

*Trouble reading this email? [View it in your browser](#)*

\*|LIST:ADDRESS\_VCARD|\*



*Virginia Bluebells (Mertensia virginica) G. Landis*

March 2025

# 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



*Wild Columbine (Aquilegia canadensis) Redmarkviolinist*

Dear **\*|FNAME|\***,

We hope you enjoyed our online programs in January and February, and we look forward to seeing you in person again at the Portage District Library this month. Remember that social time begins at 6:00, with the program starting at 6:30. Earth Day 2025 will be celebrated throughout April with happenings all over Kalamazoo--keep an eye on the Kalamazoo Earth Day [website](#) for updates. And we'll be holding our annual Native Plant Sale soon! The Virginia Bluebells and Wild Columbine pictured above were the most popular species at the 2024 sale.

**Beth Bradburn**

*Editor*

## In This Issue

From the Editor

March Program

Kleinstuck  
Community Read

Cellophane Bees

Monarch(ist) for a  
Day

Our Riverside Parks

KAWO Site Visits

Native Flora ID  
Quiz

Community Events

Contact Wild Ones



---

### March Program: Understanding What Remains

*with Jesse Lincoln, Michigan Natural Features Inventory*

Wednesday, March 26, 6:30-8:00pm at Portage District Library

Jesse Lincoln is a Plant Ecologist for [Michigan Natural Features Inventory](#). He will discuss prioritizing conservation actions in our modern landscape, from physiography and historic land cover to invasive species, rare plants, and the challenges of fragmentation. In this presentation he will focus on the natural communities of Gourdneck State Game Area.



The program begins at 6:30. Doors open at 6:00, so come early for information tables, social time, and refreshments. Learn more on [our website](#).

---

Most of our past presentations are available on YouTube to view at your convenience.

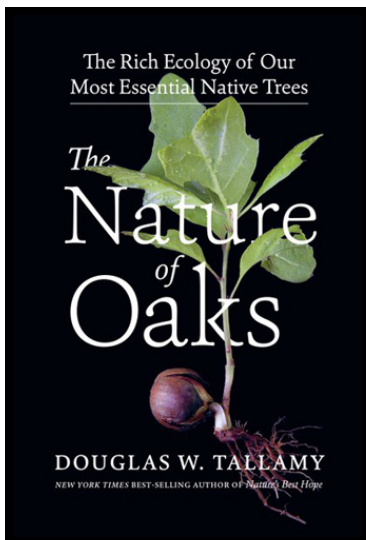
[\*Click Here to visit our YouTube channel\*](#)

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.

---

## **Kleinstuck Community Read**



In March and April, the Stewards of Kleinstuck will sponsor three community events inspired by the book *The Nature of Oaks*, by Doug Tallamy. The events will include discussion of the book as well as talks by local experts from different disciplines, and will take place at Third Christian Reformed Church in Kalamazoo. The two events in March are listed below on our Community Events Calendar. To learn more about this community read and find out how to obtain a discounted copy of the book from [this is a bookstore](#), visit [the Stewards of Kleinstuck website](#).

---

## **Site Visits for New Members**

We offer site visits to new KAWO members! An experienced native plant gardener will visit your land and help you assess its conditions and figure out what to plant, with continuing mentorship available for up to a year. To arrange a visit, please contact [Ann Klobucar](#).

---

## KAWO Co-sponsors Parks Beautification

Michigan Waterways Stewards is collaborating with the City of Kalamazoo Parks and Recreation Department and BCK CISMA on a community-wide project to beautify Kalamazoo's flagship riverside parks and to enhance the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail. KAWO is a key partner for this project-- please consider volunteering on the weekend of April 12-13! Get more details on the [MI Waterways Stewards website](#).



---

## Early Spring Pollinators - Cellophane Bees

Molly Williams

One of the joys of spring is watching what emerges from its winter sleep as the weather warms. In mid-April in Michigan, a ground-nesting native bee comes out of the ground to mate, lay eggs, and pollinate early flowering species such as serviceberry and red maple trees. These “Cellophane Bees” (*Colletes inaequalis*) are so named because of the shiny, transparent material they produce from their saliva to surround their eggs.

They need areas of bare sandy, dry soil, since they're incapable of burrowing through tangled plant roots. The areas where the past winter's snowplows have scraped off the turf are fortuitously prepared patches in which ground-nesting bees can make small tunnels in which to lay their eggs. The female, who is a bit smaller than a common honeybee, digs a vertical tunnel with several side chambers in which she lays a single egg, provisioned with nectar and pollen that she's collected from early flowering plants. These bees produce only one brood per season, so there will be active aggregations for only a few weeks each year.



*Above: Male Cellophane Bee; Below: Cellophane Bees Mating*

*Photos M. Williams, 4/13/23*

In spring 2023 there were several swarms along Persianwood Circle in the Garden Home neighborhood of Friendship Village. While the frantic activity of many insects may look intimidating, these bees are benign. The males have no stingers, and the females are remarkably docile. If you find one of their swarms, please appreciate their hard work pollinating the flowering plants that bloom in Michigan early in the spring.

Here's [a video](#) showing some of these bees in Cape Cod, Massachusetts.



## **A Midsummer Day in the Life of a Monarchist**

Ilse Gebhard

**Monarchs rule!** And the butterfly kind ruled our house during several summers. As the survival of the Monarch butterfly migration phenomenon has become threatened by habitat loss, both on its northern breeding and its southern overwintering grounds, I could not help but become obsessed with raising Monarchs to study one of its natural enemies, *Tachinid* flies.



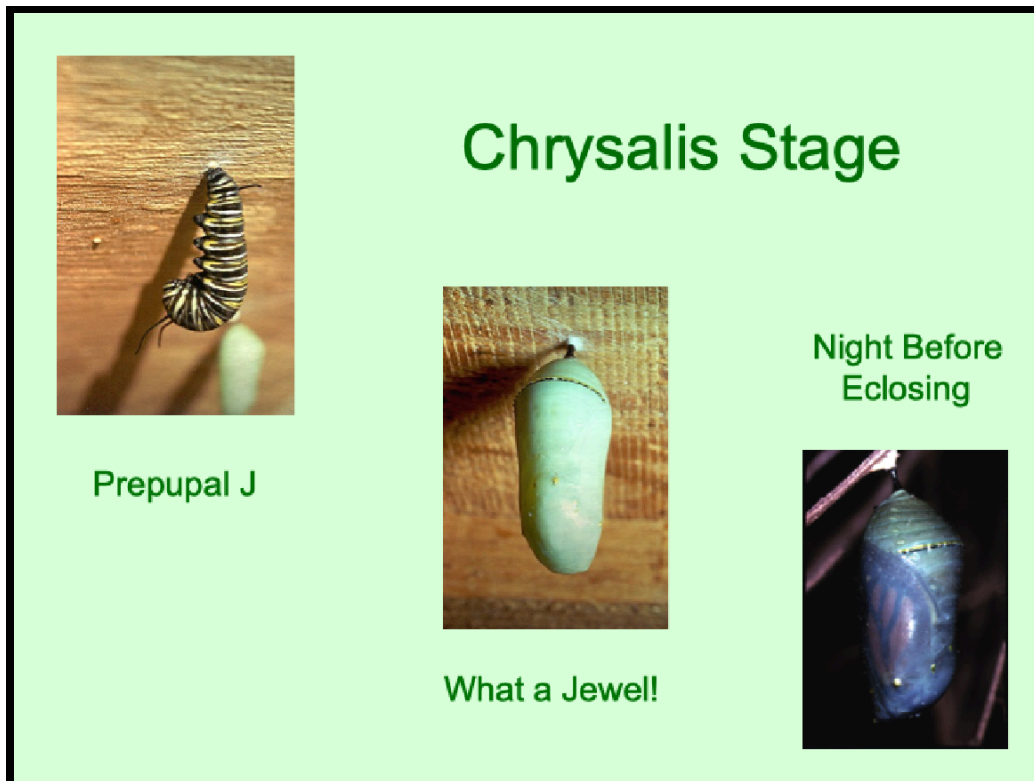
### **So what does a midsummer Monarchist's day look like?**

The day started at 6 AM with the first cleaning and feeding of about 150 caterpillars of all sizes in individual containers. This included transferring them to larger containers as they grew. The containers were sterilized by soaking in bleach or washed in the dishwasher before reuse. This tedious cleaning prevents the spread of diseases. Like people, caterpillars can get viral, bacterial, and other diseases specific to butterflies. Usually, we ran the dishwasher every other day but twice a day became the norm during those summers.

About 8 AM, before it got too hot, I would get on my bike to get some exercise and to procure food for the caterpillars – namely, milkweed leaves from plants along the nearby Kal-Haven Trail or the roadsides. While we had quite a bit of milkweed growing in the yard, I did not want to deplete it but

have it available for Monarchs to lay their eggs. Often, I would find eggs and caterpillars on the leaves collected for food, thereby increasing the hordes. And yes, needing more leaves. The leaves were washed in cold water to remove insects that might predate the eggs or caterpillars. They were then stored in the refrigerator, but hopefully not confused with the salad greens for our consumption.

Containers with freshly formed chrysalises were transferred from the feeding area, namely mud and laundry rooms, to bookshelves and other horizontal surfaces in the living room to await the butterfly emergence in about ten days. As chrysalises turned dark, indicating butterfly emergence the following day, the containers were transferred to the kitchen counters.



On the counters I could keep track, throughout the day, of the time each monarch emerged, and after at least four hours they were sexed, tested for OE (*Ophryocystis elektroscirrha*, a protozoan parasite specific to monarchs), and released. Any that emerged after lunch were released the following day.

# Butterfly Eclosing



About 1 minute

About 5 minutes



About 30 minutes

Dumping of frass, refined name for caterpillar poop, and feeding was repeated several times during the day. Each egg or caterpillar that I collected got a little piece of paper that was transferred from container to container along with each specimen. On it I recorded things like collection date, collection location, hatching date if egg, instar at collection if caterpillar. Monarch caterpillars shed their skin five times as they eat and grow. The larval stages, between sheddings, are called instars. Each instar looks slightly different, making it possible to determine its larval stage. I also recorded the date of the chrysalis formation and when the butterfly emerged, or if death occurred, for known or unknown cause. All this was entered into a spreadsheet on my computer to be analyzed in the winter for the *Tachinid* fly parasitism research project.



*Monarch egg and instars 1-5. Length of front and back tentacles, along with caterpillar size, can be used to assign larval stages. Photo Monarch Larva Monitoring Project. All other photos R. Schipper*

While the above rearing methodology produces mostly healthy butterflies, it had been documented in the past that fourth and fifth instar caterpillars in the wild can be parasitized by *Tachinid* flies. The fly lays its eggs on a caterpillar and when the fly larvae emerge, they burrow into the caterpillar. As the caterpillar grows, so do the fly larvae, consuming the inside of the caterpillar and eventually killing it. Instead of a butterfly emerging from the chrysalis, fly larvae emerge, which pupate and about two weeks later the flies emerge from their pupae. The purpose of the *Tachinid* fly study was to find out if the flies also parasitize Monarch eggs or instars 1-3. The study found that they do.

After dinner I would make the rounds of the milkweed in our yard to find eggs and caterpillars. Caterpillars are easiest to find in the morning or evening as during the heat of the day they hide on the underside of the leaves or even wander away from the milkweed plants to find shade.

After the last cleaning and feeding at 8 PM, I would enter into the spreadsheet the data of any Monarchs that emerged that day, of any Tachinid flies that did, or the death of a specimen. Deaths were few, and mostly of unknown cause. For example, there was just no way to know why about 10% of the eggs collected did not hatch. Late fall I would then enter all the data from the spreadsheet into the online [Monarch Larva Monitoring Project](#) (MLMP) database.

Read more from Ilse Gebhard [on our blog](#).

---

## **Who Am I?**

**A native flora ID quiz from Ilse Gebhard**



Click [here](#) for the answer!

*Photos R. Schipper*

---

## **Community Events of Interest**

**Saturday, March 8 - 9:00am-4:00pm:** Maple Sugar Festival, Kalamazoo Nature Center. [Learn more and purchase tickets.](#)

**Sunday, March 9 - 10:00am-12:00pm:** Volunteer Workday, Kleinstuck Preserve. Meet at the Maple Street YMCA tennis courts. [Learn more.](#)

**Monday, March 17 - 6:30pm-8:00pm:** Wild Ones River City Event: "Izhi-Minoging Mashikiwan/Place Where Medicines Grow Well" with Eva Roos. Online. [Learn more.](#)

**Monday, March 17 - 7:00pm-8:00pm:** Michigan Botanical Society Program: "Plant Movement," with Dr. Lauren Sullivan, People's Church, Kalamazoo. [Learn more.](#)

**Thursday, March 20 - 5:00pm-6:00pm:** Kalamazoo Conservation District Monthly Hike. Takes place on the third Thursday of every month at a different natural area. The coming month's location is not always posted by Seedlings press time. Check the KCD event calendar [here.](#)

**Thursday, March 20 - 7:00pm-9:00pm:** Kleinstuck Community Read: Book Discussion and oak savannah talk with Mitch Lettow, Third Christian Reformed Church. [Learn more.](#)

**Thursday, March 20 - 7:00pm:** Pints and Native Plants, an informal meetup at [Brewery Outré](#) in Kalamazoo. [Learn more.](#)

**Wednesday, March 26 - 6:30pm-8:00pm:** "Understanding What Remains" with Jesse Lincoln, a monthly presentation by Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones at Portage District Library. [Learn more.](#)

**Thursday, March 27 - 6:00pm-7:00pm:** Native Plant Gardening Workshop, Dowling Public Library. See the [Pierce Cedar Creek Institute online event calendar](#) to learn more.

**Thursday, March 27 - 7:00pm-9:00pm:** Kleinstuck Community Read: Oaks and Art with Lad Hanka, Third Christian Reformed Church. [Learn more.](#)

**Saturday, March 29 - 9:00am-10:00am:** Native Plant Gardening Workshop, Vermontville Library. See the [Pierce Cedar Creek Institute online event calendar](#) to learn more.

**Monday, March 29 - 2:00pm-3:00pm:** Native Plant Gardening Workshop, Hastings Public Library. See the [Pierce Cedar Creek Institute online event calendar](#) to learn more.

**Tuesday, April 1 - 6:30pm-8:00pm:** Native Plant Gardening Workshop, Pierce Cedar Creek Institute. [Learn more and register.](#)

*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 Beth Bradburn. It appears mostly monthly.  
The next regular issue will arrive in April. **Deadline for the April issue is March 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](http://www.KalamazooWildOnes.org)  
and [www.Facebook.com/KalamazooAreaWildOnes](https://www.Facebook.com/KalamazooAreaWildOnes)



Copyright © *|CURRENT\_YEAR|* *|LIST:COMPANY|*, All rights reserved.  
*|IFNOT:ARCHIVE\_PAGE|* *|LIST:DESCRIPTION|*

**Our mailing address is:**

*|HTML:LIST\_ADDRESS\_HTML|* *|END:IF|*

Want to change how you receive these emails?  
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

*|IF:REWARDS|* *|HTML:REWARDS|* *|END:IF|*