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Foraging Chickadee (*Poecile atricapillus*) Q. Edwards

November 2021

SEEDLINGS

Wild Ones|Kalamazoo Area Chapter

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



Maple Leaf Viburnum (*Viburnum acerifolium*) K.Patrie

Dear *|FNAME|*,

I'd like to thank you for reading the KAWO newsletter. We work very hard every month to bring you content that is relevant, useful, and beautiful, and we know there are a lot of other things you could be doing right now, but you are here. We are grateful.

On that note, I would like you to extend a warm welcome to Mel Luna. Mel has been learning and helping with Seedlings for about 4 months now, and she will be taking over as our editor very soon. She has been a quick study, and enthusiastic, and I know you will be as pleased with her work as I am!

Our November 17 program will feature Alysia Babcock. She will share with us how to take our cues from nature in our native garden designs. Alysia brings a wealth of experience; I'm sure it will be inspiring! More information and registration for the Zoom meeting below.

We are in need of volunteers to help manage our chapter of Wild Ones. If you, or someone you know, would like to help by running for a seat on our Executive Committee, please [email Kathy](#). You can read about the positions and various other volunteer opportunities [Here](#).

Thanks again for reading, I hope to see you all in person very soon. Seedlings will next be in your inbox in January 2022.

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Warmth and Joy of the Holiday season,

Kim Patrie

Editor

Take a Cue from Nature: Area Preserves - Things to See All Year Round and How it Can Help You Design Your Garden

November 17, 7pm on Zoom

Alysia Babcock, *Garden Guru Kzoo*

This month's presentation (always free!) will highlight Kalamazoo area nature trails and preserves that can be visited year round. The focus will be on the beauty of native plants and nature throughout the seasons and provide you with inspiration for designing your own garden.

Alysia is the owner of The Garden Guru Kzoo, LLC where she specializes in Native Plant Garden design, implementation and management. Her goal is to have Native Plants in every garden in Kalamazoo County. [Register here](#)



November Beauty Along the KRV Trail M. Luna

Visit Our YouTube Channel

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.

In Honor of Tom Small's 89th Birthday

Ilse Gebhard

In addition to having co-founded the Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones Chapter, another of Tom's major contributions to the preservation of native plants is the completion and publication in 2011 of *Using Native Plants to Restore Community*, Nancy Cutbirth Small and Tom Small, authors. As the subtitle indicates, the book is highly useful for establishing native plantings not only in Southwest Michigan but far beyond.

One lesser-known fact about the book is that the proceeds from its sale were used to establish the Nancy Small Memorial Fund (NSMF). This fund was used to establish native plantings in Kalamazoo and adjacent counties.



To the best of my recollection, plantings were established at 9 schools, the farthest away in South Haven. Another 16 were established at parks, nature preserves, community gardens, churches and even a hospital and a food bank. The plantings were registered as Monarch Waystations and the NSMF paid for Waystation signs.

*Planting the Native Plant Garden/Monarch Waystation at
Mattawan Later Elementary School B.Baer*

As with so much, COVID brought new projects to a halt but I think the NSMF is not completely exhausted and another project or two may be in the works. Nonetheless, plantings at 25 locations so far, is very impressive.



I believe that of all the projects the school gardens have the greatest potential for nature education, not only in the years they were established but in years to come. Thank you, Tom, for your vision and its execution.

Tom and Ilse helping students at Northglade Montessori
Magnet School plant their Pollinator Garden/ Waystation
D. Partin

Congratulations Nan & Dan, Local Winners of the Annual National Wild Ones Photo Contest!

Competition was stiff this year, with over 350 entries across ten categories from coast to coast. It is with great excitement that we here at Seedlings congratulate Nan Pokerinski from River City Wild Ones (Grand Rapids) for winning best in show and first place in her category. Congratulations also goes to Daniel Cruikshanks for his win in the Scenery category. Thank you to everyone who submitted and shared photos. If you haven't had a chance to view all of the beautiful entries, I encourage you to do so [here](#).



Coprinopsis variegata in Croton, MI N. Pokerwinski



Assorted oaks and maples along with wetlands grasses (dormant) at Asylum Park, Kalamazoo D. Cruikshanks

Toadstools and Fairy Rings Demystified

Ilse Gebhard

On a walk the 2nd week of October I was reminded of our September presentation on the hidden world below our forests and fields and even lawns. There were mushrooms everywhere and I counted ten different species, among them two fairy rings. When we think of fungi, we usually think of mushrooms, but these are just the fruiting bodies of fungi.



Fairy Ring I. Gebhard

The main part of a fungus is the mycelium, which is the vegetative part and consists of a network of fine white filaments called hyphae. When looking at a mushroom you don't see this network. It is underground, or spread throughout the dead wood and other organic matter (detritus) that the mushroom spore sprouted on.

Fungi reproduce from spores that are found in the mushroom part of the fungus. When a spore germinates, the mycelium grows out from the center as it depletes the organic matter on which it feeds. The mycelium may grow out in a more or less circular fashion, producing the mushrooms at the periphery of the mycelium, hence fairy rings. An analogy to the fungus is an apple tree. The tree is comparable to the underground mycelium of the fungus while the apple on the tree is analogous to the mushroom that appears above ground.



Fairy Ring of Amanita Muscaria M. Luna

Fairy rings appear to be of two types, free and tethered, depending on how the fungus feeds itself and where the ring appears. A free fairy ring is likely to appear in a lawn where it depends just on itself for feeding on the organic matter in the soil.

Some fungi are mycorrhizal, which means they can establish a symbiotic relationship with trees and other plants by attaching their hyphae to the roots.

This way they can provide nutrients and water that the trees need while obtaining sugars produced by the trees that the fungi need to live.

On my walk I think I spotted one of each type of fairy ring. One was out in an open grassy area and the other one surrounded a 10ft high white pine planted at the intersection of two paved paths and next to a small outbuilding.



Shaggy Manes/ Ink Caps (Coprinus comatus) M. Luna

Because of its location, that tree can use all the help it can get to grow successfully. Many plants, especially conifers, rely heavily on the presence of their mycorrhizal fungi for survival.

There is a lot of lore about fairy rings, mostly from Western Europe, summarized in the Wikipedia link [here](#). I did not take any chances stepping into one of the rings but I did look close for a toad perching on a stool. 😊

Chicken Fat Mushroom (Suillus americanus) I. Gebhard



By Any Other Name

Tom Small



Fused Hairs of New England. Not so evocative as Star of New England? Still, *Symphotrichum novae-angliae*, or *Aster novae-angliae*, she's the same lovely lady, the same fascinating New England aster, despite the recent discovery she's not a star and indeed no better than a country cousin of the exalted European asters.

Her family spreads all across the world: 32,000 species of *asteraceae*, belonging to over 1900 genera. And she has, in her own right, an honored place in the forefront of her lineage and relations. For Roger Tory Peterson, she is “our most showy wild aster.”

New England Aster (Aster novae-angliae) Q. Edwards

Her late appearance, in August through October, often in roadside ditches, seems nonetheless quite wonderful: “You thought you knew,” observes Henry David Thoreau, “every leaf and twig by the roadside, and now to your surprise, the ditches are crowded with millions of little stars.”

Our own Emma Bickham Pitcher, a founding member of Kalamazoo Wild Ones, remarked, in *Of*

Woods and Other Things, how “showy New England asters” lend grace and dignity to roadside ditches, where they “come into their own, often in glorious abundance. Such glowing luster.”

Nor is this earthly star content to show off her own beauty; she collaborates with other species in what Robin Wall Kimmerer calls “lived reciprocity.” Why, Kimmerer asks, are asters and goldenrods so beautiful together? Artists reply, because gold and purple are complementary colors. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, in his *Theory of Colors* (1810), explains, “colors diametrically opposed to each other reciprocally evoke each other in the eye,” making both more vivid.



Scientists and bees agree on a different explanation. Since bees and human beings see golden and purple flowers in much the same way, “Growing together, both receive more pollinators than they would if each were growing alone.” So, as Doug Tallamy observes, asters and goldenrods together are “keystone species” of the fall season.

For many Native Americans, asters are sacred “medicine.”

Our Yard (*Aster novae-angliae* and *Aster divaricatus*) T. Small

Smoke of New England aster, in the sweat lodge and the dwelling, serves to purify and heal both body and spirit, rising and mingling with the spirit-breath of all beings. From ancient times, in many cultures, asters have been special offerings to the gods. The Roman poet Virgil, over 2000 years ago, wrote of asters in *Georgics*, his plea for restoration of the traditional agricultural life of Italy as the Roman Republic gave way to Empire (1st century BCE):

A Flower there is that grows in Meadow Ground,
Amellus call'd, and easy to be found;
For from one Root the rising Stem bestows
A Wood of Leaves, and violet-purple Boughs:
The Flower it self is glorious to behold,
And shines on Altars like refulgent Gold.



Here, in the fourth book of the *Georgics*, Virgil celebrates the communal life of bees and their role in a simple agrarian life. He advises in detail on their proper care. To restore a hive, he counsels, boil asters in “gen’rous wine” and set them “beside the Door, the sickly Stock to dine.”

NE Aster & Brown-Eyed Susans + Tiny Bees

(Rudbeckia triloba) K.Patrie

The translation I use here is by John Dryden, the first poet laureate of England, and dates from 1697.

In the 21st century, a French translation by the poet Frédéric Boyer is titled *Le Souci de la terre* (Care for the earth). The future of the earth, he feels, is addressed through this classic Roman poem and its evocation of ancient, indigenous tradition. “The past,” he writes, “is entering into dialogue with the future right now.”

Regenerative agriculture, agrarianism, deep ecology, permaculture, forest gardening, organic farming and gardening, natural landscaping—all are aspects of this dialogue between past and future. And New England aster, along with many sisters and cousins, has been a presence in the dialogue for thousands of years.

So, with regard for her heritage and lineage, for the sake of the bees and butterflies, for beauty, for regeneration of the land and the spirit, and for the future, honor New England aster deep in your heart, in a deer-resistant part of your landscape, and in your way of life.

WANTED: **Native Plant Gardeners Willing to Share Their Experience**

October, 2022 *Sign-up details below*

Are you interested in sharing your adventures (and misadventures) with native plants?

Ruth Caputo, our Programs Chair is looking for panelists for next year's fall program, "Panel Presentation: A Wealth of Experience within KAWO."

Newer Wild Ones members want to learn from experienced members! This panel presentation is a fun way to bring everyone together to share, learn, and be inspired.

*Purple Coneflower with Showy Goldenrod
(Echinacea purpurea & Solidago speciosa) K.Patrie*



If you (or a native plant gardener you know) would like to share, please reach out to [Ruth](#) or 269-207-2815. Panelists will meet 1-3 times to decide what's important and how to share it. There is almost a year between now and then to take photos. **Thanks in advance!**

Community Events of Interest

November 15 - 6:30pm: Learn the "Science and Art of Propagating Native Plants" with speaker and expert, Jeanette Henderson. This is an in-person event hosted by the River City Wild Ones. Masks are required indoors for all attendees. [More Info](#)

November 16 - 7:00pm: New Directions in the American Landscape founder and award-winning author Larry Weaner presents "The Self-Perpetuating Landscape" webinar, free and open to the public. For information and to register for this online event [click here](#).

November 17 - 7:00pm: "Take a cue from Nature: Area Preserves – Things to See All Year Round and How it Can Help You Design Your Garden" a presentation on Zoom by KAWO's Alysia Babcock. [More details](#)

Late November: It takes a village! Are you interested in becoming more involved with KAWO? Our Executive Committee elections are coming up and there are many ways to volunteer! [Contact Kathy](#) if you are interested in serving or know someone you would like to nominate. [More info](#)

January 13 - 7:00pm: Wild Ones presents "America's Public Gardens: A Resource for Native Plants" by Matthew Ross. Get an in-depth look into how public gardens can help inform and influence your design and maintenance practices. [More Info](#)

January 26 - 7:00pm: "Choosing Plants for Pollinators" Rebecca Tonietto, Assistant Professor of Biology, U of M-Flint presents. Details to come.

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](#)

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.

SEEDLINGS is edited by Kim Patrie & Mel Luna. It appears mostly monthly.
The next regular issue will arrive mid-January. **Deadline for January issue is January 1.**

[Send Submission](#)

Contributing Editors:

Tom Small

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

and www.Facebook.com/KalamazooAreaWildOnes



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