

The News From Native Plant School

February 2013



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 at <http://shawnature.org/NPS>



Upcoming classes:

Please register at shawnature.org/NPS

2013 Schedule

Thur, Feb 14, 1-4 p.m. **(full)**
Conducting Small Controlled
Prairie/Woodland Burns
(Woodbury)

Thur, Mar. 14, 1-4 p.m.
Native Plant Propagation from Seed
(Brandt/Woodbury)

Thur, April 11, 1-4 p.m.
Practical Gardening with Native
Plants (Woodbury)

Thur, May 2, 1-4 p.m.
The Art and Function of Combining
Native Plants (Woodbury)

Sat, May 11, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
[Shaw Wildflower Market](#)

Nature Connection: The Year of Food

*"Plants allow insects and
birds to eat sunlight"*
Doug Tallamy

Danny Brown captured this yellow-bellied sapsucker eating late-hanging persimmon fruits at Shaw Nature Reserve. Persimmon is eaten by a wide range of wildlife including various small birds, turkey, possum, coyote, fox and humans!

See more of Danny Brown's beautiful photos on his website:
dannybrownphotography.wordpress.com



© DANNY BROWN

Thur, June 13, 1-4 p.m.
Garden Archaeology and
Ethnobotany (Woodbury)

Fri, Sept. 6, 4-8 p.m.
Shaw Wildflower Market

Thur, Oct. 10, 1-4 p.m.
Low-maintenance Ground Cover
Gardening

Thur, Nov. 7, 1-4 p.m.
Pruning, Training and Transplanting
Trees, Shrubs and Vines

Please register at
shawnature.org/NPS

RainScape Rebates:

Landowners in participating municipalities are eligible to take part in a RainScape Rebates program set to launch on January 7, 2013. RainScape Rebates is a voluntary program that financially assists landowners in the Deer Creek Watershed wishing to landscape their yards to improve stormwater management. Seventy-five percent of the funds will be reserved for residential landowners; the remaining 25 percent will be available for schools, churches, businesses, and parks.

Applications and more information about the program will become available on January 7, 2013; an optional training workshop or webinar for residents and a required workshop for contractors will be available in February, and the application deadline for residents is March 1, 2013. The maximum rebate per site is 75 percent of documented expenses up to \$2,000.

Find out more at... [http://
deercreekalliance.org/
rainscaperebates.aspx](http://deercreekalliance.org/rainscaperebates.aspx)

“In all things of nature there is something of the marvelous.”
- Aristotle

Explore the Natural World at Home

By Cindy Gilberg



Nature will never cease to amaze if you take the time to slow down and observe it. Learning to be more observant is not so easy for busy families—it is much like being a child again and going on a treasure hunt. In fact, sharing this time with a child often teaches us adults how to find the ‘child’ within us. There is no need to wait for vacation time and go to far-off destinations. You can explore in your own yard. Add some native plants to your landscape to enhance the diversity of insects and birds that come to visit. Plan pathways and sitting places where you can go to watch nature unfold. Quiet and stillness is the key to being a good observer and that is exactly what we all need to balance our life in this hectic modern and often loud world.

A diverse landscape of native trees, shrubs, perennials and ornamental grasses is the key to a diverse habitat that will attract insects and birds. Plants that offer seed and berries at different times of the year are as important as plants that produce pollen and attract insects. If butterflies are of particular interest, plant not only plants for nectar but also the host plants for the butterfly larvae. This includes combinations such as milkweeds and monarch butterflies, pawpaw trees for the zebra swallowtail or violets and the fritillary butterfly. Add a water feature—even one as simple as a bubbler stone will be enough to attract all sorts of birds in all seasons. Keep some good field guides handy for identifying birds and insects.

So sit back and enjoy all the surprises and wonders as nature reveals itself. A quote I came across sums it up well – “the greatest gift of the garden is the restoration of the five senses” and of the soul as well.

Natural History Reading Group

A Natural History Reading Group will be meeting at the Shaw Nature Reserve Bascom House every other week on Mondays at 1:00 pm beginning Monday, March 4th. Discussion will be lead by Larry Melton.

All reading selections will be on-line texts or available at your library. Our first book will be *The Art of Seeing Things* by John Burroughs. [Available online](#)

For more information or to sign up please email lcmelton67@gmail.com or call 636-583-2013 before February 28, 2013. Please include your Full name, Phone number, Contact email address, and put "SNR RD GRP" on subject line.

Gardening Tips:

Prepare mowers, string trimmers, etc. for use. Clean air filters, new fuel, oil & filter change, perhaps tune-up, etc.

Finish pruning trees, shrubs, and vines before leaf-out in late March.

Most bare-rooted trees and shrubs should be planted in February or early March.

Burn grass clumps where appropriate (stay away from buildings).

The Great Backyard Bird Count

The 2013 GBBC will take place Friday, February 15, through Monday, February 18. Please join us for the 16th annual count!

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual 4-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are.

Photos from Native Plant School:

Warm winter days are a great time to get outside and check for invasive plants. Bush honeysuckle seedlings can be pulled by hand or dug out. Wintercreeper euonymus plants are easy to spot creeping into your perennial beds. Remove these plants while they are easy to see and before they have a chance to overshadow you spring beauties.

If you missed the January Native Plant School class you can find lots of information on our website at www.shawnature.org/NLM in Chapter 3: Control and ID of Invasive Species.



February Native Plant Highlight:

A Pawpaw Patch of Your Own



The native pawpaw tree (*Asimina triloba*) is the only cold-climate representative of a family of otherwise tropical plants. Flowers appear in March and at times in late February with an odor of rotting grapes that attracts its pollinators—beetles and flies. Pawpaw fruit, resembling small greenish-yellow bananas, hangs in clusters of 2-3 from its branches in September and has a flavor reminiscent of banana-mango custard.

where the birds are.

Everyone is welcome--from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event. It's free, fun, and easy--and it helps the birds.

Participants tally the number of individual birds of each species they see during their count period. They enter these numbers on the GBBC website.

Log in to <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/whycount.html> to participate!

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Pawpaw is the only host plant for one of our most beautiful butterflies--the zebra swallowtail. Because of this close and very specific relationship, the native range of the butterfly is the same as that of the pawpaw tree. Zebra swallowtails are seen on warm days in March searching for young pawpaw leaves on which to lay their eggs. The leaves and twigs contain a bitter-tasting chemical that, when eaten by the caterpillars, makes them bitter as well and therefore free from predation by birds. The bitter leaves also make the pawpaw a good choice for deer resistant landscaping.

Pawpaw grows in patches and are about 20-30 ft. tall with large, tropical-looking leaves. Its natural habitat is shady, low wooded creeks and valleys, though it is adaptable to full to part sunlight. Pawpaw is an ideal option for rain gardens since it tolerates flooding. When purchasing pawpaws for your landscape, be sure to choose 2-3 different seedling plants because pawpaw is self-sterile (does not accept pollen from the same tree). This will ensure cross-pollination and fruit production. Once the fruit ripens, eat it fresh off the tree or try it in custards, cakes and quick breads.