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Spring Beauty (Claytonia virginica) K. Patrie

March 2023

SEEDLINGS

Wild Ones|Kalamazoo Area Chapter

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



May Apple Sprouts (Podophyllum peltatum) K. Patrie

Dear *|FNAME|*,

One of the perks of volunteering for Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones is the opportunity to meet individuals in our community who are committed to, and instrumental in furthering, our collective mission. This month I am delighted to share a series of questions I asked Bill Schneider on your behalf, and hope to introduce you to more of these community members throughout the rest of the year.

Speaking of community, working with Paul Olexia has been described as a “Master Class” in conservation. Paul runs our [Community Projects](#), and this year’s schedule is now up on the website.

As the sap in the forest begins to flow, Ilse illuminates a host of relationships that depend on that sweetness in her article below, and Kim is back with two more Plants to Consider.

Lastly, please join Noel and me for our very first presentation at the Portage District Library. Getting “On the Map” and attending the presentation are both free.

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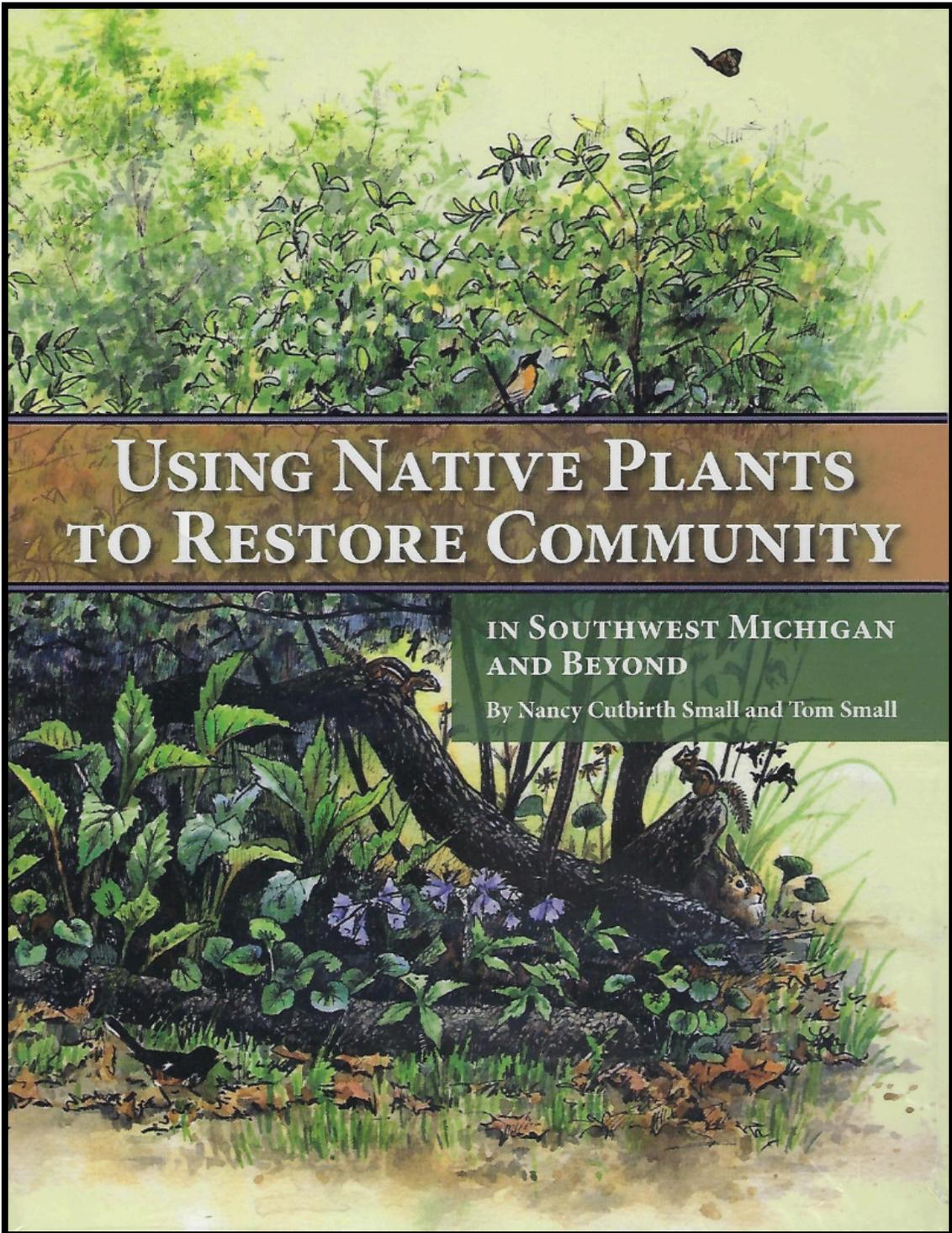
What falls during March but never gets hurt?
The rain... Enjoy it,

Mel Luna
Editor



Announcement:

Receive a Free Book with Your Wild Ones Membership in March



If you do not have a copy, lent your copy out, or gave it as a gift - you are in luck! During our spring membership drive we are offering these books, full of gorgeous illustrations, free to all new and renewing members (while supplies last) through April 26. [Learn more.](#)

Get On the Map!

Be Part of the Homegrown National Park

March 22, 7pm-8pm at the Portage District Library

Noel Ocen, *KAWO Executive Board and Master Gardener*



KAWO board members Noel Ocen and Mel Luna will explain the Homegrown National Park project and present a program highlighting community members who have already begun transitioning their lawns to native plants. Join us for this exciting look into the future of restoring & welcoming biodiversity into our lives. [Read more.](#)

Portage District Library is On the Map! Q. Edwards

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.

Plants to Consider:

Foam Flower and Zigzag Goldenrod

Kim Patrie, 2023 Plant Sale Committee

Happy Spring, everyone! I know, we've technically got a few weeks to go, but things are popping up green all around despite the "freezing precipitation" of late.

I'm super excited about our latest developments with the upcoming Community Native Plant Sale. We are creating some nice perks for volunteers (stay tuned for next month's Seedlings!) and are currently seeking sponsors for the sale.

Interested in day-of-sale volunteering? Please [contact Ann Klobucar](#); she'll be happy to give you all the details. Wondering about a personal or business sponsorship? [See our Plant Sale 2023 page](#) for an informative PDF flyer about Sponsorships, or [contact Jason Ballew](#).

This month we span the seasons from Foam Flower (*Tiarella cordifolia*) to Zigzag Goldenrod (*Solidago flexicaulis*). Both are shade plants, but the similarities stop there.

Foam Flower (*Tiarella cordifolia*)

Also known as Creeping Foam Flower, this lovely little plant could make a solid bottom layer in your shady, woodland, or edge of stream/pond plantings. It forms dense 1' clumps of beautiful 4" rounded leaf foliage that reminds me of a maple leaf. The plant spreads by nodes along the bottom of its leafy stems, but is not aggressive. In early spring, 10" racemes appear topped with tiny white flowers bearing long stamens that create a foamy appearance.

Foam Flower (Tiarella cordifolia) A. Haines



This is a plant that likes rich soil, but not wet or soggy, with good tolerance of clay or loam, heat or drought. Pollinators love the nectar, so try using this plant as a base layer for your pollinator garden. Paired with smaller sedges and some native Columbine, this flower supports the taller, more colorful plants well as a border plant.

Foam Flower (Tiarella cordifolia) D. Long



Zigzag Goldenrod (*Solidago flexicaulis*)

Ah, the glory of goldenrods! They're the plants we see in profusion of golden yellow from August through mid-October, the plants (along with the amazing asters!) that hold out for late pollinators, as well as humans who are loathe to see the summer come to an end. Without goldenrods, the year's end would be less warm, less...golden.

Zigzag Goldenrod (Solidago flexicaulis) K. Chayka



So what's so special about this one? For starters, as mentioned above, it is a shade-tolerant variety, which is different than most of the goldenrods we would readily recognize. As per usual with goldenrods, the flowers are mainly found at the end of a long stem. This variety, however, also displays flowers down the stem at the points where the leaves are attached, which is beautiful and a delight for late-season pollinators. Zigzag Goldenrod prefers moist to dry-mesic conditions in a sheltered area with soil that is high in decaying organic matter. As with the other goldenrods, this one spreads mostly by seed, but also by rhizomes; use caution when planting in a very small space. Think woodland edge, or that shaded corner that is moist and you don't know what to put there.



Zigzag Goldenrod (Solidago flexicaulis) P. Dziuk

Both Foam Flower and Zigzag Goldenrod are on order for our annual Community Native Plant Sale, coming up on May 20th. Make your garden plans now to include some of these lesser known and unusual native plants. Thanks for reading, and see you at the plant sale!

Know Your Grower: An Interview with Bill Schneider

Mel Luna



Last August I made a pilgrimage to Wildtype Native Plant Nursery in Mason, MI with fellow Wild One, Quyen Edwards, during a public sale day. It was there that I made the acquaintance of the founder and owner, Bill Schneider. He was gracious enough to agree to an interview for our newsletter.

Quyen browsing the selection at Wildtype.

Wildtype is growing the native plants we will be offering at our sale in May, and has been in business for almost thirty years. In the following interview Bill discusses how he got started and what keeps

him going, some of the winter activities at the nursery, and gives examples of a couple restoration projects he and his team are involved with.

Mel: Were you interested in plants from a young age? How did your relationship with plants begin?

Bill: When I was in kindergarten we germinated lima beans between layers of paper towel and then planted them. This rocked my world and I have had an ongoing obsession ever since. After we germinated lima beans I went home to look for anything in my mother's kitchen that I could try to germinate - mung beans (yes my mother cooked mung beans), caraway seeds, avocados, citrus etc. I eventually started to propagate the typical amateur things like pineapples, sweet potatoes, African violet and many other house plants. Plants continued to be my passion, but interest in natives came later.

Mel: Why did you decide to go into the native plant business?

Bill: It just seemed like the natural progression since I was interested in sustainable agriculture and landscape scale environmental issues and combined it with my love of plants. I also wanted to create a for-profit business that could stand on its own financially (which took a long while). We need to take the burden off grant-funded, government-directed environmental efforts. The for-profit side needs to hold up its end and, together with nonprofits and government, we can have an overall greater impact.

Mel: What does winter look like in the nursery?

Bill: Winter is a very short but wonderful time here. Starting after Thanksgiving until the middle of February there is a lot of invisible work taking place. We need to finish cleaning seed, it has to be stratified, infrastructure needs to be cleaned, repaired or replaced, prices need to be changed. A large part of this business involves contracting. We have many reports to complete and proposals to submit. We start our first greenhouse at the end of February.



Mel: Tell us about some of the restoration projects you're involved with.

Bill: We do a lot of invasive species work for Metroparks, conservancies, state parks and game areas, brownfields and superfund sites, and some privately owned property too. We have many ongoing small and large invasive species management projects.

I will mention two restoration projects specifically: Belle Isle in Detroit, and the Waterloo Recreation Area. We have been working on the Grosse Pointe (east) end of Belle Isle for a number of years. In addition to some floristic survey work, in the last couple of years we have had several contracts to collect seed from the island. We grow trees,

shrubs, perennial grasses, etc. - all collected from the island by us, mostly me personally.



We've also been doing some planting and seeding there. To my knowledge we have done all the collecting and growing for this project, although there are many other contractors involved in various other aspects. This is not to be confused with the Oudolf garden. That is something completely different that has gotten a lot of press.

Google Map of Belle Isle

The second project is an ongoing oak seedling project for a sand mine restoration in the Waterloo Recreation Area. Similarly, we are producing the seedling trees for this project from acorns we collect from the immediate area.

Mel: What is your relationship with the Indigenous Communities in the area?

Bill: We work with tribal communities occasionally. We would love to collaborate on more projects.

Mel: Is Wildtype Nursery a family affair?

Bill: Not really. My wife is a professor in the department of Plant Biology at MSU. While she has been very supportive from the beginning of this endeavor, she has not been directly involved. My daughter has no professional interest in this business, but she has a strong environmental awareness. She has been working on our public sale days since she was about 11 (now 24), and graciously helps me with social media -'cause I am a boomer.



Mel: Outside of plants and ecology, what else brings you joy?

Bill: My wife and I are both very work focused - we work a lot. I enjoy cooking for my family and friends. We like to travel, hike, and many other plant focused things. Seed collecting for me (technically work) is a combination of meditation and exercise.

Mel: Growing native plants has unique challenges. What keeps you motivated and inspired?

Bill: There are several things. One is the insatiable desire to "save all the pieces" genetically speaking. It is one thing to grow the plants, and another to go out and try to sample and propagate all the remaining genetic diversity. I will never know for sure whether preserving and

disseminating these genetic wild types will contribute to the survival of these plants and assemblages, but it is my hope. The other thing that keeps me motivated is that germinating seeds is life affirming. It has yet to get old.

Who Invented Maple Sugaring?

Ilse Gebhard

Maple sugaring is an age-old process that was discovered by the Native Americans hundreds of years ago and taught to the settlers that followed. That may be true, but have you ever wondered how the Native Americans discovered it?

Native Americans were keen observers of the natural world and I propose they learned about maple sugaring from a small bird, a woodpecker called a sapsucker. While there are three species of sapsuckers west of the Rockies, we only have one in the East, the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Here is what the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's All About Birds [website](#) has to say about this bird:



Male Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker L. Huffman

“As the name indicates, sapsuckers rely on sap as a main food source. Just like people who tap maple trees to make maple syrup, these birds drill their wells in early spring. Sapsucker wells are neatly organized, with several holes drilled in horizontal rows. The bird first drills narrow, circular wells into the tree’s xylem—the inner part of the trunk—to feed on sap moving up to the branches in early spring. Then, after the tree leafs out, the sapsucker begins making shallower, rectangular wells in the phloem, the part of the trunk that carries sap down from the leaves. This sap can be more than 10 percent sugar. These phloem wells must be continually maintained with fresh drilling, so the sap will continue to flow. Sapsuckers tend to choose sick or wounded trees for drilling their wells, and they choose tree species with high sugar concentrations in their sap, such as paper birch, yellow birch, sugar maple, red maple, and hickory. They drill wells for sap throughout the year, on both their breeding and wintering grounds. In addition to sap, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers also eat insects (mostly ants) and spiders, gleaning them from beneath a tree’s bark like other woodpeckers.”

Some of the insects that sapsuckers eat are attracted to the sap themselves. Several studies have recorded a large diversity of insects frequenting sapsucker induced flows. These include the insect orders *Hymenoptera* and *Lepidoptera*. Easy protein picking for the sapsucker.

In the *Hymenoptera* order I once observed a bumble bee at a sap well in very early spring. While the sugar content in tree sap may be lower than the nectar that many flowers provide, not many flowers were in bloom in late April. It was a Ruby-throated Hummingbird hovering in front of a sapsucker hole that made me look close and detect the bumble bee after the hummer left. The hummingbird's tongue is specially adapted for drinking nectar, or as in this case, sap. It is long and thin, and has a tube-like structure that allows it to reach deep into flowers or sapsucker holes.



The order *Lepidoptera* includes moths, skippers and butterflies. In the brushfoot family of butterflies there are two groups of butterflies (*Polygonia* and *Nymphalis*) that feed mostly on tree sap.

Comma Butterfly I. Gebhard

I once saw a Comma (*Polygonia comma*) feeding at a sapsucker hole and a friend sent me a wonderful photo of Mourning Cloaks (*Nymphalis antiopa*) feeding on sap oozing from the stump of a tree that had been cut down.



Mourning Cloak Butterflies J. Leppard

While not having personally observed moths at sapsucker holes, one reference I came across noted that adult moths in four families have been found at natural sap flows. This made me think of the Barred Owl we once observed sitting in a tree at dusk next to a bat house. That this was not coincidental became apparent as soon as the first bats emerged and a quick dinner was caught. Might small owl species like the Eastern Screech Owl, that are known to eat insects, profit indirectly from sapsucker holes? Might they stake out trees riddled with sapsucker holes for a quick moth snack?

2023 Conservation Conversations Events: Meet Scientists and Stewards

Bindu Bhakta

The Michigan Conservation Stewards Program Presents

Conservation Conversations



FIRE-ADAPTED NATURAL COMMUNITIES IN THE HURON-MANISTEE NATIONAL FOREST

Featuring Jesse Lincoln
Michigan Natural Features Inventory

MARCH 8 | 6PM

MSU KELLOGG BIOLOGICAL STATION, HICKORY CORNERS

canr.msu.edu/csp

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

The Michigan Conservation Stewards Program (CSP) is hosting a series of in-person events held in various locations on current research and management approaches, unique natural communities, and diverse partnerships involved in supporting Michigan ecosystems.

Participants will have the opportunity to enjoy refreshments, ask questions, engage in discussion with the featured speaker, and mingle with Conservation Stewards and invited local organizations who will share information about the work they do and how to get involved in local conservation efforts. MSU Extension staff will also provide information about the 2023 Fall Michigan Conservation Stewards Programs and other MSU Extension programs being offered in 2023. Each “Conservation Conversation” event will take place from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm. Registration fee is \$10/person. Individuals who have previously taken the Conservation Stewards Program attend for free. Pre-registration is required.

The kick-off for the Conservation Conversations series is "Fire-Adapted Natural Communities in the Huron-Manistee National Forest" with Jesse Lincoln. Learn more and register [here](#).

[Community Events of Interest](#)

Now - April 10: Kalamazoo Conservation District Reforestation Seedling Sale is now accepting pre-orders. Many native tree species are available. [Learn more.](#)

March 8 - 6:00pm-8:00pm: "Fire-Adapted Natural Communities in the Huron-Manistee National Forest," an in-person event hosted by the Michigan Conservation Stewards Program. [Details](#)

March 11 - 9:00am-5:00pm: 58th annual Maple Sugar Festival at the Kalamazoo Nature Center. To learn more and purchase tickets, click [here](#).

March 12 - 10:00am-12:00pm: Kleinstuck Preserve Volunteer Day hosted by Stewards of Kleinstuck. Join this passionate and knowledgeable group in their restoration work. [More details](#)

March 20 - 6:30pm-8:00pm: "Aldo Leopold and Finding a Land Ethic for Our Time" a Zoom presentation with Martha MacCleery. Hosted by River City Wild Ones (Grand Rapids). [Register here.](#)

March 22 - 7:00pm-8:00pm: "Get On the Map: Be Part of the Homegrown National Park" an in-person presentation with Noel Ocen and Mel Luna. Hosted by KAWO. Note that our new location in 2023 is at the Portage District Library. [More info](#)

March 24 - 6:00pm-9:00pm: Dinner and a Movie: Finding Wild in Your Backyard. This is an in-person event hosted by Pierce Cedar Creek Institute. [Register here.](#)

April 5 - 7:00pm: Tickets on sale now for Our Planet Live in Concert at Miller Auditorium. [More info](#)

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!

Not a member? [Click Here](#) for information on how you can support Wild Ones.

SEEDLINGS is edited by Mel Luna. It appears mostly monthly.
The next regular issue will arrive in April. **Deadline for April issue is March 20.**

[Send Submission](#)

Contributing Editors:

Ilse Gebhard

Kim Patrie

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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