

The News From Native Plant School

January 2012



Native Plant School is a partnership between Shaw Nature Reserve, Grow Native! and Wild Ones Natural Landscapers. Classes are held in the Whitmire Wildflower Garden at Shaw Nature Reserve.

Please register and pay [online](#)



Upcoming classes:

Please register and pay [online](#).

2012 Schedule

Fri, Feb. 10, 5-7 p.m.
Book Review 1 Bringing Nature Home/Tallamy (Chs. 1-7) (Gilberg/Woodbury)

Thur, Feb. 16, 1-4 p.m.
Native Plant Propagation from Seed (Brandt/Woodbury)

Thur, March 8, 1-4 p.m.
Deer-resistant Native Plants (Donovan)

Fri, March 9, 5-7 p.m.
Book Review 2 Bringing Nature Home/Tallamy (Chs. 8-13) (Gilberg/Woodbury)

Thur, April 12, 9-12 noon
Sedges for Native Landscaping (Woodbury)

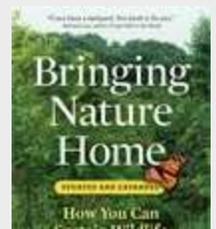
Nature Connection:



Goldfinch and squirrel drink water from the bird boulder in the Whitmire Wildflower Garden. This is a great spot to see cedar waxwings, bluebirds, sparrows, cardinals, woodpeckers, bees and an occasional squirrel.

Book Review:

Bringing Nature Home:
How you can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants
by Douglas W. Tallamy



Sedges for Native Landscaping
(Woodbury)

Thur or Fri, April 12/13, 1-4 p.m.
Small Flowering Trees, Shrubs and
Vines Part 1 (Woodbury)

Thur April 26, 9-12 noon
Container Gardening & Native
Annuals (Woodbury)

Thur or Sat, April 26/28, 1-4 p.m.
Top Performing Native Plants for
Home Gardening (Gilberg)

Sat, May 12, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
[Spring Wildflower Sale](#)

Thurs or Sat, May 17/19, 1-4 p.m.
Gardening for Wildlife and People
(Tylka)

Thur or Sat, June 14/16, 1-4 p.m.
Rain Gardening for Home Owners
(Gilberg)

Thur or Fri, July 12/13, 1-4 p.m.
Small Flowering Trees, Shrubs and
Vines Part 2 (Woodbury)

Fri, Aug. 17, 5-7 p.m.
Book Review 1 Noah's Garden/Stein
(Chapters 1-6) (Gilberg/Woodbury)

Friday, Sept. 7, 4-8 p.m.
[Fall Wildflower Sale and Open
Garden](#)

Thur, Sept 13, 1-4 p.m.
Reconstructing Tallgrass Prairies
(Woodbury)

Thur-Fri, Oct. 11/12, 1-4 p.m.
Small Flowering Trees, Shrubs and
Vines Part 3 (Woodbury)

Fri, Oct. 12, 5-7 p.m.
Book Review 2 Noah's Garden/Stein
(Chapters 7-13) (Gilberg/Woodbury)

**Please register and
pay [online](#).**

by Douglas W. Tallamy



I've heard that other colleagues and seasoned gardeners share my belief that landscaping with native plants is much more than the latest fad and much more than a money and time saver. We agree that the central theme revolves around plant and animal conservation, yes, even at home. I'd like to hear what readers of Doug Tallamy's new book *Bringing Nature Home* have to say about it. How important is it to protect and recreate wildlife habitat? How can native gardening impact the diversity of life in our own backyards, communities and planet Earth?

In Book Review One, Friday, February 1 from 5-7 p.m. participants will discuss chapters 1-7 and Questions 1-5 in chapter 14.

In Book Review Two, Friday March 9 from 5-7 we will discuss chapters 8-13 and Questions 6-10 in chapter 14.

Light food and beverages will be served. Come prepared to join in the discussion which will be led by Scott Woodbury and Cindy Gilberg in the Native Plant School Classroom behind the Bascom House. MBG and SNR members \$12, Non-members \$15.

January Native Plant Highlight

Ozark witch hazel (*Hamamelis vernalis*) offers unique winter interest with its wonderfully fragrant flowers, (photo to left), that bloom on warm days in January and February, attracting a host of winter insects. The small, yellow-orange flowers tend to be clustered on the stems, contrasting nicely with the dark brown-gray bark. Ozark witch hazel has a wide tolerance of light conditions, from sun to light shade and performs well in moist or dry soil. In nature it grows commonly on gravel bars along Ozark creeks and rivers and so can tolerate flooding and drought periods. Give this multi-trunk, small-flowering tree plenty of elbow room. It grows 10-15 feet tall by 15-20 feet wide with attractive wide-spreading horizontal branches at maturity. Add to the list its striking yellow fall color and there is no wonder how it earned a 5-star rating as a Plant of Merit.



Gardening Tips:

During winter drought periods, water newly planted trees and shrubs, especially evergreens. Tree bags work well when temps are above freezing. Double check moisture in raised planters.

Check that gardening tools and equipment are in good repair—sharpen and repair mowers, edgers, sprayers, garden hoses, hand tools, saws, etc.

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Inspect your irrigation system and replace worn or broken parts.

“Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature -- the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after

Tips for a Successful Native Garden

Cindy Gilberg

Replacing a percent of high-maintenance lawn with a more sustainable low-maintenance landscape is a growing trend for the future. “The increased requests I get for assistance is proof that people are using more and more native plants each year, not less” states Scott Woodbury, head of the Horticulture Department at Shaw Nature Reserve. He goes on to say that an increasing number of people “are turning to native plants to landscape their homes, churches, businesses, and public parks. Compared to traditional high-maintenance landscapes, people are switching to native landscapes because they are more cost-effective to maintain and are good for the environment.” Even so, there still exists some misconceptions in regards to using native plants in the landscape. Some novices feel as if by planting natives their garden will suddenly become ‘wild’. Native plants simply represent a viable, alternative list of reliably hardy plants that can be integrated into any landscape. A plant list does not dictate the design style, rather, it is the gardener who decides their style and needs, adjusting the plant list accordingly. Likewise, selling your lawn mower does not automatically produce a native garden or habitat. Scott calls this the “shock and awe” approach and it is likely to produce a weed patch and draw the attention of neighbors (rightly so!), resulting in weed ordinance problems. Having worked with cities, weed ordinances and homeowners, Scott adds “Weed ordinance issues are tricky. Most of them originate from a complaining neighbor and not a city inspector so rule number one is to be neighborly. Rule number two is to start small and expand on your successes. Rule number three is to learn the basics of garden design. Most homeowners who get in trouble break one of these three rules.”

First of all, consider that the word ‘garden’ includes in most of its definitions the word ‘cultivate’. This implies that human hands are at work, manipulating and controlling the garden environment to some degree. Therefore, the element of intent goes hand in hand with planning a well-designed garden. If you are having some ordinance issues or you are not happy with your garden, review the following design principles and strive to include at least a few. A little planning goes a long way in creating an attractive, low-maintenance native landscape.

Line functions as one of the most important concepts in the landscape. Think of pathways, bed edging, fencing or mown turf as examples of line. Line visually guides the eye and points to a focal point. Focal points can be as simple as your front door, a bench, a sculpture or a planted urn. Small water features are also welcome sights and

bench, a sculpture or a planted urn. Small water features are also welcome sights and need not be elaborate. A line leading to nowhere and a view without a focal point are disappointing.

Hardscaping is an indispensable part of the landscape that serves to reinforce line and unify the view. As a design becomes more naturalistic and loose, the use of strong lines becomes essential. Stone is an element that is both visually strong and versatile enough to be useful in all design styles, from informal to formal and from traditional to naturalistic landscapes. Weathered stones used in a way that emulates the natural outcroppings so familiar in the Midwest add a sense of place to the scene. When choosing stone for paths and steps, edging, walls or patios be sure to use stone of the same kind and a similar color. Unmatched and jumbled stone will give a confused and disorganized look rather than acting to unify the garden. Wood complements stone and can be included by adding a deck, some fencing, an arbor, a bench or even a gazebo.

When choosing which plants to combine in a design, always keep the idea of contrast in mind. Foliar contrast is what will prevent a planting from appearing weedy. Combine bold textured plants with fine textured ones alternately so that each is accentuated by its neighbor. A garden full of fine textured plants and devoid of weeds will appear weedy regardless simply from a lack of foliar contrast.

Some simple maintenance practices strengthen the look of intention. Always maintain clean edges around the plantings. This can be in the form of a mass ground cover planting such as prairie dropseed in sunny spots or wild ginger in shady spots - there are many choices for plants that can be used. A well-maintained mown grass edge or a stone pathway is just as effective in keeping a tidy boundary. Another positive practice is to use shredded leaves or bark mulch in the beds to help control weeds and to add that finished look.

One extra tip would be to do an angle cut tip-pruning in spring on taller plants, especially those along the edges of beds. This will add some depth to the bed while encouraging a more compact growth habit. Don't hesitate to do a spring tip-pruning on any of the taller, summer and fall blooming perennials such as asters, hibiscus or goldenrods to create the same effect. A certain level of general maintenance, as with any landscape, will always send a message of the gardener's intention to cultivate the space.

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