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*Pasque Flower (Pulsatilla patens) M. Luna*

May 2022

**SEEDLINGS**

# Wild Ones|Kalamazoo Area Chapter

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



Flowering with friends: Hepatica, Dicentra, Viola M. Luna

Dear \*|FNAME|\*,

Stunning Pasque Flowers, happy Hepatica! If you haven't gotten out to ogle the spring ephemerals, thanks to the cool weather, it's not too late. There are many wonderful places to view them, such as the Kal-Haven trail (between G and F Avenues) and [Dowagiac Woods](#). You can also join a field trip to [Love Creek Nature Center](#) to take in the blooms with fellow Wild Ones from the newly formed South Bend, IN chapter on May 14th. [More details](#).

We're welcoming Jen Owen this month, behavior ecologist for migratory birds. With these birds in mind, Ilse reminds us of the value of fruiting vines in her piece on the Grapevine Skeletonizer. (Am I the only one thinking Halloween costume? If you do it, please send pictures!)

**Our native plant sale is next month!** Kim gives us more details about that below, as well as the inside scoop about an exciting development underway in downtown Kalamazoo.

Have you heard of the Homegrown National Park? We are very inspired by it, and hope you will join us in getting this region on the map.

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Last, but not least, Dave is doing site visits again, so get in touch if you'd like to schedule one.

Excitement is in the air!

**Mel Luna**

*Editor*

*Cutleaf Toothwort (Cardamine concatenata) M. Luna*



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## **Birds and Berries: The Importance of Native Fruit-Bearing Shrubs for Migrating Landbirds**

**May 25, 7pm**

**Jen Owen, Michigan State University**

Join us for our (always free) presentation this month in conjunction with the Audubon Society of Kalamazoo at People's Church. We will be learning about the relationship between birds and berries from our guest speaker, Dr. Jen Owen.

For over 10 years Jen and her students have been studying the diet of frugivorous landbirds during fall migration at a stopover site in mid-Michigan. The objective of their research is to better understand what birds are eating and the health and energetic consequences of their dietary choices. [Read more.](#)

*Dr. Jen Owen holding a hummingbird. Courtesy of J. Owen*



# KAWO Community Native Plant Sale 2022

## Saturday, June 18 10am-3pm



Friends, our 8th annual Community Native Plant Sale is happening Saturday, June 18! Mark your calendars so you don't miss out on locally grown, high quality native wildflowers, grasses and sedges, ferns, trees and shrubs.

**Our sale this year is limited to in-person, on-site sales only.** Shopping hours are from 10am - 3pm behind PFC, located at 507 Harrison St, Kalamazoo.

Everyone is welcome! Native plants are for everyone and can make a positive local impact on even the smallest patch of earth.

Bring a box or crate along to get your lovely little natives home safely.

As in years past, our host [PFC](#) will be offering a discount coupon to everyone who purchases \$20 in plants. Get your plants and some wonderful locally grown organic foods at the same location!

If you're a Wild Ones member, be sure to let us know at check-out so we can give you the 5% member discount. Not a member? [Click Here](#) for more info.

Many thanks to our grower this year, Bill at [Wildtype Nursery](#). To see a list of the plants we have ordered from Bill, look [Here](#).

*Caveat: Bill can't control the weather, or the germination of some of our requested plants. So make your list, and come ready to buy, but also know we may not have everything we wanted for you.*

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## Are You On the Map?

Noel Ocen-Gorgone and Mel Luna

The HOMEGROWN NATIONAL PARK MAP, that is, [Homegrown National Park®](#) is a term coined by the inspirational Dr. Doug Tallamy. This science-based grassroots call to action is the largest cooperative conservation project ever conceived or attempted, with an initial goal of planting natives in place of just one half of the green lawns (ecological deadscapes) of privately-owned properties. That equals twenty million acres - *more than all of our national parks combined!*



In his book *Nature's Best Hope*, Dr. Tallamy invites us, as individuals, to join together to actively protect and replenish the biodiversity needed to support a functioning ecosystem. In short, each of us can contribute to the solution by converting a portion of our existing lawns to native plants—emphasizing the [Keystone native plants](#) most responsible for supporting our pollinators and wildlife. Watch Tallamy's presentation of Nature's Best Hope [here](#).

KAWO is committed to supporting this initiative. Currently, there are seventeen people in the Kalamazoo area on the map. Put yourself on the map today, then help your friends, family, and neighbors to get on it as well! Now is the time to plan this season's gardens, so let's fill them with natives, expand them into the lawn, remove invasives, and be a part of the solution to the environmental crisis facing us all.



“We need to find ways for nature to thrive in human-dominated landscapes, not hang on by a thread, but thrive.” Doug Tallamy

Watch for further information about the Homegrown National Park initiative in Seedlings, on KAWO's website and on our Facebook page.

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## **The Children's Nature Playscape: An Enriching Experience for the Children of Kalamazoo**

**Kim Patrie**, KAWO Executive Committee Member, First Congressional Church Member



*A crowd gathered for the groundbreaking ceremony at the corner of Academy and Church. M. Luna*

If you've been down to Bronson Park lately, you may have noticed there is some construction going on directly adjacent to the park. Where there was an old church, there is now an empty space that is completely dug up and a lot of earth moving equipment is hanging around. Something is happening down there!



With great excitement I'd like to tell you about the Children's Nature Playscape project. Scheduled to open late this spring, the First Congregational Church has partnered with Western Michigan University, OCBA Landscape Architects, Kalamazoo Valley Community College, and the Kalamazoo Nature Center to bring a nature inspired playscape into the heart of downtown Kalamazoo, with a focus on native plants.

*Landscape rocks delivered. K. Patrie*

The project will benefit the approximately 1500 children ages 2-10 who live within walking distance of the site, and ultimately will benefit all 32,000 children living in Kalamazoo County.

It is well known that children who spend time outdoors do better socially and academically than those who don't venture out. A playscape can provide many benefits to a child's well being, including a boost in cognitive development, concentration, impulse control, motor control and creativity, plus the added bonus of improving skills for coping with uncertainty - and we are certainly living in uncertain times! As a Wild One, I'm sure you are familiar with the benefits to your own health gleaned from spending time outdoors.



Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones has made a modest donation to this nature- and native-inspired project, and I urge you to do the same. I also hope you'll take a few minutes (or an hour!) to head downtown this summer and see for yourself the joy and beauty that we are creating for our children. With this project, we are building the earth stewards of the future!

*Quyen & Kim at the groundbreaking ceremony. M. Luna*



To see the design plan and specifics of the natural features, and for more information about the playscape's benefits and needs, take a look at the [Children's Nature Playscape website](#).

*Survey equipment for proper placement of rocks. K. Patrie*

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## **The Grapevine Skeletonizer Moth**

**Ilse Gebhard**

While native fruit-bearing shrubs are very important food sources for birds, we should not overlook vines for much the same reasons. Like shrubs, vines produce nectar and pollen for insects without which there would be no fruit to fuel the migration of birds in the fall. But of equal importance are the insect larvae that feed on the foliage of the vines and that those very same birds eat and feed to their young in summer.

At the top of the list of fruit-bearing vines is likely Poison Ivy – much prized by birds but clearly not by people. Virginia and Thicket Creeper are also highly prized. Unlike the former three, fruit in the Grape family is not high in fat but still provides food for the occasional robin or bluebird that for some reason has not headed south in winter.

*Riverbank Grape (Vitis riparia) R.W. Smith, Michigan Flora*



According to *Michigan Flora*, Riverbank Grape (*Vitis riparia*) is the most common of four grape species found in Michigan. It grew wild on our property and I found larvae of five different species of moths feeding on it, one of which is appropriately called Grapeleaf Skeletonizer (*Harrisina americana*).

It is always best *not* to handle insect larvae with bare skin and in the case of the Grapeleaf Skeletonizer it is especially wise as the hydrogen cyanide that it produces can cause a rash lasting several days.

*Grapeleaf Skeletonizer Larva (Harrisina americana)*

*I. Gebhard*



While I am singing the praises of insect larvae as food for birds and their nestlings in general, in this case the hydrogen cyanide will likely protect them from bird predation. Their bright yellow and contrasting black color may warn birds of their toxicity.

The pupae of the Grapeleaf Skeletonizer overwinter in cocoons spun among fallen leaves at the base of the foodplant. Our custom to neaten up our yards in the fall unfortunately destroys many of our beneficial insects whose various life stages spend the winter in fallen leaves.

Unlike most moths that only fly at night and are in hiding during the day, the adult Grapeleaf Skeletonizer flies by day and night and I have seen it take nectar from flowers like asters. Why isn't it in hiding from voracious birds during the day? Birds learn to associate its contrasting coloring of orange and black with its unpalatability due to the hydrogen cyanide that it produces even at the adult stage. But hey, as pollinator, the Grapeleaf Skeletonizer helps plants produce seeds which in turn keep birds fed in winter.



## Schedule Your Site Visit

Dave Wendling



Spring is here I think, and it's time to start site visits. If you are a member of Wild Ones and need some advice on native gardening, need to know what is growing in your yard, need to know how to control invasive plants, or need resources, we are here to help.

Whether you are a new member or an established member we will arrange for a more experienced native gardener to visit your property as a consultant to help you decide on how to use native plants in your landscape. We do not ask for money; our reward is seeing you succeed in creating beauty and a native habitat in your yard.

To sign up contact Dave Wendling at 269-366-8857 or [dave.wendling47@gmail.com](mailto:dave.wendling47@gmail.com). Please give me your name, phone number, and email address and I will get with you to arrange a visit.

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## Community Events of Interest

**May 14 - 9:00am-1:00pm** - "Spring Ephemerals Field Trip" to Love Creek Nature Center with Paul Olexia (KAWO) and the South Bend Chapter of Wild Ones. [More details](#)

**May 16 - 6:30pm-8:30pm** - River City Wild Ones (Grand Rapids) program, "Garlic Mustard Pull and Creative Ways to Use it" plus a Native Plant Exchange in Belmont, MI. [More details](#)

**May 25 - 7:00pm** - "Birds and Berries: The Importance of Native Fruit-Bearing Shrubs for Migrating Landbirds" a presentation with Jen Owen at the People's Church 1758 North 10th Street, Kalamazoo. Hosted by Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones. [Read more.](#)

**June 5 - 1:00pm-5:00pm:** Meet other plant lovers and share what you have at KAWO's 29th Annual Spring Plant Exchange. All are welcome! [Details](#)

**June 18 - 10:00am-3:00pm:** KAWO Community Native Plant Sale. This is Kalamazoo Area Wild One's only fund raising event of the year - all are welcome, tell your friends and neighbors! We will have a wide variety of plants, grasses, trees and shrubs grown by Wildtype nursery. [Details](#)

*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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## **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.

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

[Send Submission](#)

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**To share comments and suggestions, simply reply to this email.**

**We look forward to hearing from you!**

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and [www.Facebook.com/KalamazooAreaWildOnes](https://www.Facebook.com/KalamazooAreaWildOnes)



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