



Hawthorn flowers (*crataegus spp.*)

May 2019

# SEEDLINGS

Wild Ones|Kalamazoo Area Chapter

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

---

## In This Issue

Field Trip to  
Mildred Harris  
Sanctuary



Blue Cohosh (*Caulophyllum thalictroides*)

## **May Field Trip**

***Dr. Paul Olexia,***  
***Professor Emeritus***  
*Kalamazoo College*

### **The Mildred Harris Sanctuary**

will be a trip for both native plant lovers and bird lovers. The mature beech-maple forest is one of a very few remaining unlogged forests in the area. Expect to see Trout Lily, Toothwort, Spring Beauty, Dutchman's Breeches, Squirrel Corn, Blue Cohosh, violets, Wild Leek, Trillium, Mayapple and others. [\*\*More Information\*\*](#)

Right: Trillium (*Trillium grandiflorum*)



Annual Spring  
Plant Sale

Eastern Tent  
Caterpillar

Plant of the Month:  
Hawthorn

Community  
Events of Interest

Contact Wild Ones



---

## **6th Annual Native Plant Sale**

Local, Pesticide-Free Native Plants

May 18, 9am-3pm

A reminder that our annual fundraiser, our Native Plant Sale, is coming up in a few weeks.

This is our only fundraiser for the year.

Preorders are encouraged but plants can be selected at the sale. **The deadline to send in your order is May 13.** [\*More Info\*](#)

[Download Plant Order Form](#)

[Download Tree & Shrub Order Form](#)



*Cup Plant*

---

Mark your calendars for Sunday, June 2, 1-5pm for our Annual Spring Plant Exchange at Ruth & Tom's house in Kalamazoo.  
*More info coming soon!*

---

## **Eastern Tent Caterpillar**

Caterpillars that Spin Webs in Trees and Shrubs in Spring

*Ilse Gebhard*

For a long time I did not realize that there are actually two species of moths in our area whose caterpillars spin the easily spotted silken webs in many of our trees. Nor did I realize that one does it in spring and the other in fall.

In mid-summer the female Eastern Tent Caterpillar moth lays her eggs in a mass that hardens around a twig. David L. Wagner in *Caterpillars of Eastern North America* notes that the first instar larva develops fully in the first summer but holds within the egg through the winter months. Preferred trees for egg laying are in the rose family and include apple, cherry and hawthorn.



In spring the eggs hatch and the larvae spin their familiar communal silken tents in the crotches of the host tree. Many caterpillars take shelter in each nest, from which they emerge to feed on the young leaves of the branches extending from the nest. They then return to the safety of the nest to digest their food. According to Wagner the tent not only provides some protection from predators like birds, but also serves as a greenhouse on cool days, allowing the caterpillars to raise their body temperature above the ambient, facilitating digestion and other metabolic processes.



The last instar of this caterpillar is quite striking. It has a black head and is covered with orange-yellow hair. A white stripe, bordered by thin orange and black ones, runs down the middle of the back. The sides are blue with an orange stripe. Each segment has a black and white eyespot on either side.

The mature caterpillar wanders off, sometimes quite a distance, to spin its pale yellow cocoon. Since the caterpillar is so common, I never bothered to raise one, although one early June I brought in a mystery cocoon I had found on the side of our house, several feet away from a crabapple tree. A

week later the moth emerged and it turned out to be this species. It was light brown with two lighter diagonal stripes on each forewing.

By late summer or early fall the webs of the tent caterpillar have broken down and disappeared, battered by wind and rain and picked apart by birds looking for a meal. Fuzzy caterpillars of moths such as Gypsy, Eastern Tent and Fall Webworm are a favorite food source of both the Yellow-billed and Black-billed Cuckoos. They not only eat them themselves, but also feed them to their young, keeping the caterpillar populations somewhat in check and our birds in food.

---

## **Plant of the Month: Hawthorn**

### **Ancient Traditions, Ambiguous Powers**

*Tom Small*



Hawthorn—also known as thornapple, haw, thorn, May bush, or Mayflower—is a plant to celebrate with, especially on May Day. It’s also a plant to treat very carefully, not just because of its long, very sharp thorns.

Hawthorn berries

It’s a plant of ancient traditions and strange, ambiguous powers. Sacred to the faery realm, it’s associated with fertility and regeneration but also with death. To go a-Maying, bringing in boughs of hawthorn on May Day, for decoration of the threshold, is to bring good luck. To cut and bring it into the household on any other day, is to invite catastrophe. And woe betide the person who cuts down a solitary hawthorn. The faeries will have their revenge.

It’s best to bring a gift, perhaps some freshly churned butter, and to sing a little song while gathering those clusters of delicate white blossoms. Follow the wisdom of the birds, who, according to the poets, sing “thankful hymns,” and the generosity of the leaves that strew “gems” of dew.

And while the May flower symbolizes the freshness of youth and first love, it also reminds us of how quickly our youth is past. One of the best loved poems in the carpe diem tradition—cautioning us to “seize the day”—is Robert Herrick’s 17th century “Corinna’s Going a-Maying,” which concludes:

*And as a vapour, or a drop of raine*

*Once lost, can ne'r be found againe:*

*So when or you or I are made*

*A fable, song, or fleeting shade;  
All love, all liking, all delight  
Lies drown'd with us in endlesse night.*

*Then while time serves, and we are but decaying;  
Come, my Corinna, come, let's goe a Maying.*

Hawthorn has many other traditions as well. It's widely used as a heart tonic, for lowering blood pressure and for treating early stages of congestive heart disease. Also for treating diarrhea. Native Americans used the thorns for a kind of acupuncture to relieve arthritis and for lancing boils. Beware, however; if a thorn should scratch your eye, it could cause blindness. And remember, the good ship Mayflower brought both blessings and a boatload of trouble.

---

## Community Events of Interest to Wild Ones

**May 6, 20 - 7 p.m.**, The Kalamazoo **Natural Features Protection** ordinance and development standards will go before the City Commission for a first reading on Monday, May 6, 7 p.m. and for final approval Monday, May 20, 7 p.m. Citizen comment is welcome. See [www.imaginekalamazoo.com/projects/nfp](http://www.imaginekalamazoo.com/projects/nfp).

**May 18 - 9am-3pm** [KAWO Annuual Native Plant Sale Fundraiser](#)

**June 2 - 1-5pm** **KAWO 27th Annual Spring Plant Exchange** at Ruth & Tom's gardens, 2502 Waite Ave., Kalamazoo. *Mark your calendars, more info to follow!*

**June 8 - 9am-12pm** [Wild Edibles Workshop](#) at Kellogg Bird Sanctuary

*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!*

---

**SEEDLINGS** is edited by Tom Small and Kim Patrie. It appears mostly monthly. The next regular issue will come early in June. **Deadline for June issue is May 15.** Please send submissions to Tom at [yard2prairy@gmail.com](mailto:yard2prairy@gmail.com) or Kim at [safiraraks@gmail.com](mailto:safiraraks@gmail.com)

**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)



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|\**