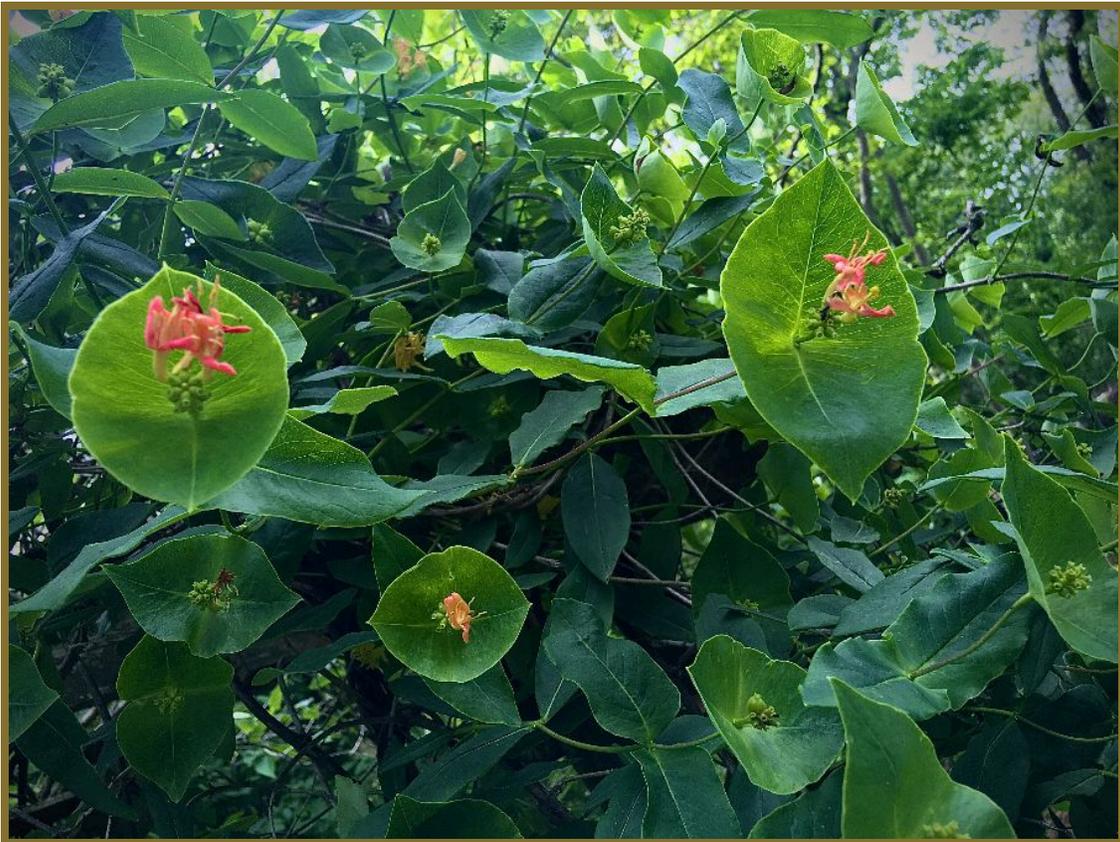


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Glaucous or Red Honeysuckle (Lonicera dioica)

June 2020

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: A Must For Your Native Planting



Ilse Gebhard

When designing a native planting several aspects should be considered. Yes, it is important to be visually attractive to humans, especially if you live in a neighborhood with weed ordinances and manicured lawns. But just as important is that it includes insect larval food plants, nectar sources for the adult stages from early spring to late fall, and provides shelter for all their life stages.

Golden Alexander (*Zizia aurea*) meets all the above criteria. Its bright yellow flowers in umbels are offset beautifully by the dark green foliage.

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Like our spring ephemerals, Golden Alexander blooms early in the season, April-June, with the added advantage that its foliage does not die back after blooming. This is important since being in the Parsley Family, it is a larval food plant for the Black Swallowtail butterfly long after it stops blooming.

Don't overlook the importance of seed to wildlife. I've seen goldfinches glean Golden Alexander seeds in fall and if you don't cut it back until spring, it will provide protection for insects overwintering at various life stages.

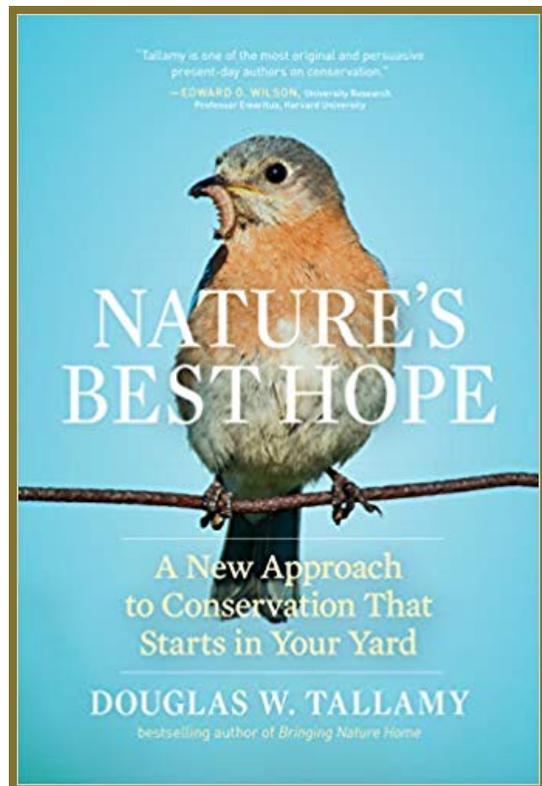


Golden Alexander (*Zizia aurea*)

Doug Tallamy's New Book

Paul Olexia, *Professor Emeritus, Kalamazoo College*

In the early pages of Douglas Tallamy's new book, Nature's Best Hope, he states "We must shrug off our age-old adversarial relationship with nature, the 'nature versus us' attitude". That adversarial relationship that may have been useful to some of our ancestors, but may be tragic for us now, should have been abandoned two to four generations ago. And it is a "war" for all practical purposes we won (in a manner of speaking). Not only have we won, we have devastated our "opponent".



After victories in two world wars in the twentieth century, this country provided assistance to our former enemies to help them recover. Yet in our "war with nature" we have been relentless. And in

doing so, we have brought about a “modified nature” that, in turn, occasionally raises new threats, not the least of which are climate change and the mass extinction of plant and animal species, some of which we never will know.

The native biota (plants and animals) have played a great variety of roles, relatively few of which we understand, that collectively constitute ecological communities. Different ecological communities are defined not only by the list of native species found there, but by the inter-relationships and ecological functions, e.g. pollination, predation, prey, competition, and mutualism, between and among those species. Moreover, humans have received many benefits from such communities as well, including pollination services, carbon sequestration, and flood and erosion control.

It is obvious to many of us that we need to re-evaluate our relationship with nature as well as what constitutes an aesthetic, desirable, and attractive environment. I often have asked myself why so many people find large expanses of one species of short grass, so highly dependent on human maintenance, to be aesthetically attractive. Some have proposed that there is something inherent in our “aboriginal” genes that perhaps allows us to feel safe because we can see potential predators, prey or enemies far in the distance. Others have suggested that this sense of “beauty” exists because we have been taught that from an early age. If the latter is the case, bear in mind that “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder”. Many people find acres of purple loosestrife attractive. It appears that we cannot trust our eyes and intuitive judgement to determine what is “attractive and desirable” in nature. What, then, are we to trust?

My suggestion is that we use “understanding” – understanding the roles of the vast diversity of insects in pollination and as food sources for wildlife; the roles of forests in carbon sequestration, cycling of moisture into the atmosphere, and soil stabilization; the roles of fungi both as important plant symbionts and in regenerating soil nutrients through decomposition of dead organic matter; the roles of birds in controlling potential destructive insect populations, and in seed dispersal. The list goes on.

Our key to understanding these interactions is knowledge. Knowledge of how my car operates allows me to take better care of it, operate it safely, and sometimes repair it. Knowledge of ecological communities helps me see how they operate so that I can appreciate their value and utility, care for them and keep them healthy. And although our knowledge of all the interactions within the community may not be complete, we can begin to assemble the critical components with the hope that some of the important interactions will develop over time, – “If you plant it, they will come”. We can use our understanding, along with additional observations over time to establish attractive, healthy, and beautiful landscapes to replace unhealthy, over-simplified and dysfunctional ones.

Tallamy quotes from President Richard Nixon's State of the Union address from 1970: "We can no longer afford to consider air and water common property, free to be abused by anyone without regard to consequences". And Tallamy goes on to state, "... the notion that the earth and its natural resources are not infinite and must be managed wisely for the greater good must have been ahead of its time because it was largely ignored." (My underline)



But we have made some progress in attempting to protect natural area over the years. We have set aside lands as National and State Parks, national forest, grasslands and wetlands. We have nature centers, land trusts (conservancies) and preserves. We have laws – the Endangered Species Act, NEPA and others designed to protect threatened species and communities. We have Federal and State Agencies whose function is conservation. And we have numerous NGO's such as TNC, Audubon, and the Wilderness Society to name only a few. Yet it appears that in spite of all that, we continue to lose biodiversity and quality habitat for many species. At times it can be an overwhelming and depressing challenge.

But Tallamy offers us hope and guidance. He reports that there are an estimated forty million acres of turfgrass in this country. If we can get each landowner to convert only one half of her or his lawn to some semblance of a plant community native to that geographic region, we would add 20 million acres of land to something more natural, providing habitat and refuge for our native species. "That is more land area than the Everglades, Yellowstone, Yosemite, Grand Canyon, Canyonlands, Denali, and the Great Smoky Mountains combined." (Tallamy)(my underline) He refers to this combined acreage of converted and improved "yards" as our "Homegrown National Park" and he has no illusion that achieving this will be easy. To get it underway will necessitate what the social sciences refer to as "behavioral contagion", the way ideas and behaviors spread through a population and can lead to changes in voting and policies – changes in society, politics, and culture. It will require governments, neighborhoods, home-owners associations, etc. to become involved and, in many cases, will mean changes in their values. It is up to us who value such transformations to not only become involved but to lead. He urges us to "update, educate, lobby, rewrite" along with our hands-in-the-dirt activities. As members of Wild Ones, we have much to do and we can make a difference.

With deep gratitude to Tom Small for his valuable suggestions and editorial review.

Free Webinar With Doug Tallamy

Thursday July 9, 7:30-10:30pm

WILD ONES PRESENTS
AN EVENING WITH
ENTOMOLOGIST, ECOLOGIST, AND AUTHOR

Doug Tallamy



Doug Tallamy Presents a FREE Webinar: “Nature’s Best Hope”

You and a guest are invited to an inspiring FREE webinar “Nature’s Best Hope” by renowned entomologist, ecologist and author, Doug Tallamy. Dr. Tallamy is a Lifetime Honorary Director of Wild Ones.

Through his research, writings and presentations, Dr. Tallamy has encouraged us to landscape our homes to: “Garden as if life depended on it.”

This FREE webinar is Thursday, July 9th, 7:30 pm EST.

If you have been motivated by Tallamy’s work, now is the time to connect with a family member, friend, neighbor, or colleague. Invite them to attend this special Wild Ones program to discover why to grow native plants!

To register for this FREE webinar [Click Here](#)

Dill: Good For More Than Pickles!

Ilse Gebhard

My first experience with raising Black Swallowtail butterflies did not have a happy ending. I had found the caterpillar on Parsley, one of its host plants, and after diligently feeding it fresh Parsley leaves for several days it pupated. A couple of weeks later, much to my dismay, instead of a beautiful butterfly, a parasitic wasp emerged from the pupa. The larval stage of the wasp had completely eaten the developing butterfly inside the pupa.



My next attempt had a happier outcome. I had picked some dill for our salad when I noticed some specks of dirt on it. Just as I was going to submerge the dill in some water to wash it, something made me take a closer look at the specks. Wow! Those specks were 3 caterpillars. Both ends were black and had black hair but the middle was white and hairless. This fit the description of the early instars (larval stages) of the Black Swallowtail caterpillar whose host plant can be dill, among many others in the parsley family. In due time, the caterpillars outgrew their skins and emerged smooth and green with black bands and yellow spots.



Actually, dill turned out to harbor another surprise, namely a small jet-black caterpillar with black bristles. Into a jar it went, along with some fresh dill. After a couple of days it went through an instar and shed its skin. It still was bristly but now only the ends were black and the middle was red-brown. A Woolly Bear! At first the black bristles on the ends were all matted together in spikes, reminiscent of a hairdo popular with some of our youth.



The Woolly Bear is the larva of the Isabella Tiger Moth and it passes the winter as a caterpillar. I've found it hiding in leaf litter when cleaning out my flowerbeds in spring. Legend says that the relative length of the black and brown bands in the fall foretell the severity of the coming winter. In fact the color variations are due to a number of factors including its age. Woolly Bear's diet was switched to plantain leaves in hopes to have the dill for us. Eventually I let it go on some plantain. We were going on vacation and

friends already had to baby-sit several chrysalises.



But back to the Black Swallowtails. Just before the caterpillars started to look for a place to pupate, they expelled a liquid along with the little barrels of frass. This is typical for all swallowtail species that I have raised. The first chrysalis to emerge was bright green but much to my surprise the other two were a mottled brown, similar to the twig they were attached to. I had wondered why one of my butterfly books showed it green and another one brown. What does the color difference mean? In the bird world the male is often brightly colored and the female is drab.



The chrysalis stage took 14 days and from the green one a male emerged, while from the two brown ones females emerged. I suppose the sample size is too small to draw the conclusion that a green chrysalis means a male butterfly and brown means female but you can bet that I'll be looking for more Black Swallowtail caterpillars to solve this mystery. With plants in the parsley family like Queen Anne's Lace, Sweet Cicely, Great Angelica, Golden Alexanders or Rattlesnake Master growing in the yard, I expect to find some and I will even gladly share my dill should the other plants not suit their palate.

Milkweed Floss For Industry & Clothing

Submitted by Ilse Gebhard



Milkweed is a very important plant for many reasons. A Quebec company has been manufacturing a product for a number of years to clean up oil spills using milkweed floss.

Protec Style has formed a cooperative of farmers who grow thousands of acres of milkweed in eastern Canada. [*Read More*](#)

A [*related article*](#) outlines how milkweed floss is being used to successfully insulate winter outerwear.

River City (Grand Rapids) Wild Ones Plant Sale

Pre-Order Only at: RiverCityWildOnes.org/Shop



Wild Ones River City Chapter NATIVE PLANT & SHRUB SALE

Pre-order and Pickup Only

Pre-order online June 22– July 13

Order at:

rivercitywildones.org/shop

Pickup by appointment on July 20
in the parking lot at 920 Cherry St SE,
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

(Behind Green Well restaurant)

12 species of perennials
\$7 - quart size pots

5 species of shrubs
\$13 - gallon size pots

Minimum purchase 3 items

Species may vary due to availability at time of online sale.

Questions? E-mail:
plantsalechair@rivercitywildones.org

SUN

Orange Milkweed *Asclepias tuberosa*
Wild Petunia *Ruellia humilis*
Golden Alexanders *Zizia aurea*

SHADE

Heart Leaved Aster *Symphyotrichum cordifolia*
Solomon's Seal *Polygonatum biflorum*
Twinleaf *Jeffersonia diphylla*

MED/MOIST CONDITIONS

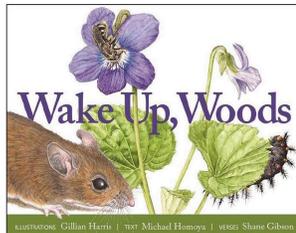
Rose Milkweed *Asclepias incarnata*
Cardinal Flower *Lobelia cardinalis*
Turtlehead *Chelone glabra*

GROUNDCOVERS

Foam Flower *Tiarella cordifolia*
Woodland Phlox *Phlox divaricata*
Pussy Toes *Antennaria parlinii*

SHRUBS

Spicebush *Lindera benzoin*
Red Elderberry *Sambucus racemosa*
Highbush Cranberry *Viburnum trilobum*
Pagoda Dogwood *Cornus alternifolia*
New Jersey Tea *Ceanothus americanus*



Special Sale!

Wake Up, Woods

Children's Book
Hardcover \$15

(suggested retail \$18.95)

By Michael Homoya and Shane Gibson.
Illustrations by Gillian Harris.



RiverCityWildOnes.org



Photo: S.Patrie

The Peace of Wild Things

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives might be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

~Wendell Berry

Event Cancellations

A quick reminder that to protect the safety of our members and the public, and help prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones has cancelled all programs and field trips through July 31.



We hope to reschedule our programming and will let you know when it is on the calendar again.

We apologize for any inconvenience, and look forward to seeing you at an event later this year.

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.

Community Events of Interest to Wild Ones

Wild Ones Online Seminars - Wild Ones is co-sponsoring a national webinar series in conjunction with New Directions in American Landscape. There are ten live, interactive webinars featuring a renowned group of instructors including Doug Tallamy, Wild Ones Lifetime Honorary Director, and Larry Weaner, founder of New Directions in American Landscape.

The instructors will illustrate landscaping techniques that make our little corners of the world more ecologically sound and enjoyable to experience. Whether you choose to learn how pollinators, people, and plant communities interact; how to share concepts of ecoliteracy with your children; or how to collect your own seeds, this series will cover an eclectic variety of topics while generally emphasizing the importance of place-based ecological landscapes.

This is a great opportunity to learn about ecologically sound landscaping right from your own home!

To learn more about the webinars and to register go to:

<https://ndal.org/webinars-for-home-gardeners-educators>

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*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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**SEEDLINGS** is edited by Kim Patrie. It appears mostly monthly. The next regular issue will come mid-July. **Deadline for July issue is July 1.**

[Send Submission](#)

Contributing Editors:

Tom Small

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](http://www.Facebook.com/KalamazooAreaWildOnes)



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