



*Autumn glory at Wolf Tree Preserve K.Patrie*

November 2019

# SEEDLINGS

Wild Ones|Kalamazoo Area Chapter

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

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## In This Issue

**Listening To  
The Plants**



*Trees in autumn at Wolf Tree Preserve K.Patrie*

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

A quick reminder, before you indulge in sweets and family and gifts, that there will be no December meeting. Enjoy your holidays!

We do, however, hope to see you at the November 20 meeting to hear Tom Small speak on listening to plants. What do they have to say? Come find out! (More info below)

Seedlings will return to your box in early January, and our January meeting will be on the 22nd.

**Happy Holidays to you and yours,  
The Editors**

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## **Nov. Program: Listening To The Plants**

**Wed. Nov. 20, 7pm**

**Tom Small**

Tom Small will close out this year's program series for Wild Ones with a powerpoint presentation on "Listening to the Plants" and the stories that they tell.

**The Mighty  
Sycamore**

**Thanks from the  
Monarch Committee**

**Cities to  
Sanctuaries**

**Thanksgiving  
Address**

**Winter Reads**

**Community  
Events of Interest**

**Contact Wild Ones**

Tom will summarize and illustrate some of the radically transformed vision of plants that has emerged during the past 40 years, combining new scientific discoveries with ancient indigenous wisdom about the “Standing Nations”—their intelligence, their unique languages, their ways of sharing. [\*More Info\*](#)



An Elder cottonwood tree on the campus of Grinnell College, where Tom & Ruth attended a Quaker environmental conference this past July. An Australian Quaker, at the extreme right of the photo, is teaching the group the way in which Australian aborigines traditionally greet and converse with an Elder tree. *Photo: R.Small*

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## **Michigan Native Tree: Sycamore** Ilse Gebhard



At its northernmost range in southern Michigan, the sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis* L.) mostly grows on riverbanks, floodplain forests, and lakeshores. It was probably named sycamore by early settlers for the English sycamore maple (*Acer pseudoplatanus* L.) because its leaves resemble those of the European maple.

The sycamore is a large tree and can grow to more than 100' tall and 6.5' in diameter. Its crown is broad and spreading. It was one of the trees featured in our recent talk "The History of our Local Forests". As of 6/2/2019 Michigan's 4<sup>th</sup> largest sycamore is in Kalamazoo on East Alcott St. It is 114' high, and has a girth of 237" and a crown spread of 92.5'. \*

The bark of the sycamore is unusual . It is red-brown when young, soon breaking into thin, flat sections, which fall away to expose white-green inner bark. The twigs are light brown and smooth and the buds are light brown and pointed.

Sycamore leaves are alternate, to 8" long and about as wide, and are divided into 3 or 5 shallow, sharp-pointed lobes. They are bright green and smooth on the upper surface and smooth but paler on the underside with sparse hairs on the veins.

In May dense clusters of tiny male and female flowers are found separate but on the same tree and are wind-pollinated. The fruit is a light brown ball about 1" wide on a long, drooping stalk and can often be found persisting on the tree in winter. The ball comes apart and the individual seeds, surrounded by down, are dispersed by the wind.



Though not strong as a beam or column, and with little resistance to decay, the Sycamore's wood is hard, fairly tough and almost impossible to split. It has found many uses, including solid wagon wheels for oxcarts. Nowadays it is most likely found as butcher's blocks since it can be endlessly hacked without splitting.

Most Sycamores over 100 years old are hollow, which does not prevent them from continuing to grow. In the days before chimneys, these hollow trees were used by Chimney Swifts for nesting and roosting overnight. John James Audubon in his book *The Birds of America, vol. 1* has a wonderful description of his experience with Chimney Swifts and a Sycamore. \*\*

\* [Michigan Botanical Club's Big Tree Database](#)

\*\* In the public domain, and available for free in many places across the web.

Excellent reference book on Michigan trees: *Michigan Trees*, Burton V. Barnes and Warren H. Wagner, Jr., The University of Michigan Press

Photos: Michigan Flora <https://www.michiganflora.net/species.aspx?id=1988>

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**Thank You, Milkweed Seed Collectors!**

Ilse Gebhard



A big thank you to all of you who collected milkweed seeds this fall. And I must commend you on how well you separated the seed from the fluff and the chaff. We received enough common, swamp and butterfly milkweed seeds for Mike and Carol Klug to again grow plants during the winter in their hoop house to give away at our events and for the establishment of native plant garden/monarch waystation community projects.

In addition we have plenty of seed for seed packets to give out at events, meetings and presentations.

While Michigan was #1 in the nation for the number of monarch waystations for quite a few years, it is now 3<sup>rd</sup> (2000), behind Illinois (2064) and Texas (2164). There are 174 registered waystations in Kalamazoo County, with 130 having Kalamazoo addresses. A Kalamazoo postal address includes both the city and many of the outlying areas that are not in a city or village. Here is the breakdown:

Augusta 3  
Comstock 4  
Galesburg 3  
Kalamazoo 130  
Parchment 2  
Portage 17  
Richland 6  
Schoolcraft 4  
Vicksburg 6



**If you have milkweed and nectar plants on your property, please consider registering it as a Monarch Waystation. <https://www.monarchwatch.org/waystations/>**

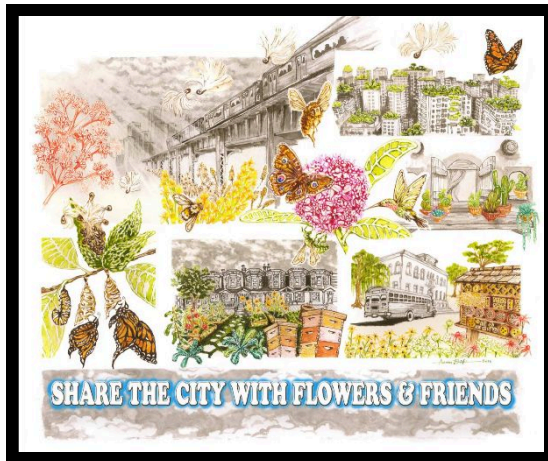
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## **How To Turn Cities Into Pollinator Sanctuaries:**

*Curtailing light pollution, starting a seed library, and other ways metro areas are bringing pollinators back.*

**Submitted by Ilse Gebhard**

Originally published on [Nextcity.org](http://Nextcity.org).



The following is an excerpt from **“Protecting Pollinators: How to Save the Creatures That Feed Our World,”** by Jodi Helmer, published by Island Press. In it, Helmer talks about the environmental threats that have put birds, bats, bees and other pollinators in peril, and put the global food supply at risk.

*She also reports on the most promising conservation initiatives. In this excerpt, Helmer outlines the strategies several cities have taken (including New York and Charlotte) to lure pollinators back.*

To read the full excerpt, [Click Here](#).

(Also see **“What Can Bees Teach Us About Building Better Urban Ecosystems?”**)

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## **A Contemplation for Thanksgiving.**

From the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address

**Submitted by Tom Small**

## Thanksgiving Address

### *Greetings to the Natural World*

### **The People**

Today we have gathered and we see that the cycles of life continue. We have been given the duty to live in balance and harmony with each other and all living things. So now, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to each other as People.

*Now our minds are one.*



### **The Plants**

Now we turn toward the vast fields of Plant life. As far as the eye can see, the Plants grow, working many wonders. They sustain many life forms. With our minds gathered together, we give thanks and look forward to seeing Plant life for many generations to come.

*Now our minds are one.*

### **The Animals**

We gather our minds together to send greetings and thanks to all the Animal life in the world. They have many things to teach us as people. We see them near our homes and in the deep forests. We are glad they are still here and we hope that it will always be so.

*Now our minds are one.*

### **The Trees**

We now turn our thoughts to the Trees. The Earth has many families of Trees who have their own instructions and uses. Some provide us with shelter and shade, others with fruit, beauty, and other useful things. Many peoples of the world use a Tree as a symbol of peace and strength. With one mind, we greet and thank the Tree life.

*Now our minds are one.*

**Grandmother Moon** We put our minds together and give thanks to our oldest Grandmother, the Moon, who lights the nighttime sky. She is the leader of women all over the world, and she governs the movement of the ocean tides.



By her changing face we measure time, and it is the Moon who watches over the arrival of children here on Earth. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to our Grandmother, the Moon.

*Now our minds are one.*

## **The Creator**

Now we turn our thoughts to the Creator, or Great Spirit, and send greetings and thanks for all the gifts of Creation. Everything we need to live a good life is here on this Mother Earth. For all the love that is still around us, we gather our minds together as one and send our choicest words of greetings and thanks to the Creator.

*Now our minds are one.*

## **Closing Words**

We have now arrived at the place where we end our words. Of all the things we have named, it was not our intention to leave anything out. If something was forgotten, we leave it to each individual to send such greetings and thanks in their own way.

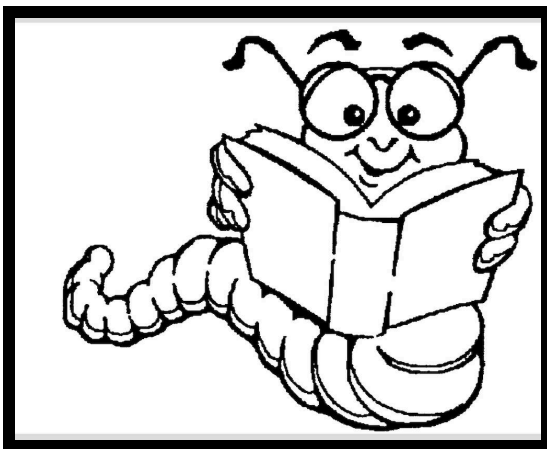
*And now our minds are one.*

*Excerpted from the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address, English version by John Stokes and Kanawahionton (David Benedict, Turtle Clan/Mohawk). This translation of the Mohawk version was published in 1993, and provided here, courtesy of Six Nations Indian Museum and the Tracking Project. All rights reserved.*

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## **Wintertime Is For Reading**

Ilse Gebhard



In summer I usually read just one book. I try to find one that I should read but is very boring to help me fall asleep at night. It takes me about two or three pages when I realize I don't have a clue what I've read because I've been dozing off. None of the books below fall into that category.

Last winter I read a number of books on trees and how they communicate, exemplified by *The Hidden Life of Trees* by Peter Wohlleben. A book of scientific, lyrical, and contemplative bend is *The Songs of Trees: Stories from Nature's Great Connectors* by David George Haskell,

author of another fascinating book, *The Forest Unseen*. I also read *The Overstory*, a novel by Richard Powers that Tom Small had recommended, and Barbara Kingsolver (one of my favorite authors) had [reviewed in \*The New York Times\*](#).

I just finished reading *The Revolutionary Genius of Plants: A New Understanding of Plant Intelligence and Behavior* by Stefano Mancuso. Plants are so amazing. Two other fun books on plants that I read in years past are *Wicked Plants: The Weed That Killed Lincoln's Mother and Other Botanical Atrocities* by Amy Stewart, and *The Orchid Thief: A True Story of Beauty and Obsession* by Susan Orlean.

All are available in the Kalamazoo Public Library.

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## **What's Happening at the National Office**

Check out our [National Office web site](#)! To read the October report from the board of directors, [log in to the member only area](#). Thanks for your interest and support of Wild Ones!

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**SEEDLINGS** is edited by Tom Small and Kim Patrie. It appears mostly monthly. The next regular issue will come early in January. **Deadline for the January issue is December 15.** Please send submissions to 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](https://www.Facebook.com/KalamazooAreaWildOnes)



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