natives for landscaping, and pollinators.

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

You can also click on the small red YouTube icon above, underneath the editorial.

Overwintering Strategies of Moths & Butterflies

Ilse Gebhard, text & photos (unless otherwise noted)

Moths and butterflies have developed interesting and varied overwintering strategies in a northern climate such as Michigan's. All four metamorphic stages are represented: egg, larva, pupa and adult moth or butterfly, and of course complete absence.



Perhaps the best-known, and least liked example of a moth overwintering at the egg stage is the non-native Gypsy Moth. Late summer the female lays her egg mass on a tree trunk, preferably oak, from which the small larva emerge in spring to defoliate the tree and make a mess with their frass (*caterpillar poo*) should the tree overhang a patio, deck or sidewalk.

Left: Gypsy Moth eggs



Overwintering at the larval stage is again represented by a well-known species, the Woolly Bear. This is the caterpillar of the Isabella Tiger Moth and is densely covered with stiff bristles of mostly uniform length. In the common color form, the bristles are black at the ends and rusty in the middle. It overwinters under leaf litter and in spring resumes

feeding.

Left: Woolly Bear caterpillar



Among the butterflies that overwinter as pupa are the Swallowtails. They have similar looking chrysalises that are suspended from a twig with silken threads. Their colors are mottled browns and tans, providing excellent camouflage by looking like the twig to which they are attached.

Left: Giant swallowtail chrysalis



Many moths spend the winter as pupa. Some spin silken cocoons attached to a substrate (*something an organism lives, grows, or obtains its nourishment from or on.*) Inside the cocoon the usually dark brown, elongated pupa forms as the caterpillar sheds its skin for the last time. Some fuzzy caterpillars incorporate their hair into the cocoon, others incorporate bits and pieces of the substrate, or even entire leaves. While the cocoon is certainly designed to help protect the pupa from predation and the elements, some pupae are bare and only flimsily attached to the shed skin or the substrate. Camouflage against bark is its biggest defense.

Left: Gypsy moth pupa

I've watched an American Dagger Moth caterpillar first spin a cocoon incorporating its hair. The now hairless larva then spun a 2nd cocoon inside the first one, before finally pupating. Its glass jar home made these observations possible.

Over the years I have found that many moth caterpillars burrow into the ground where

they either spin a cocoon or create a small open space around them, appropriately called a cell. There they pupate and spend the winter. I once watched a Tobacco Horn Worm, the kind that tomato growers hate, completely disappear underground in just minutes.

We think of adult butterflies as warm weather creatures and that is mostly true. But we have some really hardy ones that overwinter behind bark, under logs or in small crevices. On sunny, late-winter days they emerge from their protected crannies to bask in the sun, and once warmed up, to fly around.



One such species is the Mourning Cloak. It is a sight for sore eyes not only for its beauty but also as a sign that spring is not far behind. Its purplish-black upper side, in sharp contrast to the yellow margin edged with iridescent blue spots, is well suited to absorb the heat of the sun.

Left: Mourning cloak butterfly Photo: Bugguide.net

Because they fly at night, we don't realize that moths can be out and about in winter. Attracting them to bait is the easiest way to find and photograph them. A sugar concoction is prepared and painted on tree trunks. Then after dark you can check for them with a flashlight. The sugar concoction recipes usually call for beer. Sometimes they call for stale beer. I can see how some slightly inebriated lepidopterists (*people who study butterflies or moths*) come up with the recipes while freezing their you-know-what off waiting for moths.



Unusual in its overwintering strategy is the Monarch butterfly and its long-distance migration to Mexico where they arrive around Halloween. There they basically, and literally, just hang out, slowly metabolizing the stored-up fat they accumulated during their southward migration. Then, come mid-March, they fly north to Texas to mate, lay their eggs and die. It is their offspring that come wafting into Michigan in May.

Left: Monarchs overwintering in Mexico

Photo: JourneyNorth.org

A New Michigan Invasive:

Invasive Mile-a-Minute Weed Found in Calhoun County

From the Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Contact: [Joanne Foreman](#), 517-284-5814 or [Susie Iott](#), 517-420-0473

The Michigan departments of Natural Resources and Agriculture and Rural Development recently confirmed the presence of invasive [mile-a-minute weed](#) (*Persicaria perfoliata*) at Albion College's Whitehouse Nature Center in Calhoun County.

Mile-a-minute weed, a fast-growing, barbed vine native to India, Asia and the Philippine Islands, was not known to be in Michigan until Doug White, professor of ecology at Albion College, discovered it Oct. 3 in a forest opening on the property while surveying for house wrens.

[Read More](#)



Winter Botany Books

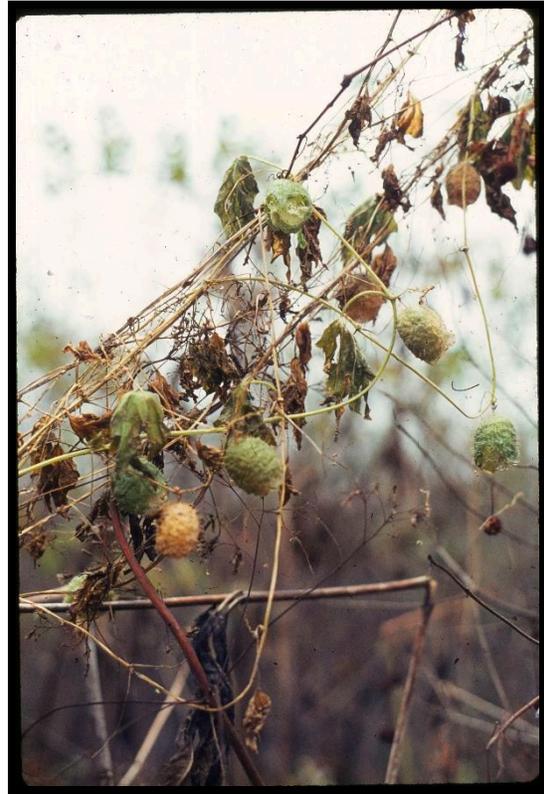
Ilse Gebhard Photos: Russ Schipper

If you enjoy looking at and identifying plants in the wild, that enjoyment does not have to stop once the flowers are gone and the leaves have fallen. Looking at my bookshelf, I find a dozen books that are useful in identifying trees, shrubs, vines and herbaceous plants in winter.

For something small that you can stick in a pocket there is a series of small guides put out by Nature Study Guild Publishers. For winter I have found particularly useful *Winter Tree Finder*, May Theilgaard Watts and Tom Watts, and *Winter Weed Finder*, Dorcas S. Miller. The *Berry Finder*, Dorcas S. Miller, may be most useful in late summer and fall but some berries persist into winter.



Seedpods of the Northern Catalpa (*Catalpa speciosa*)



Wild Cucumber aka Wild Balsam Apple (*Echinocystis lobata*)

With most people carrying a phone with camera these days, you can always take pictures of your “finds” and then in the comfort of a warm room pour through books that you might not want to lug around. Two such books are *The Shrub Identification Book* and *The Tree Identification Book* by W. D. Symonds. In winter, when you don’t have flowers or leaves to help you identify plants, you need to resort to other plant characteristics like fruit, buds (both flower and leaf), twigs, bark, overall shape of tree. These books excel in showing these characteristics along with the flowers and leaves.



Horsemint (*Monarda punctata*)



Winterberry, aka Michigan Holly or Black Alder (*Ilex verticillata*)

I have four books on wildflowers and weeds in winter and any one is a good start. But the way I look at it, one is good, several is better, as they vary in the plants they show and the information that goes along with the plants. Three of the books are illustrated with drawings and the 4th shows photos.

The three books with drawings are: *Wildflowers and Winter Weeds*, written and illustrated by Lauren Brown; *A Guide to Wildflowers in Winter*, Carol Levine, illustrated by Dick Rauh; *Season of Promise: Wild Plants in Winter*, written and illustrated by June Carver Roberts. The one with photos is *Pods: Wildflowers and Weeds in their Final Beauty*, by Jane Embertson, photography by Jay M. Conrader. What makes this book very different from the others is that it shows the flowers in summer, the pods in winter and how the pods are used in decorative arrangements. So if you have an artistic penchant, this might be the book for you.

Follow-Up From David Mindell: Managing and Maintaining Native Landscapes

Ann Fraser

At the November KAWO meeting, David Mindell from PlantWise provided a great presentation on managing and maintaining native landscapes. If you missed it, or want to see it again, you can find his presentation on the KAWO [YouTube channel](#). As a follow-up, David kindly summarized some of his maintenance suggestions and management tips in [this PDF document](#).

Below is David's summary on how to manage for desired outcomes. **IF** you'd like the outcome on the left..., **THEN** implement the action on the right.

IF	THEN
You don't desire aggressive natives	Pull/dig/spray them (i.e., don't ignore them!)
Plants are taller than hoped for	Cut plants back in June
Desire a "neat" landscape	Plan to weed, mulch, cut bed edge regularly
Plan for expansion of plants by self-seed	Don't mulch the bed

Controlling annuals and biennials	Cut budding/flowering plants at base (no need to pull)
You want to nurture wildlife	Leave your planting “messy” through the winter
You desire an “open” site	Plan to remove/thin planting every year or two

In addition to this, [David’s document](#) includes information on

- 1) basic herbicide information for graminoids and broad-leaved weeds
- 2) changes in dominance of different groups of grasses and forbs in response to fire seasonality, and
- 3) invasive species control techniques & timing

For more great information on selecting, growing and caring for native plants, visit the [KAWO resources webpage](#).

Community Events of Interest

Jan. 27th - 7:00PM: “Bumble Bees, Blossoms and Boots on the Ground: Propelling Pollinator Conservation Through Citizen Science” Nikoli Nickson, Nicole Bailey, and Ann Fraser of Kalamazoo College. *An online Zoom presentation, info near the top of this newsletter.*

Feb. 24th - 7:00PM: "Forests Around Us: How Urban Forests Bring Value to People, Places, and Wildlife" Jessica Simons, VP for Conservation Stewardship at the Kalamazoo Nature Center *An online Zoom presentation, more info to come.*

March 7&8 - Wildflower Association of Michigan Annual [Michigan Native Plant Conference](#), w/Heather Holm and Neil Diboll. Held virtually. [More Info](#)

March 24 - 7:00PM: "The Beauty of Spring Ephemerals and Their Place in the Sun" Tom Small, KAWO *An online Zoom presentation, more info to come.*

Ongoing - [National Wild Ones](#) is sponsoring a series of ten Home Gardeners & Educators webinars in conjunction with New Directions in American Landscape (NDAL) This virtual series features interviews where Larry Weaner, founder of NDAL, compares notes with iconic practitioners Piet Oudolf, Gerould Wilhelm, Charles Birnbaum, and Darrel Morrison.

This is a great opportunity to learn about ecologically sound landscaping right from your own home! [Brochure](#) [Registration](#)

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 national 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.

SEEDLINGS is edited by Kim Patrie. It appears mostly monthly. The next regular issue will arrive mid-February. **Deadline for February issue is February 15.**

[Send Submission](#)

Contributing Editors:

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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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