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*View from the Trail at Lillian Anderson Arboretum M. Luna*

January 2023

# SEEDLINGS

# Wild Ones|Kalamazoo Area Chapter

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



"Snow Flowers" (*Agastache foeniculum*) M. Luna

Dear \*|FNAME|\*,

Spring sunshine and warmth is on its way with the passing of the Solstice, but it's not too late to start your winter sowing. Portage District Library has loads of native seeds for free in their [seed library](#). Why not give it a try?

In a new monthly series, Plants to Consider, Kim details some of the options that will be available during our annual [Native Plant Sale](#) in May. She is also helping to plan the celebrations for the 30th anniversary spring plant exchange in June! Stay tuned for more info on that.

Ever wonder how to crack the code on a mystery moth or unknown bug? Ilse explains how she does it. Gail Simmons shares some history and her experience with the Spotted Lanternfly, which has unfortunately been "spotted" here in Michigan. Lastly, stay cozy and tune into our first program of the year - on [Zoom](#) - with author, educator and ecologist [Kim Chapman](#) on January 25th.

Thanks again to all of you who gave us feedback in last year's member survey. We're doubling our efforts to record our programming so you can view them on our

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[YouTube channel](#) if you aren't able to attend in person. You can also expect more field trips and garden tours in response to your requests. In this spirit, you'll find some cheerful photos from a trip led by Ann Fraser last July down below.

Keep planning, learning, and dreaming,  
**Mel Luna**  
*Editor*



*Snow and fungus at work decomposing this fallen limb.*

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## **Planting Native Species Using Real Ecosystems as a Guide**

**January 25, 7pm-8pm on Zoom**

**Kim Chapman, Ecologist**

Our first program of the year asks the question -What is an ecosystem? Learn about the ecosystems of SW Michigan, and how to put the concept of ecosystems to use when planting native species.

Click [here](#) for more information.  
Register for the Zoom presentation [here](#).



*Dry Mesic Prairie B. Slaughter*

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## **Plants to Consider - Harebell and Flowering Spurge**

**Kim Patrie, 2023 Plant Sale Committee**

Plans are rolling along nicely for the 2023 KAWO Native Plant Sale! The Committee has asked me to write about some of our plant selections, specifically plants many folks may not have encountered before. Over the next few months I'll be giving you the scoop on some new (or not offered recently) plants we're hoping to have at the upcoming plant sale on May 20th. Here we go!



### Harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*)

You may see this lovely little plant if you're out on the shore of a lake where it's sandy and rocky, or at the edge of the woods. It frequents semi-shaded slopes as well as sidewalk cracks.

The 1'-2' tall plants are fine-leaved and tough with beautiful 1" lavender to purple blooms from June through September, with a few errant pink or white flowers here and there.

*Harebell (Campanula rotundifolia) K. Patrie*



Though it looks delicate, harebell is hardy. It can tolerate drought, and loves a sandy, dry spot in full to partial sun. It's a great plant to "fill in the gaps" in your native garden beds, especially between plants that are more structural, as it will blow over in heavy winds. Harebell spreads both by seed and rhizome. It is not aggressive.

*Harebell (Campanula rotundifolia) S. Hart*



### Flowering Spurge (*Euphorbia corollata*)

Flowering Spurge, despite its unusual name, is a delightful plant with an unusual partially whorled stem. It has many small white flowers with green and yellow centers - like tiny smiling faces! Blooming June through August, it grows to about 3' tall and is sometimes referred to as the "baby's breath" of our Michigan native plant world.

This is a hardy plant that can grow just about anywhere, as it tolerates medium to dry soil and full to partial sun. Many insects frequent its pollen and nectar, and it is worth mentioning that the endangered Karner Blue butterfly (*Lycaeides melissa samuelis*) is one of its most famous guests. Mammals avoid it



because of the toxic white latex inside its stems.

Flowering Spurge is also a good “filler” plant. Compared to harebell it is a bit more structural. It would be a good candidate for a container, especially at the back of a larger pot with some June Grass and some wild petunias spilling out the front.

*Flowering Spurge (Euphorbia corollata)* K. Patrie

## I Love a Good Moth Puzzle

Ilse Gebhard

In late November I received an e-mail from fellow Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones member Paul Olexia with a moth question. We had had a number of below-freezing overnight temperatures and our first winter storm had dumped a foot and a half of lake effect snow on the landscape. Despite all that, Paul was seeing some small, pale tan moths, with translucent wings, flying around and landing on their sliding glass door. His outdoor thermometer was reading as low as 33 degrees when he observed them.

I had observed a similar phenomenon years ago at our former house but did not manage to catch one to identify it. Maybe Paul would be a better “moth catcher” than I was? Indeed he was, and brought me one in a jar.

*Moth in Question* R. Schipper



Alternately peering at the moth in the jar and paging through my *Peterson Field Guide to Moths of Northeastern North America* (David Beadle & Seabrooke Leckie), I did not find a match. But moths

can have slight color differences between individuals of the same species and books don't always show that, so on to the age of technology.

On my phone I have an application called Seek by iNaturalist. Pointing my phone at the moth as if to take a picture, Seek identified it as a moth in the *Geomitridae* Family. I had just looked at well over 100 moths in that family in my moth book and not found a match. Clearly I would need some good close-up photos that I could post on a website for expert help, and so I asked my husband to take some with his camera. He uploaded the photos to his desktop computer and from there downloaded them to a thumb drive. From the thumb drive I uploaded them to my desktop computer.

With a good close-up photo of the moth on my computer screen, I pointed my phone at the image and this time up flashed "Winter Moth." Okay, smart-ass smartphone, I said. I already know it is a moth and it is winter. None-the-less I googled winter moth and Wikipedia enlightened me that "there really is" a moth called Winter Moth. Wiki showed it a bit darker than Paul's specimen but its life cycle fit. Said to emerge from their cocoon in late fall/early winter, they fly by day even at temperatures just above freezing. The larvae hatch in early spring after overwintering as eggs and when fully grown, drop down to the ground where they spin their cocoons.

But something did not quite fit. The Winter Moth (*Operophtera brumata*) is an invasive species from Europe and the Near East and in North America only found in Nova Scotia and some New England states and in British Columbia, Washington and Oregon. Had it, like so many non-native species, expanded its range to Michigan? But Wiki also mentioned that there is a closely related native species, the Bruce Spanworm (*Operophtera bruceata*), that is found coast to coast in southern Canada and the northern US states.

The two moth species look alike and are so closely related that they hybridize. The flightless females of both species even emit the same pheromone to attract the males. Dissection of the male genitalia or DNA analysis is needed to distinguish between them.

*Screenshots of the identification process. I. Gebhard*

The Bruce Spanworm  
*Operophtera bruceata*

**Observation date:** November 26, 2022

**Submitted by:** Ilse Gebhard

**Specimen type:** Photograph

**Observation notes:** Flying around at barely above freezing after overnight temperatures below freezing and 1.5 ft snowfall a few days before.

**Status:** Resident

**Verified by:** jwiley rains

**Verified date:** November 27, 2022

**Coordinator notes:** None.

**Checklist region(s):** [United States](#), [Michigan](#), [Kalamazoo County](#)

Since genital dissection or DNA analysis were not options available to me, that left me with only their known range to choose between the two species. I checked the range maps for both species on the BugGuide and the Butterflies and Moths of North America websites and they agreed with Wikipedia. Therefore, on the basis of their ranges, the moth had to be Bruce Spanworm. To get independent confirmation, I submitted the photos to both of the websites and expert reviewers confirmed my proposed identification.

[https://www.inaturalist.org/pages/seek\\_app](https://www.inaturalist.org/pages/seek_app)

<https://bugguide.net/node/view/15740>

<https://www.butterfliesandmoths.org>



## **This Beauty... is a Beast!**

Gail Simmons

Among the many reasons we at Wild Ones advocate for native plant habitats is because they support a healthy ecosystem – which means that they support the animal life that is native to our area. We think of the mammals and birds we love, and also of the insect life that supports the mammals and birds. We want our native habitats to support a balanced web of life in our yards, in our communities, in our state, nation, and on our planet. We plant native to try to restore that balance to places that have been disturbed.

Unfortunately even our best efforts at supporting that balance can be toppled by an invader. Many of us in Michigan mourn the loss of millions of ash trees to the Emerald Ash Borer, a gaudy green insect that arrived in Michigan in 2002. Now there is a new invader in our midst, and it is a horrifying beauty of a bug that I've seen with my own eyes.

I first saw this interloper when I lived on Long Island and visited a friend in New Jersey. We went for a walk in a nature preserve near her home. As we strolled through woods on a sunny summer afternoon, I noticed a beautiful winged insect, about the size of a cabbage moth, sitting on the trunk of a tree. At first I was captivated – such beauty! Spotted grayish wings, with a blue cast in the dim forest light, and then a bright red underwing when it fanned itself. I stopped to marvel at this gorgeous creature, eager to find out what it was.



Only after a moment did I notice that the object of my fascination was not alone – there were dozens, no, hundreds of them, clinging to tree trunks all around us. More of them were crawling on the ground. I gradually became aware that this was not a normal sort of insect swarm. When I called to my friend, who has a background in entomology, she walked back and surveyed the scene with disgust. She informed me that what I was looking at was the Spotted Lanternfly – and she proceeded to stomp on as many of them as she could manage to catch on the ground. I was horrified – but now I am even more horrified because I have learned that this invasive insect has been found in Michigan!

*Spotted Lanternfly Adult (Lycorma delicatula) D. Leffler*

The Spotted Lanternfly, *Lycorma delicatula*, first arrived in the United States in 2014, and has been reported in Oakland County, Michigan in the summer of 2022. It is a native of China and first appeared in eastern Pennsylvania. Since 2014, it has spread throughout the eastern United States.

Its invasion is a classic case of how the use of non-native species for landscaping can backfire. The favorite host plant of the Spotted Lanternfly is Tree-of-Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), an aggressively invasive tree imported to Pennsylvania from China in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Unfortunately, the Spotted Lanternfly is very happy to dine and reproduce on our native species as well as crops. Several important Michigan crop plants, including grapes, hops, and fruit trees, are popular with the Lanternfly. It has also been known to feed on black walnuts, maples, willows, and poplars.

The Lanternfly does not usually kill its host plant (thank goodness!) but because it is a sap-sucking species, it excretes a sugary substance called “honeydew” which, in a heavily infested area, can cause the growth of mold and attract ants and stinging insects that like sugar water – the result is a nasty mess that can reduce the vigor of your native garden. Heavy infestations may require the use of insecticides – which of course is not a treatment that favors our native insect species.



**What can you do?** The first order of business, according to the MSU Extension, is to report the location of the non-native [Tree of Heaven](#). If you have this species growing on your property, you might want to make its removal one of your highest priorities as you work to bring your habitat back to a native state. You can report the location of Tree of Heaven to the Michigan Invasive Species Information Network (MISIN, <https://www.misin.msu.edu/>) – your information will help MISIN monitor areas near those trees for the possible arrival of the Spotted Lanternfly.

Second, be alert for the Spotted Lanternfly on your property or in any natural area you frequent. The MSU Extension has a website, Eyes In The Field, (<https://www2.dnr.state.mi.us/ORS/Survey/38>) where you can report the location of any Spotted Lanternfly you find.

You can learn how to identify the various life stages of the insect by visiting the Michigan Invasive Species page <https://www.michigan.gov/invasives/id-report/insects/spotted-lanternfly>. Your vigilance will help state authorities keep one step ahead of this invasive pest.

Finally, if you visit an area that is infested with the Spotted Lanternfly, be aware that it is easy for humans to inadvertently transport this insect. The USDA reports that the Spotted Lanternfly is now found in 14 states: *Delaware, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia, and West Virginia*. The insect has been known to hitchhike on vehicles, both in its adult form and as egg masses laid inside bumpers. If you have parked for a time anywhere near a location with an infestation it is worth it to inspect your vehicle for the unwanted presence of the Spotted Lanternfly.

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## **Field Trip: Warmer Days at Lillian Anderson Arboretum**

**Mel Luna**

It was a hot, sticky day in July and everything was a riot of color and bloom! Ann Fraser, Kalamazoo College professor and KAWO board member, guided a walk through the various ecosystems of [Lillian Anderson Arboretum](#) with her student, Eli Edlefson.

Ann holds up a plant of interest in one hand, and in the other she clutches a handful of invasive Spotted Knapweed (*Centaurea stoebe*) she snagged as we walked along.

M. Luna



(Left) Round headed bush clover (*Lespedeza capitala*) is relatively new to me, so I was happy to see it among the many, many other native plants in the preserve.

(Right) Royal fern (*Osmunda regalis*) growing along the boardwalk over the bog.

The power line cut was planted and seeded with natives by K-College faculty and students. The results were impressive! We saw a variety of pollinators, including several clearwing moths all a-buzz over a large stand of Bee Balm (*Monarda fistulosa*).

Common Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) in the foreground, with *Rudbeckia* and *Monarda* in the background.



This was a wonderful opportunity to enjoy the preserve with fellow enthusiasts! Photo credit E. Edlefsen

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## Community Events of Interest

**January 2 - 1:00pm:** Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy (SWMLC) welcomes volunteers all year long to become a Privateer, a stewardship crew that meets on Mondays. The first session of 2023 is at the Portman Preserve. [More info](#)

**January 7 - 10:00am-2:00pm:** Hike with a biologist: Stewardship Day at the Gourdneck State Game Area in Portage. Lunch provided, registration required. [More info](#)

**January 8 - 10:00am:** Join the Stewards of Kleinstuck for a Public Workday. Meet at the YMCA parking lot by the outdoor abandoned tennis courts. Feel free to bring loppers, gloves and hand clippers. For more information on this group, check them out on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

**January 11 - 8:00pm:** "Leopold Shack and Farm Virtual Tour World Premiere" in honor of Aldo Leopold's 136th birthday. [Read more](#)

**January 13 - 11:00am-12:00pm:** "Finding Wild - A Quest to Find Rare Plants" in-person and on Zoom through Pierce Cedar Creek Institute. [Register here](#)

**January 14 - 9:00am-12:00pm:** "Second Saturday Workday at Lamberton Lake Fen" with the Land Conservancy of West Michigan. [More details](#)

**January 16 - 9:00am-12:00pm:** "Day of Service in Honor of Dr. King" at Bow in the Clouds Preserve hosted by SWMLC. [More details](#)

**January 19 - 4:30pm-5:30pm:** "Social Hike" at Wolf Tree Nature Trail with Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy aka SWMLC. [Read more.](#)

**January 25 - 7:00pm-8:00pm:** "Planting Native Species Using Real Ecosystems as a Guide" a Zoom presentation sponsored by Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones. [Read more](#) and [register here](#).

**January 28 - 1:00pm-4:00pm:** "Saturday Volunteer Workday" at Chipman Preserve hosted by SWMLC. [More 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 February. **Deadline for February issue is January 20.**

[Send Submission](#)

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

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

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and [www.Facebook.com/KalamazooAreaWildOnes](https://www.Facebook.com/KalamazooAreaWildOnes)



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