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Monarch on New England Aster (Symphyotrichum novae-angliae) Q. Edwards

September 2022

SEEDLINGS

Wild Ones|Kalamazoo Area Chapter

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



*American Lady caterpillar on Pussytoes
(*Antennaria neglecta*) M. Luna*

Dear *|FNAME|*,

Where has the summer gone?! One minute we're anxiously awaiting spring ephemerals, the next we're scurrying to do our fall planting. That's where we are, folks. Thank goodness for asters and goldenrods.

Are you as excited about the [fall plant exchange](#) as I am? It's a wonderful way to meet your fellow Wild Ones, get a friend or neighbor to dip their toes into gardening with natives, and bring home something new. While it is a labor of love to pot up plants to give away, if you don't have plants to bring, consider helping an established gardener who could use a hand [here](#). Matchmaking is joyfully underway.

The newsletter is short, but the theme is definitely bugs. Don't miss our [in-person program](#) with Sara Tannis, and keep an eye out for the dreaded [Spotted Lantern Fly](#). Thanks to Ilse, you'll know a Hickory Tussock Moth caterpillar if you meet one!

Please fill out our member survey if you haven't already - and a thank you to everyone who has provided feedback. Remember that KAWO is 100% volunteer-run, and each one of you plays a crucial role in making our chapter engaging and useful.

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To the beautiful days behind and ahead of us,
Mel Luna
Editor



Sneezeweed (Erythronium americanum) with Boneset (Eupatorium perfoliatum) in the background. M. Luna

What's Bugging You?

Identifying Insect "Pests" by the Signs They Leave Behind

September 28, 7pm-8pm

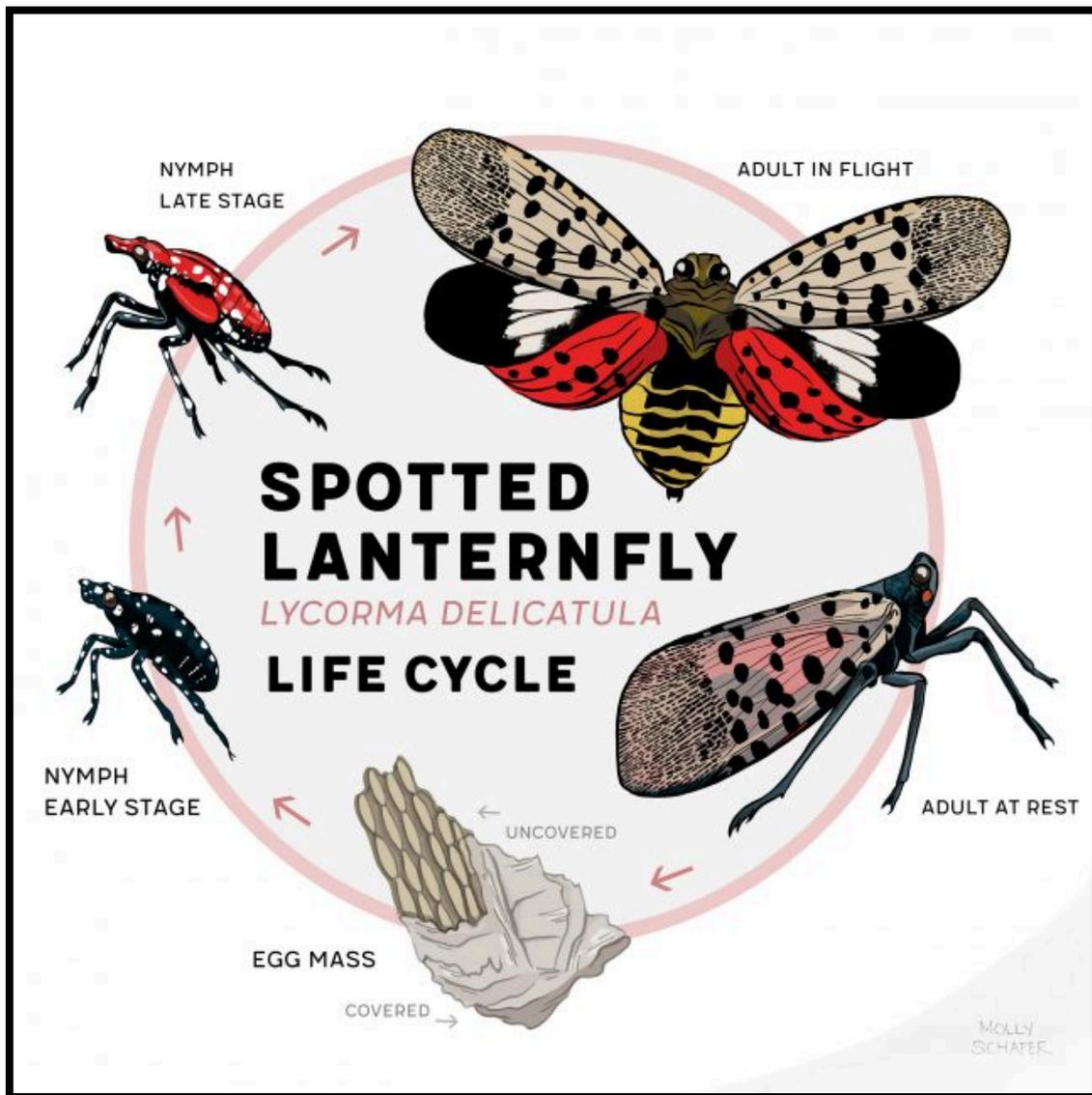
Sara Tannis, *Program Director of Horticulture & Sustainable Landscaping, KVCC*

Ever marvel at the etchings in deadwood beneath the bark? This month's Speaker is a forest entomologist who will be helping us become insect detectives capable of reading the tracks of species like the Emerald Ash Borer, among others. [Read more.](#)

Please join us in person at the First United Methodist Church on Wednesday, September 28 to become capable of feats of deduction sure to impress your friends.



Mysterious Tracks S. Tannis



Spotted lanternfly has finally landed in Michigan.

The winged pest from Asia was found in Oakland County.

Learn how to identify them [here](#).

Their lifecycle begins now, so it's a very good time to be on the look out for egg masses.

If you do see them at any state, you can report it [here](#).

Life is Tough for Hickory Tussock Moths

Ilse Gebhard

This story begins 20 summers ago on a field trip led by Paul Olexia to a floodplain-woods along the Kalamazoo River. Rubber boots and lots of mosquito repellent were in order.

From the far side of a formidable Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) thicket I heard a voice calling “Ilse, caterpillars.” Following the voices of my fellow field trip participants, I plunged right into the thicket.

Just brushing against the leaves and twigs of this shade tolerant, moisture loving, native shrub released some of the aromatic smell that it is known for.



Yes, there were caterpillars – lots of them. About 1/2 inch long, they were all lined up next to each other covering several leaves. In my excitement I forgot to count or even estimate their number. Since we had Spicebush on our property, I knew that I would have food available if I took a few of the black and white hairy caterpillars home. And I just happened to have a suitable container in my pack.

Hickory Tussock Moth Caterpillars D. & M. Priebe



Once home, I leafed through my copy of *Caterpillars of Eastern Forests* by David L. Wagner et. al. and I quickly found a picture of the caterpillars – Hickory Tussock Moth. Since its preferred food is hickories, I put the caterpillars in a jar with fresh hickory leaves. Life would be easier if they ate hickory versus Spicebush because we had hickories in the easily accessible front yard versus the rubber boots, mucky swamp woods visit for Spicebush out back.

5th Instar Hickory Tussock Moth Larva on Bottlebrush Grass R. Schipper

They did eat hickory and in retrospect my patience would have been severely tested had they not. Unlike many other caterpillars that I have raised, the larval stage of this species is rather lengthy. I brought the caterpillars home on July 13th and the last cocoon did not form until September 28th.



One of the reasons for the title, Life is Tough for Hickory Tussock Moths, is that seven of the ten caterpillars were parasitized by Tachinid flies and died at the larval stage and from the remaining three that did form cocoons, nothing emerged the following spring.

I was more successful raising Hickory Tussock Moth caterpillars to adult moths in subsequent years as I kept finding single individuals, usually in September. Similar to many moth species, this one lays its eggs in a group on the host plant. After hatching, the caterpillars are gregarious, staying together in groups, until the last instar (larval stage) when they become solitary.

Hickory Tussock Moth R.Curtis



Like other tiger moths, the caterpillars weave their hair into a loose cocoon in which they overwinter in leaf litter. If you must rake the leaves from your lawn, use them as mulch on your flower beds. This will allow many insects to survive until spring, and at the same time provides food for those insects in the ground that decompose leaves and enrich your soil.

Starting to Spin a Cocoon of Hair MJ Hatfield



A second reason for the title is shown in the photo that Russ took while kayaking a small lake in the Allegan State Game Area. Likely a very minor threat to Hickory Tussock Moth survival, nature is full of surprises. He was able to successfully use his paddle to flip this lucky individual to the shore.

Taking a Swim R. Schipper

* A note of warning – some people may be sensitive to the hairs of this species and can get rashes and associated itching.

Book Review: Looking for Hickories with Tom Springer

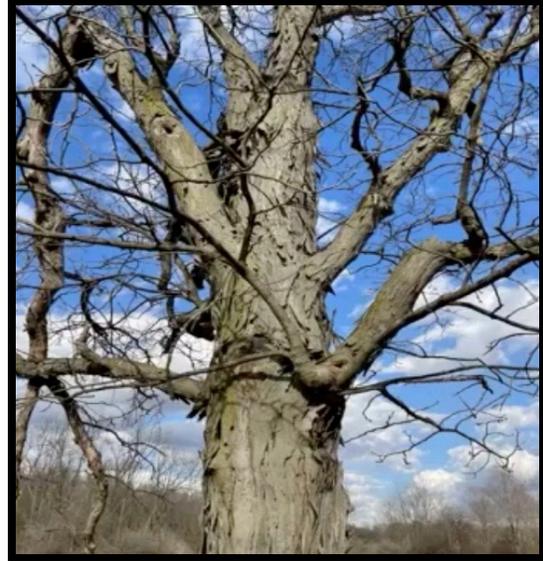
Mel Luna

To compliment Ilse's piece on the Hickory Tussock Moth this month, I had the good fortune to read and review Tom Springer's 2008 collection of nature essays entitled Looking for Hickories: The Forgotten Wildness of the Rural Midwest.

Like the title piece (which is only a few pages long) the majority of the book takes place in the author's hometown of Three Rivers, MI. For me, this fact was thrilling. To see our region and its inhabitants lovingly reflected on the page was reason enough to read it with care.

The title essay does indeed shed light on the local significance of Hickories as well as their role in human life to the present day.

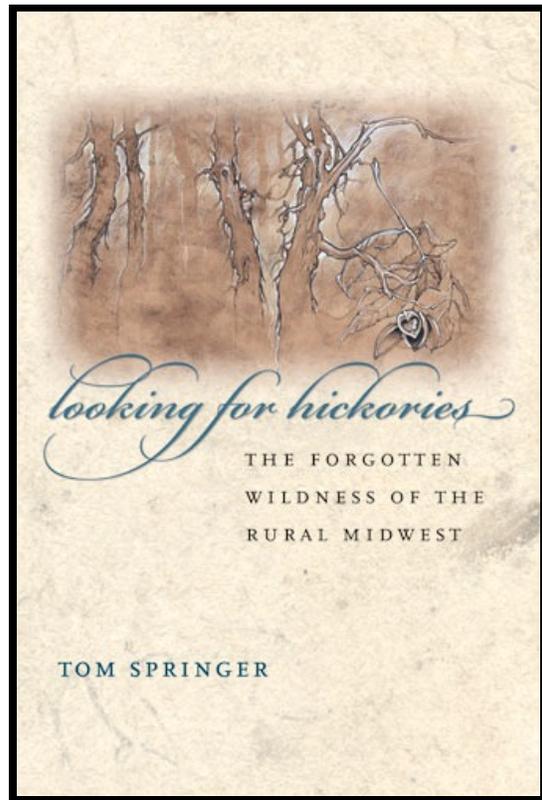
Springer's Shagbark Hickory (Carya ovata) T. Springer



“If we want to save the world, our own neighborhood seems like a good place to start.”

Springer's writing style is congenial and relaxed, belying a sophistication and depth of feeling that is evident in both clarity and warmth. He covers a range of topics from urban landscaping to barn arson, microforestry to conservation districts, as well as Sassafras, Serviceberry, and Osage Orange.

Many of you will recognize the accompanying illustrations as belonging to the very same Ladislav Hanka that grace the pages of Tom and Nancy Small's book, [Using Native Plants to Restore Community](#). I enjoyed the collection in its entirety. It is a beautiful book that I believe any Michigander can relate to and learn something from. I look forward to reading Springer's more recent book next, [The Star in the Sycamore: Discovering Nature's Hidden Virtues in the Woods Nearby](#), published in 2020.



Community Events of Interest

September 3 - 9:00am-11:00am - "Weed Pulling Party" at the Portage District Library's Monach Waystation. Check out the native plantings. Help them thrive by bringing a bucket and leaving with some weeds. Contact [Quyen](#) with questions.

September 10 - 9:00am-12:00pm - Native Plant Propagation Workshop hosted by KAWO and WMU. Currently full, but check online to see if a spot opens up. [More details](#)

September 10 - 9:00am-12:00pm - Volunteer work day at Spirit Springs Sanctuary hosted by SW Michigan Land Conservancy (SWMLC). Learn more and RSVP [here](#).

September 15 - 5:30pm - SWMLC Social Hike at Spirit Springs Sanctuary. [More details](#)

September 18 - 1:00pm-5:00pm - KAWO's Annual Fall Plant Exchange at Jessie and Bill's house. Everyone is welcome! [More details](#)

September 19 - 6:00pm-8:00pm: Hop on the bus with our friends to the north, River City Wild Ones (Grand Rapids), on a Green Infrastructure Bus Tour. [Details](#)

September 20 - 12:00pm - 1:00pm: The Xerces Society hosts "Habitat for Pollinators: Success, Next Steps, Ready for Winter" a panel presentation via Zoom. [More info](#)

September 28 - 7:00pm-8:00pm - "What's Bugging You: Identifying Insect "Pests" by the Signs They Leave Behind" a presentation with Sara Tanis at the First United Methodist Church, 212 S. Park Street, downtown next to Bronson Park. Hosted by Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones. [Read more.](#)

September 24 - 10:00am-12:00pm: "Sand Prairie Saunter" at Pierce Cedar Creek Institute. Learn the features of this imperiled habitat and look for Box Turtles with one of the Institute's researchers. [Register](#)

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 October. **Deadline for October issue is September 20.**

[Send Submission](#)

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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

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