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*Eastern Redbud (Cercis canadensis) B. Bradburn*

May 2024

# 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



*Blue-Eyed Mary (Collinsia verna) P. Laferriere*

Dear \*|FNAME|\*,

We've borrowed the E.O. Wilson quotation above from Mitch Lettow, Stewardship Director at Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy and the speaker at our April program. Mitch spoke of our complementary missions, pointing out that Wild Ones tends to the crucial social aspect of the growing network of people and organizations dedicated to ecosystem restoration. Wild Ones originated with home gardeners wishing to make their own land hospitable to pollinators, and we may still be progressing one lawn at a time, but we have always known that restoring and protecting biodiversity goes beyond the boundaries of our yards. In its twenty-fifth anniversary year, KAWO celebrates its connection not only with native plants, but also with so many other stewards of nature.

**Beth Bradburn**

*Editor*

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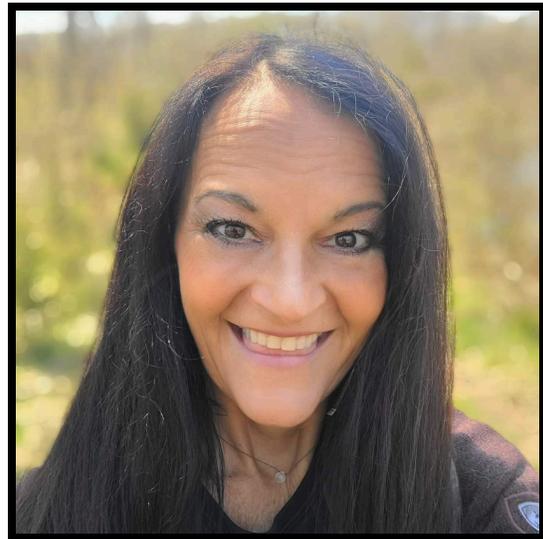
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## Seeking Spiritual Connectedness with the Plant Nation

**Wednesday, May 29, 6:30pm-8:00pm at Portage District Library**  
**with Bethany Earl-Moody, RN, CNM, MSN**

Bethany Earl-Moody, traditional forager and plant wisdom keeper and enrolled member of the Piqua Shawnee tribe, will lead an open discussion of the unique indigenous understanding of seeking the spiritual interconnection between the two-leggeds and our plant relatives.

Please note that **our monthly programs now begin at 6:30 pm**. We'll be there to greet you starting at 6:00, so come early and meet more Wild Ones.



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**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.

Past issues of Seedlings can be found [here](#), and by clicking the link between the  
Facebook and YouTube links above.

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## KAWO Native Plant Sale Continues through May 5



*Foxglove Beardtongue (P. digitalis) B. Bradburn*

Thank you for supporting us via our annual fundraiser! Many species are now sold out, but there are still some wildflowers, grasses, and sedges left. The sale will continue through 4:00pm on Sunday, May 5. Click [here](#) to go to the order form and see what's still available. If you have already purchased plants, you can pick them up at Hidden Savanna, [100 N Van Kal St](#), Kalamazoo, between 4:00pm and 8:00pm on May 22 or 23.

## Spring Plant Exchange

KAWO's annual spring plant exchange will take place on Sunday, June 2, from 1:00pm to 4:00pm. Come for the afternoon or just stop by! You don't need to bring a plant to take one (or more) home, or to celebrate with us at this longstanding traditional event. We'll be there to answer your questions about native plants. To find out more about what to expect and how to prepare any plants that you would like to contribute, please visit [the plant exchange web page](#).



*2022 Spring Plant Exchange M. Luna*

This year's plant exchange will include two ceremonies: one to present the Nancy Cutbirth Small Distinguished Service Award, described in the next article, and one to place stones on the Life Cairn started by Tom and Ruth Small in 2012. As the plant exchange concludes, at about 4:00pm, those who wish will gather for a brief ceremony, placing stones in honor of species vanished from the earth or threatened with extinction, as well as those we may yet be able to save through our dedication to restoration. All are welcome at both ceremonies.



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## **KAWO Awards Ceremony**

**Tom Small**

In celebration of our twenty-fifth anniversary, the Kalamazoo Area Chapter of Wild Ones will honor five long-time KAWO members with the Nancy Cutbirth Small Distinguished Service Award. The awards will be presented during the spring plant exchange on Sunday, June 2.

Established in 2011 to honor the memory of Nancy Small, an important founder of Kalamazoo Wild Ones, the award is presented to “recognize individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to our chapter, to environmental education, and to the restoration of native plants and natural landscapes in southwest Michigan.”

Since its establishment, only two individuals have received the award: Richard Brewer and Ilse Gebhard. For our silver anniversary celebration, the KAWO Executive Committee has approved five more individuals to receive this special award: Ann Fraser, Carol Klug, Mike Klug, Paul Olexia, and Dave Wendling. Each recipient has an outstanding record of many years service to the chapter, to environmental education, and to native plant restoration.

Ann Fraser, Carol and Mike Klug, and Paul Olexia have devoted their lives to teaching biological and environmental sciences. Carol and Mike Klug, Paul Olexia, and Dave Wendling have served as President of KAWO, as well as on many committees. Ann Fraser has been especially valuable in her service to committees and in media publicity.

All five recipients have presented special programs for KAWO and many other environmental organizations. Working together with other Wild Ones, all of them have been involved in many restoration and research projects, on their own properties and on preserves and private lands throughout southwest Michigan.

This is only a small sampling of their service to the community by these five devoted KAWO members. For more details and to show your appreciation for their contributions to the success of Wild Ones, please attend the award ceremony during the spring Wild Ones plant exchange at Tom and Ruth Small's house, on Sunday, June 2, from 1 to 4 p.m. There will be a celebratory break from 2:30 to 3:00 for the award ceremony and special refreshments.

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## **It's a Red Admiral Butterfly Irruption Year**

Ilse Gebhard



Weather events this past winter, both locally and in the southern US, led to an interesting opportunity for insects to feed on tree sap. Our mid-January snowstorm had damaged a number of trees in the small woodlot that we here at Friendship Village just call the “woods.” In February several of the damaged trees that were overhanging the walking paths were cut down. If a tree is cut down in winter, before the sap rises from the roots into the trunk and branches, the sap will rise into and flow from the stump once late winter/early spring temperatures reach the threshold for sap to rise.



After several cold and cloudy days, the sap was flowing on April 6, a mostly sunny day with highs in the upper 50s. On a meander through the woods, I caught a fleeting glimpse of a Red Admiral butterfly (*Vanessa atalanta*) feeding on sap oozing from one of the stumps. Two days later, on April 8, after viewing the eclipse in an open area, I decided to take another spin through the woods and found two Red Admirals on the above-mentioned stump.

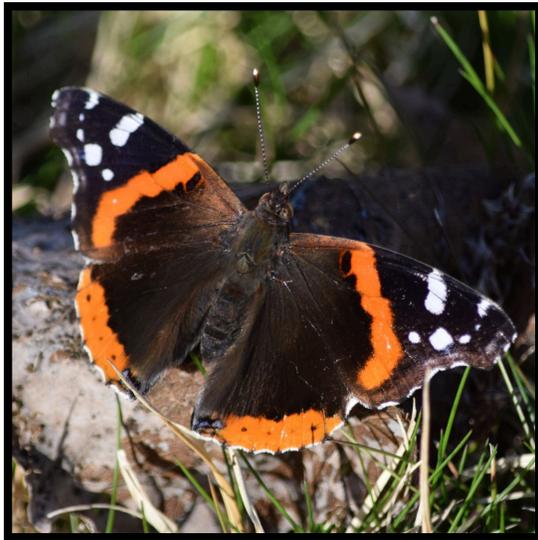
*Red Admiral sipping sap I. Gebhard*

I managed to get a good enough photo with my phone to document the sighting for iNaturalist. During the hour I spent in the woods I received texts from two friends who had just seen a Red Admiral in their yard. When I got home my husband told me he had seen one on the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail and another friend sent an email reporting one at Harris Preserve. The next day, April 9, I saw Red Admirals flitting throughout the woods and multiple sightings of them feeding on

stumps. The numbers were down the following day, April 10, and on my next meanders through the woods a few days later they were gone.

These sightings reminded me of a Red Admiral irruption that occurred in 2012. "Irruption" in this case means a sudden increase in an animal population. Is this another irruption year, I wondered. My hunch was confirmed when I read posts on a butterfly Listserv about observers in Ontario having seen hundreds, if not thousands, crossing Lake Erie and flying northeast along the Lake Huron shoreline. In response to these posts came one from Texas, where Red Admirals had reproduced in high numbers in February and March. The warm, southerly wind was now pushing them north.

I remember the 2012 Red Admiral irruption well. In Michigan, seeing multiple butterflies a day in early April is rare. Chip Taylor from Monarch Watch explains that the 2012 irruption followed a seven-month drought in the South in 2011 that ended in September of that year. The drought probably knocked back the predators and parasites that didn't recover well in the cooler and rainy months that followed. Abundant moisture led to rapid growth of false nettle (*Boehmeria cylindrica*), the main caterpillar host for Red Admirals in the South. The combination of lush host plants and low numbers of predators and parasites apparently allowed the population to build up rapidly, leading to the irruption in early April 2012.



*Red Admiral* Q. Edwards

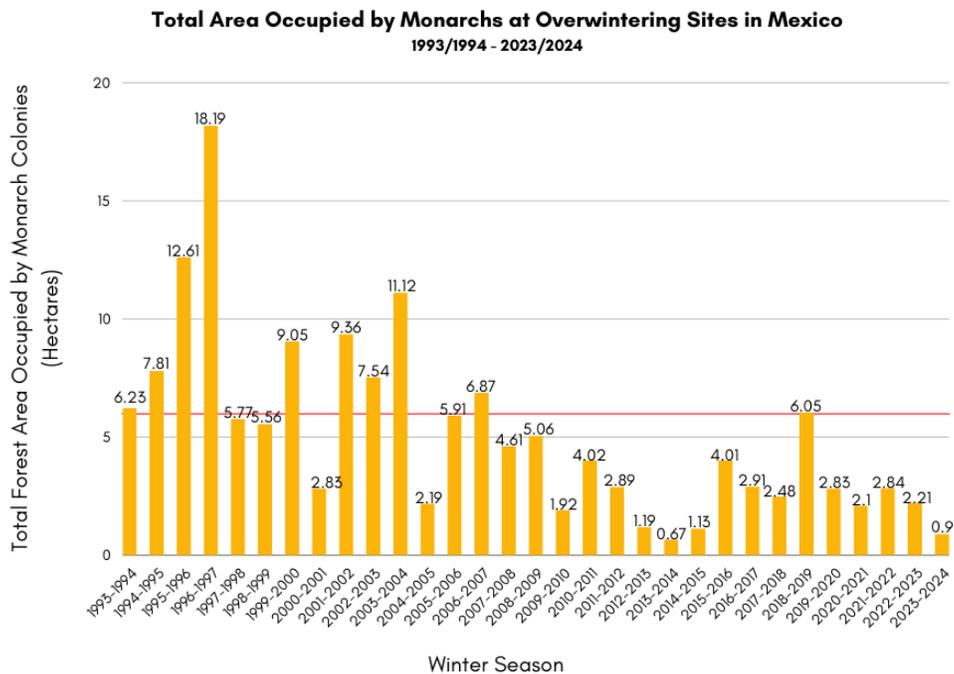
According to Chip Taylor, weather conditions were at play again this year. Two sweeps of freezing temperatures in the South in January probably took out the predators and parasites over large areas. Those events were followed by widespread rainfall and good plant growth, conditions favoring high reproductive success of butterflies in general, and specifically of the Red Admirals now moving north.



*Stinging Nettle emerging* R. Schipper

I had hoped the Red Admirals would linger in the woods until the Stinging Nettle (*Urtica sp.*) that I had seen in previous years had broken ground. Unfortunately, the emergence of this larval host plant lagged behind the arrival of the butterflies and they had moved on before the nettle broke ground. Red Admirals continue to be seen in the county, so I don't discount future sightings in the woods later in spring or summer. You bet I will be checking the nettles (ouch) for eggs and caterpillars.

Possible good news for Monarchs, Chip Taylor explains, is that any of the predators that attack Red Admirals also feed on Monarch larvae. He is going to take the Red Admiral population explosion as a positive sign that this year Monarch larvae may have suffered fewer losses to predators in the South than is usually the case. In view of last winter's Monarch population being at its second lowest since counting started in the mid-1990s, any conditions that might help numbers rebound is welcome news. In the meantime, I hope everyone has enjoyed the Red Admirals flitting around their yards.



Scientists estimate that a minimum of 6 hectares of overwintering monarchs is needed to sustain the eastern populations (Sermens et al., 2016)

Data from 1994-2003 were collected by personnel of the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve (MBBR) of the National Commission of Protected Natural Areas (CONANP) in Mexico. Data from 2004-2024 were collected by the WWF-Telcel Alliance, in coordination with the Directorate of the MBBR. 2000-2001 number as reported by Garcia-Serrano et al. in 2004

## Past Seedlings Newsletters Available

A full archive of Seedlings Newsletters, going back to 2010, is now available on our website. You can go directly to the archive page [here](#), or access it through the side menu on the front page or the "Resources" drop-down menu.

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## Who Am I?

A native flora ID quiz from Ilse Gebhard



*Photo: R. Schipper*

Click [here](#) for the answer!

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## Community Events of Interest

**Thursday, May 2 - 11:00am-1:00pm:** Michigan Butterfly Network Virtual Butterfly Monitoring Training, online, hosted by Kalamazoo Nature Center. [Learn more.](#)

**Thursday, May 2 - 7:00pm:** Pints and Native Plants, an informal meet-up at [Brewery Outré](#) in Kalamazoo. [Learn more.](#)

**Saturday, May 11 - 9:30am and 1:00pm:** Spring wildflower walks, Pierce Cedar Creek Institute.

Learn more: [9:30](#) or [1:00](#).

**Sunday, May 12 - 10:00am-12:00pm:** Volunteer Day, Kleinstuck Preserve. Meet at the Maple Street YMCA tennis courts.

**Tuesday, May 14 - 7:00pm:** "Listening to Birds: Stories of Biodiversity Loss and Conservation Solutions," with Sharon Gill, Friendship Village, Kalamazoo. [Learn more](#).

**Monday, May 20 - 6:30pm-8:30pm:** "An Introduction to Moth Appreciation," Wild Ones River City online event. [Learn more](#).

**Wednesday, May 22 - 2:00pm-4:00pm:** KAWO Community Projects Workday, Glen Park. [Learn more](#).

**Wednesday, May 29 - 6:30pm-8:00pm:** "Seeking Spiritual Connectedness with the Plant Nation, with Bethany Earl-Moody, a monthly presentation hosted by Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones at Portage District Library. [Learn more](#).

**Friday, May 31 - 2:00pm-4:00pm:** Community Projects Workday, Tom and Ruth's house. [Learn more](#).

**Sunday, June 2 - 1:00pm-4:00pm:** Spring Plant Exchange, Tom and Ruth's house. [Learn more](#).

*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 Beth Bradburn. It appears mostly monthly.

The next regular issue will arrive in June. **Deadline for the June issue is May 20.**

[Send Submission](#)

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)



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