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*Blooming Lupine (*Lupinus perennis*) at Chipman Preserve. M. Luna*

May 2023

SEEDLINGS

Wild Ones|Kalamazoo Area Chapter

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



Trillium grandiflorum on the Kal-Haven Trail. M. Luna

Dear *|FNAME|*,

May is marvelous, and it's action-packed! Get ready to load up on native plants at our annual [native plant sale](#), pot up your extras for the 30th anniversary of our spring [native plant exchange](#), and ogle the blooms at nature preserves near and far. There are still spots available for the [field trip](#) to Little Grand Canyon, and it's not too late to catch ephemerals on the Kal-Haven trail between F and G Avenues. If you've ever wondered why that stretch of the trail is so magical, I'm excited to share that story with you next month.

Kim is back to tell us about an essential component of ecological landscapes - shrubs, a must in any yard or garden, and available at our sale. She and Tom have some fun plant exchange updates as well. Ilse revisits an old friend - fancy galls made by tiny, tiny wasps.

Have your winter-sown seeds begun to germinate?! If you need a refresher about what to do next, the Winter Sowing 101 article is [here](#). You can refer back to past issues of this

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newsletter anytime by clicking the icon above, between the ones for Facebook and YouTube.

Our May program at the Portage District Library promises to delight. Join us in welcoming wild food forager and herbalist, [Brenna Pixley](#). In the meantime, I hope you're enjoying lots of delicious garlic mustard.

Happy May Day and a Blessed Beltane to you,

Mel Luna
Editor



Winter-sown Lupine sprouts. M. Luna

Eating Wild for the Future

May 24, 7pm-8pm at the Portage District Library

Brenna Pixley, Community Herbalist and Wild Food Advocate



Brenna Pixley will take us on a journey that reminds us of how foraging connects us to our feral ancestry, describe some of the tasty tidbits on offer out there, along with their health benefits, and discuss ethical and sustainable foraging techniques.

B. Pixley



This presentation will be followed up by a hands-on exploratory field trip led by Brenna on Saturday, June 17 from 10am-12noon.

Read more [here](#).

Foraging for wild grape leaves. B. Pixley

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.

Native Shrubs & Plant Sale Info

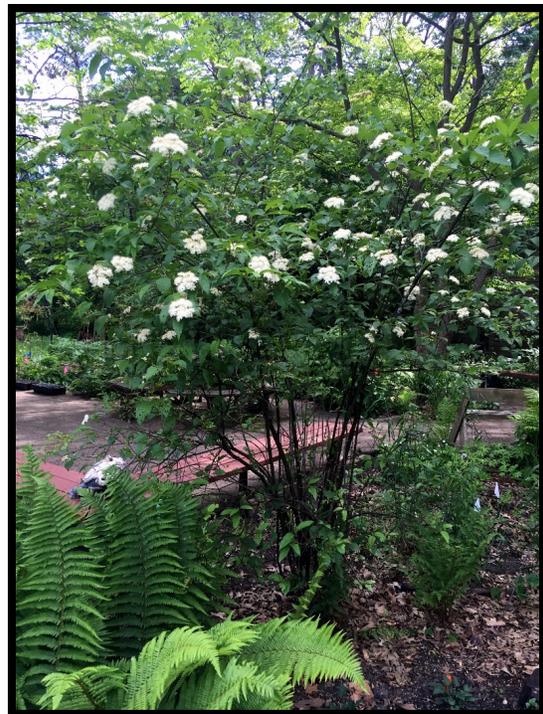
Kim Patrie, 2023 Plant Sale Committee

Hello fellow native plant enthusiasts! I have the great pleasure of letting you know that we will have seven different native shrubs for you to choose from at this year's plant sale, which I think is more variety than we have had in the past. Haven't thought of native shrubs before? Here's your chance to expand your horizons - and your garden!

Shrubs play a critical part in native habitats and are the middle level of a landscape. They provide food (nectar, pollen, berries, yummy leaves and caterpillars) and shelter to birds and other small creatures. There are hundreds of species of native shrubs, and I'll tell you about one.

Nannyberry (*Viburnum lentago*) is a lovely plant with shiny green serrated leaves and beautiful clumps of white flowers in the spring. It is colorful in autumn, with drupes of blue jewel-toned berries favored by birds and humans. That's right, the berries are often used for jams or jellies. It can grow as a shrub or a tree, depending on how much space you have and how much pruning you'd like to do to the suckers it sends up. It can grow quite large, from 10-18' tall with a 6-12' spread. If you prune it to grow as a tree, it can grow up to 30' tall! So you need a bit of space for this one.

Nannyberry Tree in Ruth & Tom's Garden. T. Small



It grows naturally in places that are moist, like stream banks and near lakes and rivers, but tolerates drier soil well and likes a little bit of sun, although it is listed as a shadier variety. It's good for creating a screen, or for a deep and tall backdrop to a native garden.

Why is it called Nannyberry? Because folklore says that nanny goats like the fruits. (In case you have any goats roaming around. And who doesn't like baby goats?! But I digress...)



Drupes of Viburnum lentago. A. Haines, Native Plant Trust

We anticipate also having the following six shrubs available for the plant sale:

New Jersey Tea - *Ceanothus americanus* - Used as a substitute for tea during the Revolutionary War.

Buttonbush - *Cephalanthus occidentalis* - The flowers look like fluffy white gum balls; unusual.

American Hazelnut - *Corylus americana* - Squirrels and birds love the nuts!

Spicebush - *Lindera benzoin* - Famously hosts the Spicebush Swallowtail butterfly.

Fragrant Sumac - *Rhus aromatica* - The name says it all!

Wild Berry Currant - *Ribes americanum* - Related to gooseberry; you can eat them.

[Here](#) is a complete list of all the plants we anticipate having at our sale this year, and their details.

If you're interested in learning more about the importance of native shrubs, check out our [YouTube channel](#), and specifically [this presentation](#) by Dr. Dave Warners about native trees and shrubs.

The plant sale is Saturday May 20, 10am-2pm at [PFC](#).

Here's a checklist for the checkout process:

1. Grab a box (we'll have some, but you can bring your own)
2. Choose your plants
3. Get your plants counted
4. Get a free plant (!!!)
5. See the cashier
6. Get your swag bag
7. Go home and plant!

Other information of note: Members receive 5% off their plant purchases. And there are swag bags for everyone who makes a purchase, with good stuff like information about how to put your lovely plants in the ground, and seed packets.

There will be a limited number of t-shirts available for purchase. This is a new and big step for us, so we aren't making very many. But there will be t-shirts, and beautiful ones at that. Don't miss it!

30th Annual Plant Exchange Celebration

Sunday, June 4th, 2023, 1pm-5pm

Kim Patrie, photos from our plant exchange in 2012.



We have a wonderful tradition here at Kalamazoo Wild Ones: We've made it our habit to give back to our community by giving away native plants! That's right, on Sunday, June 4 from 1-5 pm, stop by at Tom & Ruth's house to join our celebration of the [30th anniversary of the Spring Native Plant Exchange.](#)

Bring some native plants that you are thinning and pick up some plants that you need to fill in your garden, or start your garden, or that just look interesting.



It's a great social gathering (including a celebratory cake!) where you can connect with fellow native plant lovers and ask all your questions of the experienced people who will be roaming around just for that purpose. We've been doing it for 30 years this year, and our heartfelt thanks and gratitude go out to Tom and Ruth Small for hosting this event every year.

Tom and his late wife Nancy started it all way back then, and we are so happy that Ruth & Tom are still hosting this, our seminal event, at their home.



In addition to finding some orphaned plants that need you, there will be tours of Tom & Ruth's gardens at 1:30 and 3:30 p.m., and also a Life Cairn Ceremony at 2:30 p.m. More info below about the ceremony.

If you're bringing plants to the exchange, please drop them off a day or two early, so that the helpers can get them in place before the appointed time. Get those plants into pots as soon as possible. They'll fare better with more time to adjust to new soil. **Please label the plants carefully**, preferably with both common and botanical names. (I'll personally be digging out some wild geraniums, and some great

blue lobelia from my gardens.) You can find Tom & Ruth at 2502 Waite Ave, Kalamazoo, 49008; drop off any time on Friday or Saturday.

If you don't have native plants to bring, no worries. You're welcome to take some plants to get started or add diversity to your new garden.

Also, if you'd like to be in on the helping out end of things, they need a few volunteers on Friday to help prepare for the exchange. Contact [Paul Olexia](#) for more info in that regard.

I hope to see you at the exchange; say hello if you see me (Kim)! Now here's a word from Tom & Ruth...

Life Cairn Ceremony at the Spring Plant Exchange

Tom & Ruth Small

On May 22, 2011, a group of people gathered on Mount Caburn in East Sussex, England, to place the first stones of a "Life Cairn" to commemorate and to mourn all the species driven to extinction by human violence, development, and carelessness.

Life Cairn, Sussex



Since that time, many people have made the climb up the mountain to place a stone and participate in a ceremony, or simply to meditate, grieve for a particular species or all species, and to dedicate themselves to preservation and restoration. Elsewhere in the world, other similar cairns are growing, creating a permanent web of Life Cairns.

On May 20, 2012, the day of the 20th annual Spring plant exchange, Tom and Ruth began their own life cairn in their front yard, to observe the first anniversary of the first Life Cairn. In July 2012, Tom joined a walking tour in Devon, England, with Anglican priest Peter Owen Jones, one of the originators of the Life Cairn project.

Tom Small's Life Cairn.



Now, on the day of the 30th annual spring plant exchange, Ruth and Tom and Wild Ones invite all of you to participate in a Life Cairn ceremony and rededication. Please bring a stone that has some special meaning for you—a stone from your yard or from some other special place. Please choose a

particular plant or animal species you wish to honor—a species driven to extinction by human action, or in danger of extinction. You may also, if you wish, bring a brief passage or poem to read.

During the plant exchange, at about 2:30 p.m., those who wish to do so will gather to participate in a brief ceremony, placing their stones in honor of those species vanished from the earth or those threatened with extinction, as well as those we may yet be able to save through our dedication to restoration of species and habitats.

If you don't bring a stone, you are nonetheless welcome to participate in the ceremony. You may also, at any time, contribute a small stone to the cairn and observe your own moment of silent remembrance, or ask Ruth and Tom to join you.

If you have any questions about the exchange, please [email Tom](#).

The Wool Sower Gall & its Namesake Wasp

Ilse Gebhard

On April 27, 2002 the Kalamazoo Gazette published an article of mine in their Nature's Way column under the title of "Galling discovery made: questions remain." I had just started to expand my interest in insects beyond butterflies. Since my knowledge of insects has increased considerably with the proliferation of information on the internet, I decided to revisit the article to see if I now could answer some of the questions I had at the time. The article is based on a strange growth on a twig that a friend had given me the previous May. I wrote:

After much head-scratching I decided the strange growth was a gall. *Webster's Dictionary* defines a gall as "a tumor on plant tissue caused by irritation due to fungi, insects, or bacteria." Familiar with only a few galls, this one looked totally different. It was tan, more or less ball-shaped with little bumps on it. About one inch in diameter, it felt spongy.

There seemed to be two options to find out what was inside the gall. Wait and see if anything emerged or cut it open. Opting for the former, I put it in a cloth-covered jar and about a month later some tiny flying insects emerged.

Immature Wool Sower Gall I. Gebhard



Examination under the microscope and studying our insect books, I came to the conclusion that I had gall wasps of two different sizes. To the untrained eye they looked identical except one was about 1/8"

long and the other only about half that size. The larger one also had longer and thinner antennae than the smaller one. My conjecture was that they were male and female of the same species.

The time had come to cut the gall open. Sure enough, the inside of the gall was sponge-like but of a lighter color than the outside. In the middle was a cluster of what looked like 1/8" long oval seed-like capsules with stems of similar length facing away from the center and causing the bumps on the outside. The capsules were tan and very hard. Upon their close examination, a pin-prick hole could be seen in each capsule from which the wasps must have emerged.



I was left with lots of questions. What is the species? How could such a tiny insect make a hole in such a hard capsule? Did the plant produce both the tiny capsules and the sponge-like tissue or did the wasp larvae make the capsules like butterflies and moths produce their pupae?

Twenty-one years later, what have I learned? I now know that the wasp's common name is Wool Sower Gall Wasp (*Callirhytis seminator*) after its namesake gall. Interestingly, when the galls are first produced in spring, they are white-cottony with pink spots and only turn tan as they mature. They are most commonly found on white oaks.



Tiny Oak Gall Wasp R. Leung

The female wasp is said to lay her eggs in winter. They hatch just as new leaves are appearing on the oaks in spring. The newly emerged larvae secrete chemicals that stimulate the plant to develop the gall tissues – both the hard capsules and the foamy tissue surrounding them. The plant keeps supplying the wasp larvae with tissue upon which they feed inside the tiny capsule.

My conjecture that I had both male and female wasps emerge from the gall, despite the size and antenna differences, is likely true. I have found no information indicating otherwise and there are many examples in nature where either the male or the female is larger. Differences in size and shape of antenna can be explained by differences in their function depending on the sex. Females need to find their host plant on which to lay their eggs and males need to locate females with which to mate – host versus mate recognition.

Community Events of Interest

Now - May 29: Pierce Cedar Creek Institute Native Plant Sale is now open online for Pre-Order. Pick-up date is June 3, 9:00am-12:00pm. [Learn more.](#)

May 6 - 9:00am-11:00am: Spring Wildflower Walk along the Beech-Maple Ridge Trail at Pierce Cedar Creek Institute. [More info](#)

May 12 - 2:00pm-4:00pm: Volunteer with KAWO's Community Projects at Axtell Creek. [Read more.](#)

May 13 - 8:30am-11:00am: Field trip to Little Grand Canyon at Pierce Cedar Creek Institute (near Hastings, MI) with field station manager, Matt Dykstra. Registration is required and limited to 25 participants. IMPORTANT: This 1.5-mile hike descends down through a 60-ft deep glacial gorge. PLEASE be prepared to hike on a narrow path, uneven terrain, and steep stairs, but the view is worth it! Participants will meet at the Visitors Center of Pierce Cedar Creek Institute at 8:00 am to car pool to the site. Contact [Mike Klug](#) to register for the event and to obtain further details.

May 14 - 10:00am-12:00pm: Kleinstuck Preserve Volunteer Day. Meet at the Maple Street YMCA tennis courts. [Read more.](#)

May 15 - 2:00pm-4:00pm: "Spring Wildflower and Flower Photography" with Craig Elston, hosted by the River City Area Wild Ones (Grand Rapids). [More details.](#)

May 17 - 2:00pm: Volunteer with KAWO's Community Projects at Northglade School. [Read more.](#)

May 20 - 10:00am-2:00pm: Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones annual Community Native Plant Sale. Come one, come all! [Click here](#) for details and a full list of plants. The plant sale committee has been working hard to make this the best plant sale yet. Don't miss it!

May 24 - 7:00pm-8:00pm: "Eating Wild for the Future" an in-person event at the Portage District Library with Brenna Pixley. Hosted by Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones. [More info](#)

May 26 - 10:00am-12:00pm: Volunteer with KAWO's Community Projects at Glen Park. [Read more.](#)

June 2 - 10:00am-12:00pm: Volunteer with KAWO's Community Projects at Tom & Ruth's house to prepare for the Plant Exchange. [Read more.](#)

June 3 - 9:00am-1:00pm: Washtenaw County Conservation Native Plant Expo & Marketplace. [More info](#)

June 4 - 1:00pm-5:00pm: 30th Annual Plant Exchange Celebration and Life Cairn Ceremony. Read about both in the articles above or [click here](#) for 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!

What's Happening at the National Office

Check out our [National Office web site](#)

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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!

Find more information and news at www.KalamazooWildOnes.org

and www.Facebook.com/KalamazooAreaWildOnes



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