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Monarch caterpillar on Butterfly Milkweed (Asclepias tuberosa) A. Fraser

July 2022

SEEDLINGS

Wild Ones|Kalamazoo Area Chapter

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



Bumblebee with Penstemon (Penstemon digitalis) M. Luna

Dear *|FNAME|*,

Summer is here! This month we're reveling in the relationships between native plants and insect pollinators -with two articles by Ilse, and a photo exhibit by Quyen.

Have you been tempted to team up with folks to work on native planting sites in the community? Then you will enjoy hearing about a recent project at a local elementary school in "The Northglade Report" below.

Just a reminder that there are *two* field trips this month - to an oak savannah next week with Tyler Bassett, then later in the month to Lillian Anderson Arboretum with Ann Fraser. I hope to see you there!

Interdependence Day is every day,

Mel Luna

Editor

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Oak Savannah Field Trip:

Restoration at MacCready Nature Reserve

July 9, 9am-12pm

Tyler Bassett, *Michigan Natural Features Inventory*

Oak ecosystems were abundant in the eastern United States prior to widespread European colonization, and the dominant cover type in southern Michigan. They are now one of the rarest ecosystem globally and desperately in need of restoration. [Read more.](#)



Please join us on Saturday, July 9 to experience oak savanna restoration firsthand. This will be a fun and informative walk on good trails!

Oak Savannah T. Bassett

Honeysuckles:

The Good and the Bad

Ilse Gebhard

The Michigan Flora website lists fifteen *Lonicera* species in Michigan, of which nine are non-native, and five of those, highly invasive. The invasive non-native honeysuckles were first imported, mostly from Asia, as ornamental garden plants but they soon escaped into the wild and Conservation Districts even included them in their “Wildlife Packages.” If only deer would eat them. I have only come across one insect larva, a sawfly, feeding on a non-native honeysuckle. While not highly favored, birds will eat the berries and spread their seeds when native sources are exhausted.



Of the six native honeysuckle species in Michigan, three species are found in Kalamazoo County. Swamp Fly Honeysuckle (*Lonicera oblongifolia*) is an obligate (OBL) wetland plant, an indicator status category of the US Fish and Wildlife Service for a species that almost always occurs in wetlands (greater than 99% probability). More accessible to most of us are Canadian Fly Honeysuckle, aka American Fly Honeysuckle, (*Lonicera canadensis*) and Glaucous Honeysuckle, aka Red Honeysuckle, (*Lonicera dioica*).

Swamp Fly Honeysuckle (Lonicera oblongifolia) P. Dziuk



Canadian Fly Honeysuckle is an erect or semierect straggling shrub that is moderately shade tolerant and found in forests of all kinds. The flowers bloom in spring and are insect pollinated. They are pale yellow, bell-like in shape and grow two together on a long stalk. Five stamens protrude from the flower. The berries are red, and like the flowers, also grow two together on a long stalk.

*Canadian Fly Honeysuckle flower (Lonicera canadensis)
A. Cressler*



Glaucous Honeysuckle is a vine that grows in forests and forest borders, rocky woodlands, thickets, roadsides. The stalkless flowers bloom in spring and grow in clusters from the center of two leaves that are joined, forming a cup around the flowers. They are typically red to maroon with a slender tube and two lips. The upper lip is broad and the lower one is narrow, with five stamens protruding. The berries are bright red or orange-red and, like the flowers, grow in stalkless clusters.

Glaucous Honeysuckle Flowers (Lonicera dioica) K. Patrie



Hummingbirds love tubular flowers and especially red ones, so Glaucous Honeysuckle on a trellis, fence or even a pole to climb up on would make a nice addition to any yard that has at least part shade.

Beware if shopping for Glaucous Honeysuckle as there is a species called Trumpet Honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*) native south of us that looks very similar. Many cultivars of this species have been bred and are sold in garden centers in our area under various common names.

Glaucous Honeysuckle Flowers (Lonicera dioica)

R. Schipper

A Wonderful 29th Annual Spring Plant Exchange

Mel Luna



Thank you to everyone who came out to the spring plant exchange and to our hosts, Tom and Ruth! It was such a pleasure to get to meet so many of you in person. Especially thrilling was witnessing the joy of native plant sharing and acquisition by both the givers and receivers alike. I

brought home a few plants that were new to me such as Figwort (Scrophularia) and Queen of the Prairie (Filipendula rubra) - thank you Becky & Mark, and Chuck!

Thank you also to all of the volunteers who made it a smooth and fun event - Margo, Kathy, Douglas, Ilse, Mike & Carol, Dave, Paul, and the Community Projects crew. Next year will be our thirtieth anniversary exchange and we are very excited about celebrating with all of you. Let us know if you have ideas or would like to be involved in the planning! Next up - mark your calendar and start setting plants aside for the [fall native plant exchange](#) in September. I'll be there with bells on!



Ilse and Carol giving away varieties of Milkweed.



Joyful participants with their new native plants!

No, They Are Not Baby Hummingbirds

Ilse Gebhard

Over the years I have been contacted by a number of people who believed they had baby hummingbirds visit the flowers in their garden. I had to very gingerly explain to them that they are moths and not baby hummers. I say “gingerly” because people love hummingbirds and somehow are prejudiced against moths.

Hummingbird young don't leave the nest until they are fully grown and even may weigh a few milligrams more than their run- ragged, or is it flown-ragged, mother. As the sole provider, she has been stuffing small insects down their beaks while barely taking time to feed herself.

The moths that people see at their flowers are one of two species of diurnal clearwing sphinx moths, namely Hummingbird Clearwing (*Hemaris thysbe*) or Snowberry Clearwing (*Hemaris diffinis*). Like the only hummingbird in our area, the Ruby-throated (*Archilochus colubris*), but only about 1/3rd its size, clearwings hover while drinking nectar by inserting their proboscis into flowers. At a quick glance, clearwings may look like large bumblebees, but bumblebees land on flowers to drink nectar. As the name clearwing indicates, their wings are mostly transparent but because they beat them so fast, up to 70 beats per second, all you see is a blur.

Snowberry Clearwing Moth (Hemaris diffinis) L. Shaw



The caterpillars of both clearwing species are green, with the typical horn of sphinx moth larvae on the back of their hind end. They overwinter in loosely woven cocoons in leaf litter. It always pains me when I see people burn their leaves in fall. Not only does it cause air pollution and produces greenhouse gases but it robs the soil of much needed organic matter and nutrients and it kills uncountable organisms that spend the winter sheltering in leaf litter.

Snowberry Clearwing Caterpillar Snowberry. Q. Edwards



Several of my moth books list honeysuckle and snowberry as larval host plants for both species of clearwings. Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus* var. *albus*) is a native shrub. Its flowers attract many pollinators and its berries are eaten by fruit-eating birds in winter such as robins, bluebirds and waxwings.

Common Snowberry (Symphoricarpos albus) W. Siegmund



As for honeysuckle, the [Michigan Flora website](#) lists fifteen *Lonicera* species in Michigan, of which nine are alien and some highly invasive. In my searches for caterpillars I have never found a

clearwing caterpillar, or of any other moth or butterfly species, on these ubiquitous alien shrubs. I'm certainly glad that clearwing moths do find the much rarer native honeysuckles.

Native Flora Photo Exhibit: **Spotlight on EC Secretary Quyen Edwards**

Mel Luna

As anyone who knows her can attest, Quyen (pronounced Quinn) Edwards is an amazing human being with a passion for pollinators and biodiversity. She puts her skills as a librarian to work by reading widely, visiting the gardens of mentors and preserves, and through careful observation coupled with thoughtful experimentation. I have to say - this woman is on fire! In a process that started a year ago, she rescued and successfully raised ten cecropia moths to maturity. I hope she will share that incredible story with you soon, but for now I'd like to invite you to check out her [photo exhibit](#) on display at the Portage District Library during the months of July and August.



It's another reason to visit the library if you haven't yet seen the building since it was remodeled. Not only has Quyen helped launch PDL's [seed lending library](#), she also spearheaded the expansion of the monarch waystation native gardens on the west and north sides of the building. Her commitment to local biodiversity is evidenced in this collection of photographs taken in her own backyard in Portage.

Don't miss a chance to be inspired by these and other stunning images now through August 26th.

Robber fly on Downy Sunflower. Q. Edwards



“I have been interested in native plants and pollinators since 2018 when I helped plant the Portage District Library’s Monarch Waystation. I have learned a lot about native plants since then and have enjoyed watching the insects they attract. All of these photographs were taken in my backyard in Portage. You can find more of my photographs of native plants and the creatures that visit my garden on Instagram @mi_nativeplantgarden.”

- Quyen Edwards

Monarch on Stiff Goldenrod. Q. Edwards

The Northglade Report

Paul Olexia and Margo Rebar

A pair of third grade students emerge from their Northglade Montessori Magnet School to help revitalize a native garden located outside of their classroom. They are not quite sure what to expect and are soon confronted with an array of potted native plants, a barren plot of land, jugs of water, trowels, and several Wild Ones members. Oh, so many choices that need to be made: which plant do I want? Where do I plant it? How deep do I dig? How much water do I use?

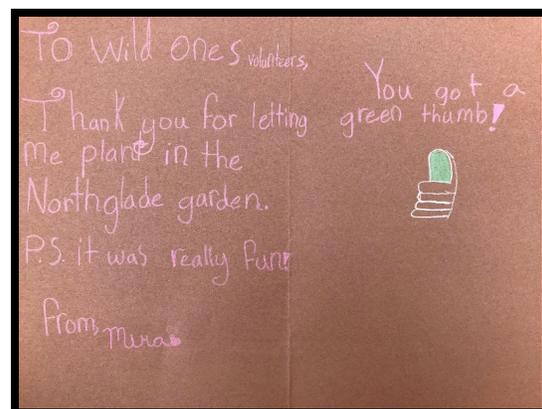
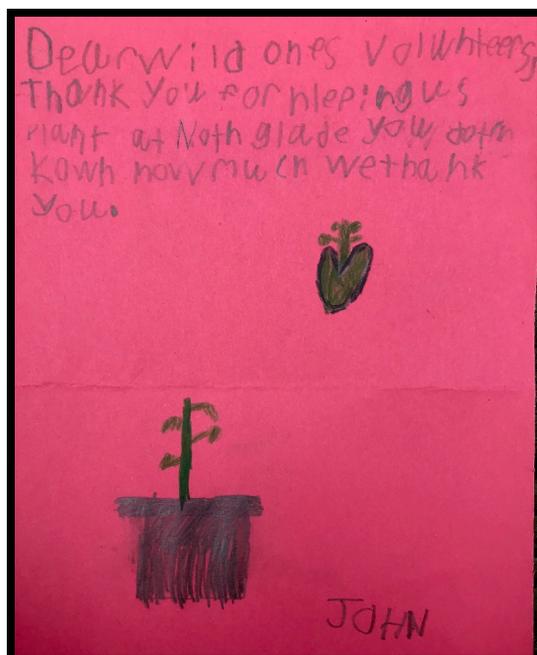
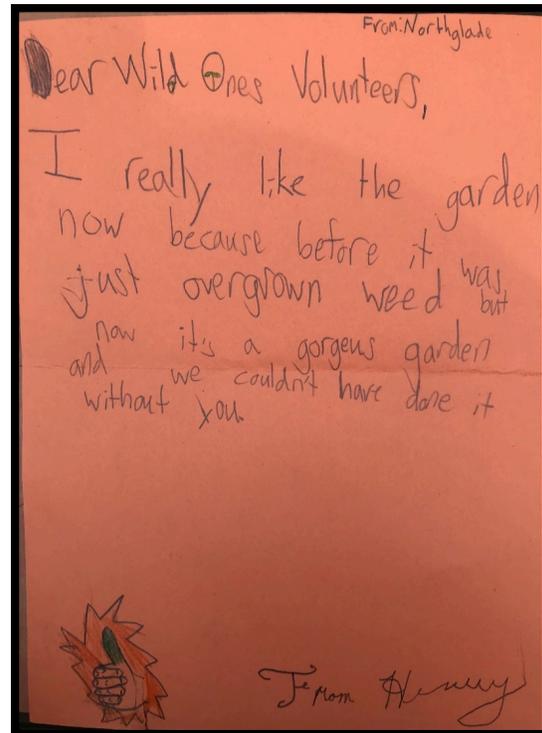
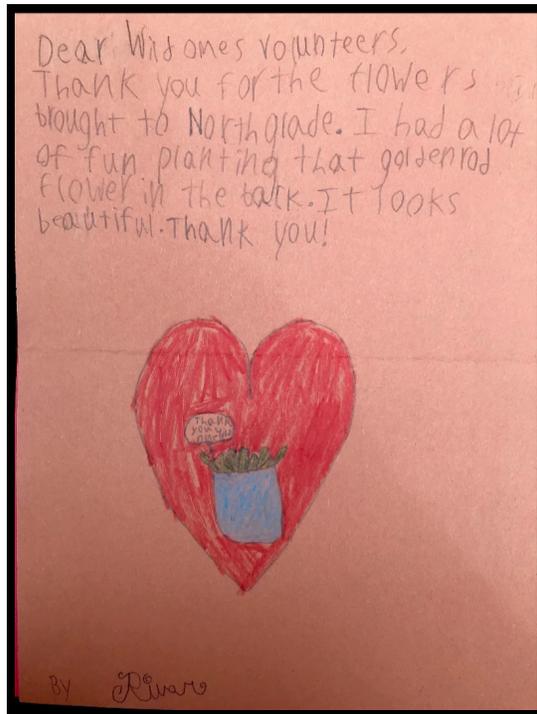
Wild Ones Community Projects members had become aware that this courtyard garden (established years ago with funds from the Nancy Small Memorial Fund) was no longer being tended. This 20 x 5 foot plot was overgrown with invasive non-natives such as “creeping Charlie” (*Glechoma hederacea*) and less desirable plants such as poke weed (*Phytolacca americana*). Once they were removed, the children were invited - two by two - to continue the revitalization efforts.

As the first pair of students finished choosing, digging, planting, and watering, they invited the next pair of students to join us. At first, these students were eager but somewhat timid; however, with a little coaching by us, they quickly adjusted. We provided an array of plants that were suitable for this site (the sunny south side of a storage building) and chose natives that bloom in early spring or mid-fall when the students would be in session. We also selected plants with a range of heights, such as taller New England Aster (*Aster novae-angliae*) and Blue stem goldenrod (*Solidago caesia*), mid-sized Golden Alexander (*Zizia aureus*) and Black-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia hirta*), and shorter wild

strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*) and wild petunia (*Ruellia caroliniensis*) for a total of about forty plants from thirteen different species.

Pairs of students rotated through the planting process until we “ran out of” third graders and plants. Wood chips were added at the end to cover the bare soil and to help reduce the re-introduction of other species. We will continue to monitor the site with assistance from the teacher who promised to water as needed.

The best part, after working with enthusiastic students, was the surprise bundle of thank you notes we received in the mail!

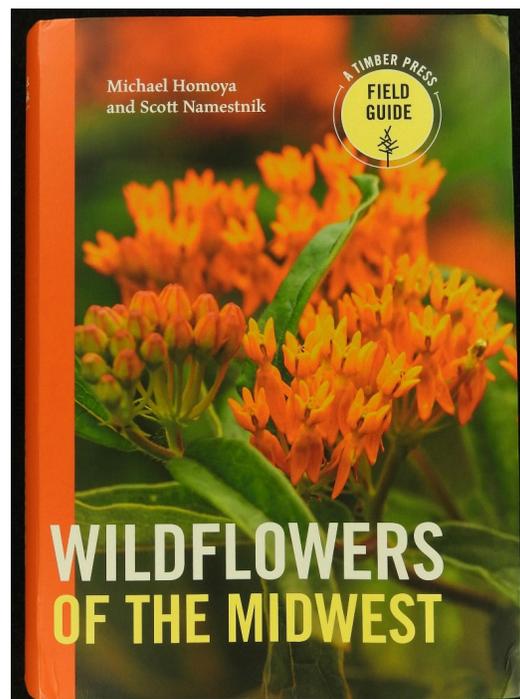


New Wildflower Guide: Wildflowers of the Midwest

Russ Schipper

Just out in June 2022, this guide by Michael Homoya and Scott Namestnik covers 1000 commonly encountered species in the upper Midwest: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Wisconsin.

The major arrangement is by flower color and within each color by family, so related plants are together. Notably, the images are deliberately large. The top half of each page has excellent photos of two species, often with very good close-ups and the bottom half has comprehensive explanatory text, describing the habitat, flowering season, the plant description and states where found.



In the introductory section, there is an excellent description of the ecoregions and natural communities in the region, as well as a valuable section on plant families. Both of these are very useful additions. Though it mostly covers herbaceous plants, some vines and shrubs are included. The only drawback is that, at more than six hundred pages, it may be a bit heavy to carry into the field.

Community Events of Interest

July 6 - 8:30pm-10:30pm - "Fun With Fireflies Fireside Chat" at Pierce Cedar Creek Institute. [Learn more.](#)

July 9 - 9:00am-12:00pm - KAWO's field trip to an oak savannah at MacCready Nature Preserve with Tyler Basset. There is a carpooling option. [More info](#)

July 9 - 9:00am-11:00am - KAWO Community Project: Clean up and remove invasive plants at Paris Cleaners. Maintaining an established wetland planting. [More details](#)

July 20 - 6:30pm-8:30pm - Wild Ones River City Chapter (Grand Rapids) annual plant sale/fundraiser at Fulton Street Market. [More details](#)

July 21 - 9:00am-11:00am - KAWO Community Project: Clean up and remove invasive plants at Paris Cleaners. [More info](#)

July 23 - 10:00am-12:00pm - KAWO's field trip to Lillian Anderson Arboretum with Ann

Fraser from Kalamazoo College. Please note that parking is scant at the entrance so we are meeting at Oshtemo Township Park. [More info](#)

July 22, 23, 24 - Spend a weekend in Beavercreek, OH at the 14th Annual Midwest Native Plant Conference. Programs, speakers, field trips, oh my! [Learn more](#)

July 30 - 6:00pm-9:00pm - Pierce Cedar Creek Institute's annual fundraiser event, A Late Summer Night's Green. Details [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](#)

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

The next regular issue will arrive in August. **Deadline for August issue is July 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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