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*Common Sneezeweed (Helenium autumnale) M. Luna*

September 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



*Swamp Rose Mallow (Hibiscus moscheutos) at Paris Cleaners Community Projects Site B, Bradburn*

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

In this issue of Seedlings you'll find more stories of native gardens in the Kalamazoo area as well as information about a seed collecting field trip, mentoring for new members, and our second plant exchange of the year. The fall exchange is usually a bit smaller and more relaxed than the one we hold in spring, so if you are looking to learn about native plants and meet other gardeners, please join us. (And if you are an experienced gardener with plants to donate, they will be most welcome.) We also have helpful information online. KAWO members have compiled a comprehensive [resource list](#) that is available on our website. And [our Facebook page](#) features a "native plant of the week" with cultivation tips and beautiful photos.

**Beth Bradburn**  
*Editor*

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## **Trees: Their Identification, Their Roles, and Our Relationship with Them**

**Wednesday, September 25, 6:30-8:00pm at Portage District Library  
with *Larry Cornelis*, Naturalist and Conservationist**

At our September 25 meeting, Wild Ones will welcome back naturalist Larry Cornelis to speak on “Trees, Their Identification, Their Roles, and Our Relationship with Them.” In his previous talk for Wild Ones, in 2019, Larry spoke on the plant communities and the cultural history of Eastern deciduous forests. This talk will draw on his new book, *Trees, Forests and Nature in Southwestern Ontario*.



Read more about the talk [here](#).

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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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## **Seed Collecting Field Trip**



Laura Moss, Groundskeeper at WMU, will lead us on a seed collecting field trip at the [Parkview Campus](#) on Saturday, September 14, from 11:00am to 1:00pm. (The campus was designed and landscaped to mimic the prairie that existed there pre-colonization.) There will be instruction as well as discussion, with some materials provided. To help us estimate attendance numbers, please RSVP either [on Facebook](#) or by emailing us at [info@kalamazoowildones.org](mailto:info@kalamazoowildones.org). Learn more about this event on [our website](#) or [Facebook page](#).

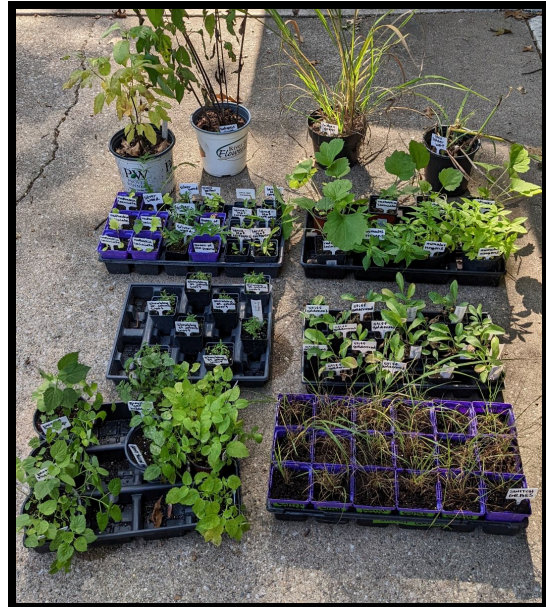
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## Fall Plant Exchange & Anniversary Celebration

KAWO's fall plant exchange will take place on Sunday, September 29, from 1:00pm to 4:00pm at Bill and Jessie's house in Portage. If you have extra native plants to share, consider donating them. Instructions for bringing plants as well as directions to the house may be found at the link below.

This year's fall exchange will include special refreshments in celebration of our twenty-fifth anniversary! Please join us.

Learn more [here](#).



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## Site Visits Available to New Members

We offer site visits to new KAWO members! An experienced native plant gardener will visit your land and help you assess its conditions and figure out what to plant, with continuing mentorship available for up to a year. To arrange a visit, please contact [Ann Klobucar](#).

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## KAWO Project at Gilmore Car Museum

Cindy Vergeron



The KAWO community garden project at the Gilmore Car Museum in Hickory Corners was planted in 2018 by KAWO members and has been maintained since then. After approaching the Gilmore about putting in native plants, Carol and Mike Klug designed the gardens and grew the plugs for planting. There are three gardens: a demonstration garden near the main building entrance and two basins that serve as catchment for water runoff for the entire compound. The basins have plants that prefer a wet environment in the lower areas.



A group of KAWO gardeners maintain the gardens by having work sessions from early spring through late fall. The basins are usually burned in the spring to remove the previous year's growth and that is the main extent of work on them. In the demonstration garden, weeds are controlled and the edges maintained, mulch is laid, and spent plants are deadheaded to prevent too much volunteer seeding.

To see more of Cindy's photos of this project, please visit [our Facebook page](#).

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## **Milkweed Pollination**

**Ilse Gebhard**

Not all insect species obtaining nectar from milkweed flowers are able to pollinate the flowers in return. Last summer I was fortunate to observe this phenomenon that I had only read about.

There are about 100 species of milkweeds native to the United States. They differ in height, leaf shape, flower color, and bloom time. Their needs for light and moisture differ and the amount of the milky sap, for which they are named, differs between species.

One thing they all have in common is the unique flower structure that distinguishes them from all other plant species. And it is this flower structure that requires certain insects for pollination.

*Leafcutter bee on Butterfly Weed J. Hagen*



The previous fall I had planted four Swamp Milkweeds (*Asclepias incarnata*) next to our sidewalk where I could easily inspect them for Monarch butterfly eggs or caterpillars. The spot was not ideal as in early spring it would not get a lot of sun, although as the season progresses, it would get more. The plants were late to emerge, which I attributed to insufficient sunlight to warm up the soil.

I also had one Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) and two Whorled Milkweeds (*Asclepias verticillata*) in a five-gallon pot sitting in full sun. They were small, first year plants that had been grown in a greenhouse during late winter/early spring and were fully leafed out when the Swamp Milkweed was just emerging from the ground.

The Butterfly Weed was the first to bloom. The Whorled Milkweed, growing under the exact conditions of light and moisture, did not start blooming until about six weeks later. Like the Whorled Milkweed, but under different light and moisture conditions, the Swamp Milkweed started to bloom much later than the Butterfly Weed.

I had noticed a number of insects of varying sizes on the Butterfly Weed flowers and at least one species successfully pollinated the flowers as several seed pods resulted.

Watching the later-blooming flowers of Whorled and Swamp Milkweed for insects, I noticed very few visits by larger insects but for several days they were visited by swarms of small “sweat” bees in the genus *Lasioglossum*. The identification was suggested by Ann Fraser, Professor of Biology at Kalamazoo College, from the less than perfect photos.

*Sweat bees on Whorled Milkweed I. Gebhard*



It surprised me to note that none of the Whorled Milkweed flowers produced seed pods and, despite profuse flowering, the four Swamp Milkweeds produced fewer seed pods than the one Butterfly Weed plant had produced. Apparently, the small sweat bees that had visited the Whorled and Swamp Milkweed flowers were unable to pollinate them.

*Sweat bees on Swamp Milkweed R. Schipper*



Of course, all this is worrisome. Many plants are pollinated by specific insects and, as the climate changes, will the synchronization of a plant's flowering and the emergence of the adult stage of the pollinator be disrupted? Plants are flowering earlier and birds are nesting earlier, but is the emergence of insects solely dependent on temperature or does the length of daylight also play a role? Climate change will affect temperature-driven processes but will not change the number of daylight hours.

**Read Ilse Gebhard's blog post on native plants and Monarchs at Peninsula Point [here](#).**

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## **Paw Paw Middle Schoolers Learn about Native Plants**

**Beth Bradburn**



KAWO member Kevin Oles is teaching his sixth-grade students at Paw Paw Middle School all about native plants. A few weeks ago I tagged along with Community Projects co-chairs Paul Olexia and Paul Laferriere to get a tour of the plantings Kevin and his students are installing. At the front of the school they've established a Paw Paw (*Asimina triloba*) patch with other native plants, including Swamp Milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*) that the students started from seed. Around back, between the playing fields and Ismons Pond, an even more ambitious native garden is in its early stages. Kevin described the many ways he can incorporate native plants into his middle school science curriculum, from pollinating paw paw flowers to locating monarch caterpillars on the milkweed to chasing geese away from newly planted plugs. We look forward to seeing this project continue to grow.

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## **Who Am I?**

**A native fauna ID quiz from Ilse Gebhard**



*Photo R. Schipper*

Click [here](#) for the answer!

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## **Community Events of Interest**

**Wednesday, September 4 - 10:00am-12:00pm:** KAWO Community Projects work day, KPS. [Learn more.](#)

**Wednesday, September 4 - 3:30pm-5:00pm:** What's In Your Backyard Discussion: Invasive Plants, Pierce Cedar Creek Institute. [Learn more and register.](#)

**Sunday, September 8 - 10:00am-12:00pm:** Volunteer Day, Kleinstuck Preserve. Meet at the Maple Street YMCA tennis courts.

**Thursday, September 12 - 9:00am-12:00pm OR 1:00pm-4:00 pm:** Conservation District Forestry Workshop Event, Kalamazoo Nature Center. [Learn more.](#)

**Thursday, September 12 - 7:00pm:** Pints and Native Plants, an informal meet-up at [Brewery Outré](#) in Kalamazoo. [Learn more.](#)

**Friday, September 13 - 2:00pm-4:00pm:** KAWO Community Projects work day, Glen Park. [Learn more.](#)

**Saturday, September 14 - 11:00am-1:00pm:** KAWO Field Trip: Seed Collecting with Laura Moss, WMU Parkview Campus. [Learn more.](#)

**Monday, September 16 - 5:00pm-6:30pm:** Kalamazoo River Urban Wildlife Corridor Plan Public Input Meeting, Kalamazoo Community Recreation Room, 251 Mills Street, Kalamazoo. Learn more about the project [here](#). Find out how to register for the meeting [here](#).

**Monday, September 16 - 6:30pm-8:30pm:** "Human Ecology," Wild Ones River City event, Grand Rapids. [Learn more.](#)

**Thursday, September 19 - 4:30pm-6:00pm:** Late Blooming Wildflower Walk, Kalamazoo Nature Center. [Learn more and register.](#)

**Thursday, September 19 - 5:00pm-6:30pm:** Kalamazoo River Urban Wildlife Corridor Plan Public Input Meeting, Kalamazoo Nature Center. Learn more about the project [here](#). Find out how to register for the meeting [here](#).

**Saturday, September 21 - 9:00am-5:00pm:** Green Hearts: Liberty Hyde Bailey Museum Fall Conference, Lake Michigan College, 125 Veterans Blvd, South Haven. The roster of speakers includes KAWO members Mike Weis, Susan Schneider, Sue Hodapp, and Pat Reid. [Learn more](#) or [buy tickets](#).

**Wednesday, September 25 - 6:30pm-8:00pm:** "Trees: Their Identification, Their Roles, and Our Relationships with Them," with Larry Cornelis, a monthly presentation by Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones at Portage District Library. [Learn more.](#)

**Wednesday, September 25 - 7:00pm-8:30pm:** Dessert with Discussion: "Extraordinary Leaves with Dr. Kadeem Gilbert," Kellogg Biological Station. [Learn more and register.](#)

**Saturday, September 28 - 10:00am-4:00pm:** Michigan Botanical Society Fall Foray, Wolf Lake

State Fish Hatchery. [Learn more.](#)

**Sunday, September 29 - 1:00pm-4:00pm:** Fall Plant Exchange and KAWO 25th Anniversary Celebration, Bill and Jessie'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 October. **Deadline for the October issue is September 20.**

[Contact the editor](#)

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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