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Hairy Wild Petunia (Ruellia humilis) B. Bradburn

July 2024

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



Leadplant (Amorpha canescens) B. Bradburn

Dear *|FNAME|*,

From Indiana Dunes National Park to nearby natural areas and neighborhood native gardens, this month's newsletter is like a tour of native flora and fauna. Scroll down to learn about many places to explore and what you can see there. And to find out about one more KAWO native planting, at the Gilmore Car Museum, please visit [our Facebook page](#).

If your travels take you down Howard Street in Kalamazoo, check out the KAWO Community Projects planting at the Kalamazoo Public Schools Administration Building. Many folks (including non-KAWO visitors to the building) have commented on its beauty this year. I love arriving for a work day and seeing a dozen American Goldfinches fly up out of the garden. Both photos above were taken at the site.

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Beth Bradburn

Editor



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.

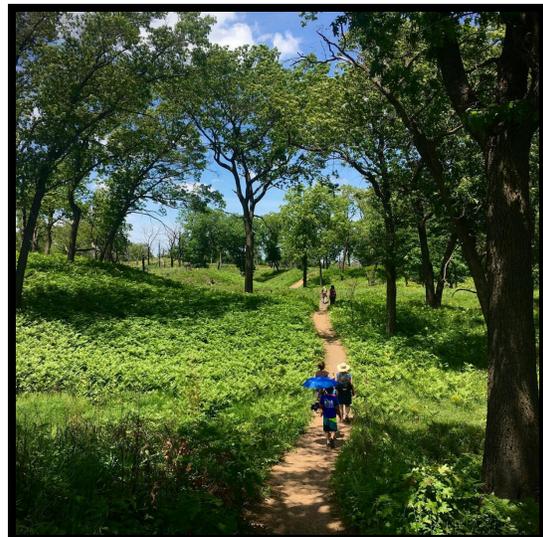
Past issues of Seedlings can be found [here](#), and by clicking the link between the
Facebook and YouTube links above.

A Field Trip to Miller Woods

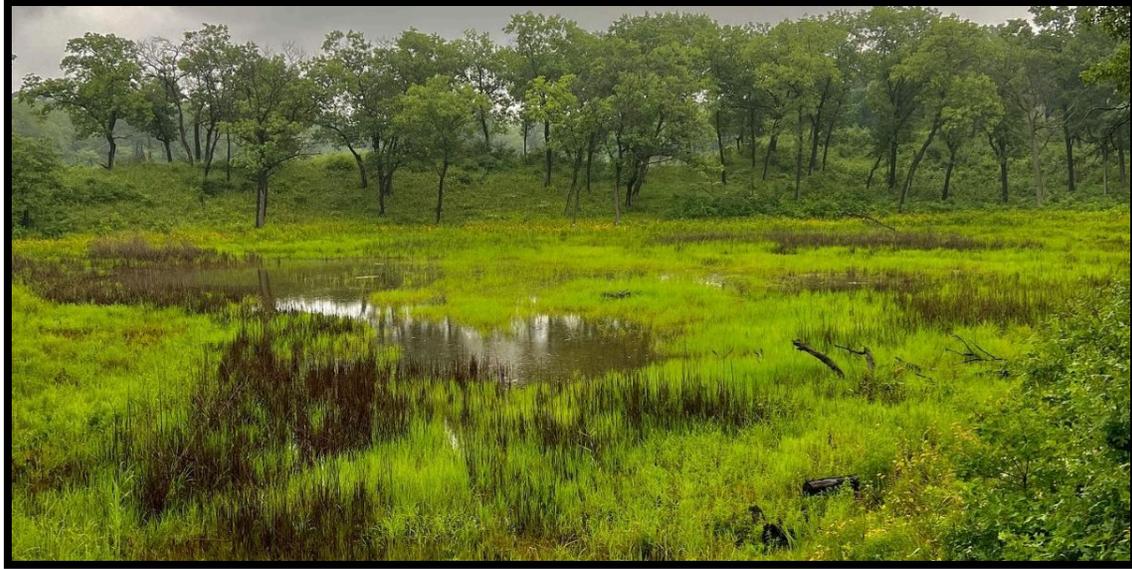
Mike Weis

In July I will lead a tour of arguably one of the highest quality Black Oak Savannas in the country. Miller Woods, a 1,000-acre site in the City of Gary, is the western property of the Indiana Dunes National Park. This property has three globally rare ecosystems – black oak savanna, dune and swale habitat, and pannes. The hike from the nature center to the lake is like walking through ecological succession history. From the oak savanna you will pass through ancient dunes, ancient shorelines, interdunal wetlands, lagoons, ridge and swale, pannes, a brief pine forest, dune blowouts, foredunes, sedge meadow and finally the beach (which is typically secluded at this spot with a beautiful view of the Chicago skyline).

This quick trip through natural history is what caught the eye of [Henry C. Cowles](#), the father of modern ecology, in the late nineteenth century. It was here where he began his groundbreaking observations of ecological succession, which formed the beginning of the study of ecology. Miller Woods is unique in that the fire cycle has pretty much continued from the thousands of years of stewardship of the native peoples through today, which is one of the reasons why this system is so high in quality.



During most of the twentieth century the land was owned by the United States Steel Company. The company never developed it but did run railroad tracks and spurs through it, which caused sparks and wildfires to flare up frequently. The land was acquired by the National Park Service in 1976 through the expansion bill. The bill, the environmental study center, and the Miller Woods hiking trail were named after Illinois senator Paul Douglas, who was a fierce advocate of the preservation of the Indiana Dunes.



Miller Woods has over 520 native plants, many of which are state endangered. State and federally-listed plant and wildlife in Miller Woods include the piping plover, Blanding's turtle, and Pitcher's thistle. There are many other botanical surprises here including a ground-cover of New Jersey Tea as far as the eye can see, the rare Prairie Fameflower (*Phemeranthus rugospermus*) and loads and loads more. Every season throughout the year offers spectacular discoveries.

Photos M. Weis

The field trip to Miller Woods is **Saturday, July 27, at 11:00am Eastern (10:00am Central)**. For more details, including location, directions, and Mike's recommendations for what to see in Miller Beach, visit [our web page](#). And please consider carpooling!

Member Garden Tours Continue Throughout Summer



Our June member garden tours were wildly popular! See more local native plant gardens and talk with the gardeners in [Portage on Wednesday, July 24](#), and in [Texas Township on Monday, August 5](#). For details, including maps and the gardeners' stories, click on the dates above. A fourth garden tour is also planned for late August; find updates in the next Seedlings.

Moraine Meadows Savanna Restoration Project

Paul MacNellis will lead a tour of Moraine Meadows, a 20-acre savanna restoration project, on Saturday, July 13, at 10:00am. For more details about the project and the field trip, click [here](#).

Photo P. MacNellis



The Lowly Circopidae

Molly Williams



As a young child, I'd run through fields of grass and wildflowers. Once in a while I'd feel something wet against my bare legs. It looked like somebody had spit on the plant stems, leaving a froth of bubbles, that would wet my legs as I brushed past. This year, I've observed these "spittle" masses on Golden Alexander (*Zizia aurea*). It's a Michigan native prairie plant, one of the earliest to bloom in the spring, typically in early May. This year, I had time to investigate what was hiding inside the bubbles. Using toothpicks as tweezers, I teased out the critter hiding inside the bubbles.

Bubble nest on Golden Alexander M. Williams



What I found was the nymph of the common meadow spittlebug, *Philaenus spumarius*. This insect is aptly named for the froth it makes from the juices it draws from its host plant. The bubble mass is quite stable, due to components that keep the liquid from evaporating. Even on a hot, windy day the bubbles endure.

Spittlebug nymph, less than 1 cm M. Williams



I've never seen an adult spittlebug. They're called "frog hoppers" because of their big hind legs. They spend their adulthood in grassy areas. Females lay eggs in the fall in leaf litter.

Adult spittlebug "froghopper" U of Minnesota Extension

Usually, there's no need to take any action to remove these insects. They're not harmful to their host plants. Population numbers are typically low. Insecticide sprays are ineffective because the nymphs are protected inside their bubble masses. But if you find the spittle masses unsightly, a spray with a garden hose is usually enough to remove them.

Five KAWO Members Honored at Spring Plant Exchange

Our 2024 Spring Plant Exchange attracted about one hundred new and experienced native gardeners who socialized, admired the six-foot-tall stem of an American Columbo (*Frasera caroliniensis*) in flower, and took home almost five hundred donated plants. In a brief but moving (and occasionally humorous) ceremony, Tom Small presented the [Nancy Cutbirth Small Distinguished Service Award](#) to Paul Olexia, Mike Klug, Carol Klug, Ann Fraser, and Dave Wendling.



Parasitic Orchids Found in Michigan

Ilse Gebhard

Exploring Michigan's natural areas you may have come across some native orchids like Pink Lady-Slipper, Purple-Fringed Orchid or even the tiny Nodding Lady-Tresses. Often overlooked are four species of orchids in the Genus *Corallorhiza* found in Michigan's woodlands. They are parasitic or at least partly so. Parasitic means that the plants don't photosynthesize but get their nutrients from tree roots, either directly on the roots, or parasitic on fungi that are connected to tree roots and that shuttle nutrients from the tree to the parasitic plant.

For ease of searching the [Michigan Flora website](#), I am using the common names used there, as common names can be very confusing.

Photos R. Schipper



***C. odontorhiza* – Fall Coral-Root**

Dry open oak forests; pine plantations; much less often in beech-maple forests or under tamarack.

The stem is bulbous or enlarged at the base in this species, unlike the other three species. This is the latest species of *Corallorhiza* to bloom in Michigan. Flowering collections have been made from mid-August through September, with fruiting occurring through October.

C. odontorhiza clearly is increasing in Michigan as well as spreading northward. Records from north of the middle of the Lower Peninsula did not begin to appear until the late 1960s.



***C. striata* – Striped Coral-Root**

Coniferous and mixed forests and swamps, especially cedar thickets, often associated with limestone; also in beech-maple forests.

May occur singly or in large handsome clumps of a dozen or more stems, by far our showiest coralroot.



***C. trifida* – Early Coral-Root**

Coniferous and mixed forests and swamps, especially under cedar, but also in beech-maple, aspen, and other forests; and less commonly in bogs and tamarack swamps; often in deep shade. Very local southward.

Usually easily recognized by its small stature (though rarely as tall as 28 cm), yellow or greenish yellow color, and (usually) unspotted lip.



***C. maculata* - Spotted Coral-Root**

Parasite of fungi in the *Russulaceae* family.

In forests of all kinds: conifers, hardwoods, mixed; moist or dry; from sandy oak-hickory or red pine to wet cedar-hemlock; often common in pine and spruce forests on old dunes as well as in beech-maple stands.

Two varieties occur in Michigan, the widespread *var. maculate* and *var. occidentalis* found in the Upper Peninsula and northern Lower Peninsula. *Var. occidentalis* flowers ca. 2–4 weeks earlier than *var. maculata* when they occur in the same region, and may occur in dense patches. In addition to the two varieties, several color forms occur.

Community Projects Spotlight: Northglade School

Beth Bradburn

A couple of weeks ago several regular Community Projects volunteers were joined by a local scout leader and his family to add some plants to (and remove a few weeds from) the KAWO planting at Northglade Montessori Magnet School. Paul Olexia told me that Ilse Gebhard had helped start this native plant garden, so I asked her about its history.

Northglade School, June 2024



In 2017 Donna Partin, a teacher at the school, received a grant from the Nancy Small Memorial Fund to install a native plant garden. That winter, Donna's students used cardboard and leaf mulch to suppress the existing weedy lawn, and in the spring Ilse Gebhard and Tom Small helped them plant the garden.

Planting day, 2018



Community Projects took over this site around 2021 and has added quite a few plants, including some donated by KAWO members, so we're not sure how many remain from the original planting. In this photo from June 20, you can see New Jersey Tea (*Ceanothus americanus*) blooming in the foreground. The tallest plant, toward the back, is Rattlesnake Master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*). You may recognize several other species in this thriving garden.

June 2024



Who Am I?

A native fauna ID quiz from Ilse Gebhard



Photos I. Gebhard

Click [here](#) for the answer!

Community Events of Interest

Saturday, July 6 - 10:00am-12:00pm: Fern identification hike, Pierce Cedar Creek. Rescheduled from June 29. [Learn more.](#)

Friday, July 12: Robin Wall Kimmerer, Cheney Auditorium. This event is sold out. [Learn more](#)

about the speaker [here](#).

Saturday, July 13 - 10:00am-12:00pm: KAWO field trip to Moraine Meadows Savanna Restoration Project. [Learn more](#).

Sunday, July 14 - 10:00am-12:00pm: Volunteer Day, Kleinstuck Preserve. Meet at the Maple Street YMCA tennis courts.

Monday, July 15 - 6:30pm-7:30pm: Portage District Library Monarch Waystation Tour. Registration required. [Learn more](#).

Wednesday, July 17 - 5:00pm-6:45pm: Wild Ones River City Native Plant Sale, Grand Rapids. [Learn more](#).

Sunday, July 21: Registration deadline for 2024 Field Botany series, Kellogg Biological Station. [Learn more](#).

Wednesday, July 24 - 6:00pm-8:00pm: KAWO member garden tours, Portage. [Learn more](#).

Saturday, July 27 - 11:00am EDT (10:00am CDT): KAWO field trip to Miller Woods, Indiana Dunes. [Learn more](#).

Saturday, July 27 - 10:00am-12:00pm: Michigan Botanical Society field trip to mesic northern forest, Wade Preserve, Allegan County. [Learn more](#).

Thursday, August 1 - 7:00pm: Pints and Native Plants, an informal meet-up at [Brewery Outré](#) in Kalamazoo. [Learn more](#).

Monday, August 5 - 6:00pm-8:00pm: KAWO member garden tours, Texas Township. [Learn More](#).

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 Beth Bradburn. It appears mostly monthly.
The next regular issue will arrive in August. **Deadline for the August issue is July 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
and www.Facebook.com/KalamazooAreaWildOnes



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