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Little Bluestem (S. scoparium), Fort Custer B. Bradburn

November 2023

SEEDLINGS

Wild Ones|Kalamazoo Area Chapter

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



Gray Dogwood (*C. racemosa*), Fort Custer B. Bradburn

Dear *|FNAME|*,

As we head for a dormant season in SW Michigan, we can stay grounded by looking closely at what's around us - even when it is hidden or hard to understand. Ilse Gebhard shows us the way by investigating galls, those oddly beautiful products of the interaction between plants and insects. Noel Ocen reminds us too that what seems inert still harbors the power of life.

This issue of Seedlings directs us to many opportunities to protect what we care about, including a call for service on the City of Kalamazoo's Natural Features Protection Review Board, action to preserve Asylum Lake, and [openings for leadership](#) in our local Wild Ones chapter, which will hold elections this month.

You may take inspiration from [Second Wave Media's in-depth article](#) about the community of native landscaping proponents here in Kalamazoo, and from the calendar: November is [Native American Heritage Month](#).

Seedlings goes dormant in December, but we are excited to tell you more about the kickoff event to our 25th anniversary year: a presentation by Neil Diboll on January 24. Mark your calendars!

Until the New Year,

In This Issue

From The Editor

On the Brink of
Local Extinction

Announcing Our 25th
Anniversary Kickoff
Event

Natural Features
Protection Review
Board Openings

Protecting Asylum
Lake Preserve

The Power of
Organic Matter

Galls--Shelter and
Food Source for
Insects

Community Events

Contact Wild Ones



Beth Bradburn

Guest Editor

On the Brink of Local Extinction: Interventions for the Weakest Links to Plant Species Survival

Wednesday, November 29, 7:00pm-8:00pm

with Todd Barkman, Professor of Biological Sciences, Western Michigan University

Over the last hundred years, an estimated 40 plant species have gone extinct in Kalamazoo County and another 70-120 are considered endangered and likely to go extinct without dedicated and concentrated efforts. How can we intervene? Professor Barkman will explain how simple experiments and models can help preserve local genotypes, demonstrating on local Kalamazoo County populations of *Eryngium yuccifolium* (Rattlesnake master) and *Coreopsis palmata* (Prairie coreopsis). Read more [here](#).



Please note: This presentation was originally scheduled for November 22. **It has been changed to November 29.**

Rattlesnake Master in bloom T. Barkman

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.

Save the Date! Kalamazoo Area Wild One's 25th Anniversary Kickoff Event with Neil Diboll

Wednesday, January 24, 6:30pm-8:00pm



KAWO's 25th anniversary year will begin with a presentation by Wild Ones Lifetime Honorary Director Neil Diboll entitled "Prairie and Savanna Plants for Pollinator Gardens." Register for the Zoom presentation [here](#) and mark your calendars! KAWO members may also want to join a national Wild Ones webinar with Neil Diboll and Hilary Cox on November 16. Learn more about their new book, *The Gardener's Guide to Prairie Plants*, and register [here](#).

Openings on Natural Features Protection Review Board

from Nolan Bergstrom, Community Planner, City of Kalamazoo



The City of Kalamazoo has two openings on the Natural Features Protection Review Board, a public body that reviews and approves Site Plans to make sure they follow the special development rules in City's Natural Features Protection (NFP) Ordinance. Applicants that live, work, or are in some way connected to the community and motivated to advance the community's vision for sustainability are encouraged to apply. (City residency not required.) Board members contribute to the board by offering lived or professional experience in a variety of disciplines. This knowledge might include wetland and water resources, forest ecology, botany, geology, stormwater management, sustainable building and site design, property management, and environmental studies. Learn more

[here](#).

Protecting Asylum Lake Preserve



Asylum Lake B. Bradburn

Several KAWO members attended an informational meeting of the Asylum Lake Preservation Association (ALPA) on October 21, learning about the history and management of the preserve, current threats to its future, and ways for the community to get involved. ALPA leaders stressed the need to argue constructively to prevent the re-zoning of undeveloped land near the preserve (rather than focusing on individual developers). To that end, they encourage community members to attend the Kalamazoo City Planning Commission meeting on Thursday, December 7, at City Hall. Learn more about this and other issues related to Asylum Lake at [ALPA's website](#).

The Power of Organic Matter

Noel Ocen

Earlier this summer, what looked to be a tall weed appeared in my unused compost bin. The bin hasn't been turned or tended in about 8 years. On closer inspection, the weed turned out to be a volunteer Swamp Milkweed. As the weeks passed, this astonishing little volunteer grew into the most beautiful Swamp Milkweed I've ever seen. When the flowers faded, the number of seed pods was estimated at over 300, yielding 4 ounces of cleaned seeds.

Swamp Milkweed in Flower (Asclepius incarnata) N. Ocen



Those seeds are on their way to Mike & Carol Klug for planting and seed distribution. Mike's comment: "It proves the power of organic matter on plant growth since this productivity was most likely driven by the high organic matter in your spent compost." Sometimes Nature makes her lessons both simple and glorious.

Swamp Milkweed Seedpods (Asclepius incarnata) N. Ocen



Galls--Shelter and Food Source for Insects

Ilse Gebhard



My book *Tracks & Sign of Insects and Other Invertebrates: A Guide to North American Species* by Charley Eiseman and Noah Charney is a treasure trove of information on what often seems mysterious in nature. It was recommended to me by Ann Fraser, Kalamazoo College biology professor and KAWO member. While it is a field guide of sorts, I read it from cover to cover as soon as it arrived.

Maple Eyespot Gall Midge (Acericecis ocellaris) I. Gebhard



One of the chapters in the book is on “galls” and the following information comes from the introduction to that chapter. A gall is a plant deformation caused by another organism, which may be an insect, mite, fungus, bacterium, virus, or nematode. North America has more than 150 species of gall mites, several hundred gall wasps, and still more gall midges.

Goldenrod Gall Fly (Eurosta solidaginis) R. Schipper



Galls are also caused by aphids and other sap-sucking insects, as well as some beetles, moths, and flies other than midges. Insects and mites cause galls by entering plant tissue while it is still forming. They stimulate the tissue not just to modify its growth, but also to produce more nutrients. As a result, galls serve both as shelter and food source for the developing larvae or nymphs. Gall formation benefits the plant as well, because it contains the damage in a relatively small space and galls rarely cause significant damage to the host plant.

Wool Sower Gall Wasp (Callirhytis seminator) on White Oak sapling I. Gebhard



Gall-producing organisms are usually highly host-specific, inducing galls in one plant species or a few closely related species. Many insect galls are very distinctive structures, which are often much easier to identify and distinguish than the actual tiny insects that cause them. Many are formed not just in a specific plant, but in a specific part of the plant. Is the gall on the bud, fruit, leaf, stem or root? If it is on the leaf, what part of the leaf and where on the leaf? Is it on the upper side, underside or edge? Is it on a main vein of the leaf, side vein or the intervening tissue?

Goldenrod Bunch Gall Midge (Rhopalomyia solidaginis)
I. Gebhard



Included here are some of the galls I have been able to identify, caused by midges, wasps, flies, mites and aphids. Most are leaf galls but a couple are stem galls and one is a leaf bud gall. All the galls except the Maple Eyespot Gall and the Oak Apple Galls were found along the walking paths at Friendship Village and I'll be on the lookout for them here.

Witch-Hazel Cone Gall Aphid (Hormaphis hamamelidis)
I. Gebhard



The Oak Apple Galls on the left merit some discussion. The galls were collected from the ground by Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones member Mel Luna in the northeastern part of the Lower Peninsula. iNaturalist indicates that there are three species of wasps found in Michigan that cause very similar looking galls: Oak Apple Gall Wasp (*Amphibolips cookie*); Spotted Oak Apple Gall Wasp (*Atrusca quercuscentricola*); and Spongy Oak Apple Gall Wasp (*Amphibolips confluenta*).

Oak Apple Galls M. Luna



The question is, are the galls in the photo above caused by the same wasp species and just look different because they are at varying stages of maturity or are they caused by more than one species of wasp? A question that will be left unanswered. Nonetheless, a thing of beauty can be admired whether we know its name or not.

Furry Oak Leaf Gall Wasp (Callirhytis furva) I. Gebhard

Community Events of Interest

November 4 Saturday - 9:30am-12:00pm: Stewardship workday at Pierce Cedar Creek Institute: seed collection and processing. [Read more.](#)

November 4 Saturday - 10:0am-1:00pm: Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy (SWMLC) volunteer workday at Chipman Preserve. [Read more.](#)

November 4 Saturday - 1:00pm-3:00pm: "Learning the Land Fall Hiking Series" at Pierce Cedar Creek Institute. Landscape History Hike. [Read more.](#)

November 10 Friday - 6:00pm-8:00pm: Candlelight night hike at Kalamazoo Nature Center. [Read more.](#)

November 16 Thursday - 7:00pm: "Pints and Native Plants" is a monthly in-person meet-up at Brewery Outre. [Read more.](#)

November 29 Wednesday - 7:00pm-8:00pm: "On the Brink of Local Extinction: Interventions for the Weakest Links to Plant Species Survival," a monthly presentation hosted by Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones at the Portage District Library. [Read more.](#)

December 2 Saturday - 1:30pm-4:00pm: Stewardship workday at Pierce Cedar Creek Institute: invasive shrub control. [Read more.](#)

December 7 Thursday - 7:00pm-9:00pm: Kalamazoo Planning Commission meeting at City Hall. The City Planning Commission will consider the latest zoning change request for the property at Stadium and Drake. ALPA encourages all concerned to attend and/or write City Planning Commission members ahead of time. [Read more.](#)

December 14 Thursday - 7:00pm: "Pints and Native Plants" is a monthly in-person meet-up at Brewery Outre. [Read more.](#)

January 24 Wednesday - 6:30pm-8:30pm: "Prairie and Savannah Plants for Pollinator Gardens," an online presentation by Neil Diboll hosted by Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones.

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 Mel Luna. It appears mostly monthly.
The next regular issue will arrive in January. **Deadline for the January issue is December 20.**

[Send Submission](#)

Contributing Editors:

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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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