

The News From Native Plant School

December 2015



Native Plant School is a partnership between Shaw Nature Reserve, The Missouri Department of Conservation, and Wild Ones Natural Landscapers. Classes are held in the Whitmire Wildflower Garden at Shaw Nature Reserve.

Please register at shawnature.org/NPS



Upcoming classes

Thursday, January 14, 2016, 1-4 p.m.
Woodland Restoration for Larger Landowners

Are you battling a heavy infestation of bush honeysuckle on 1-100 acres of woodland. In this class we will explore the challenges of bush honeysuckle in large-scale areas. Instruction will focus on the best removal practices, forest thinning, reseeding/replanting with appropriate native plants and long-term maintenance. Annual scouting, spot spraying and prescribed burning are the key maintenance components in the fight to tilt the battle in your favor. Indoor/outdoor.

Thursday, February 11, 2016, 1-4 p.m.
Converting Lawn to Seeded Prairie or Savanna

Do you have too much lawn? Are you sick of cutting all the grass? Doug Tallamy states that there are over 40 million acres of lawn, more than all of the U.S. National Parks combined. Our children need a place to play ball, our pets need elbow room to romp but what about that extra lawn that nobody uses. It's a good time to get serious about converting that turf to prairie or savanna. Come learn how to create a natural-style landscape with high diversity and low maintenance. Mostly indoor.

Please register at shawnature.org/NPS

Burning Bush Invasion



November and December are good times to scout your property for burning bush, Bradford pear, and bush honeysuckle. Burning bush (*Euonymus alatus*) is easy to identify with its red leaves and winged stems. Don't confuse it with native *Euonymus* like the Eastern wahoo and strawberry bush. Burning bush is widely used as a hedge plant but has escaped cultivation and is invading our forests. Keep an eye out and pull them when they are small to save your back later.



Gardening Tips

- Review the year's schedule and make plans for next year's improvements.
- Prune any tree branches in parking lots and sidewalks that interfere with public safety.
- Provide cover for wildlife. Leave plant stalks and seed heads standing. Create brush piles. Leave deadwood for insects to overwinter.
- Build an insect hotel.
<http://www.bbcwildlife.org.uk/sites/birmingham.live.wt.precedenthost.co.uk/files/Insect%20Hotel.pdf>

"Trees are much like human beings and enjoy each other's company. Only a few love to be alone."

– Jens Jensen

How to Provide Water for Birds When the Birdbath Freezes

Wild birds need access to clean water all year round, but when winter temperatures dip into the freezing range, this may be harder to find. Birds can quench their thirst by eating snow, but this requires large amounts of energy which they need to keep themselves warm. So what's a caring Ecosystem Gardener to do?
<http://www.ecosystemgardening.com/how-to-provide-water-for-birds-when-the-birdbath-freezes.html>

Monarch News

Saving the migration video

<http://features.newsly.com/saving-the-migration/watch/>

De-icing Can Harm Plants

Get out the snow shovel—a new study finds toxic levels of chloride in U.S. rivers and streams that's harmful to animals, plants, and people.

Too much sodium and chloride in the soil is bad for plants and agriculture. In many wetlands areas, chloride contamination is leading to an increase in salt-tolerant invasive species, which are crowding out native plants less happy in a salty environment. The chloride contamination can decrease soil fertility, making agriculture less productive. And finally, salt makes water more corrosive, increasing erosion.

There are many product alternatives to salt but some have their own problems. Using salt sparingly and pre wetting the salt can also help. However, shoveling by hand or plow is the best method. Consider ways that you can reduce your salt use this winter to protect plants in your area.

Read the full article at;

<http://www.takepart.com/article/2014/12/17/pass-salt-de-icing-your-sidewalk-poisoning-supply?cmpid=tpdaily-eml-2014-12-17>

Pictured at right, plants have been damaged from de-icing adjacent to the planting bed.

We wish you a happy salt-less holidays!



Weevils Love Wild Indigo Seeds

There are few things more irritating than opening fat wild indigo seed pods only to find them filled with weevils and no seeds. The mother Straight-snouted weevil (*Trichapion rostrum*) will locate a wild white indigo plant (*Baptisia alba*) in June, just as the seed pods are developing. She chews a small hole in the pod and inserts her eggs into the safety of the pod. Baby weevils hatch and consume 5 or more seeds. There are about 35 seeds in a pod so 7 little weevils could easily eat all the seeds in the pod. Some baptisia plants will take notice of the weevil infestation and abort the infected pods which kills the developing weevils inside. Many pods only have a few weevils and the remaining seeds are allowed to develop. The young weevils then wait for the seed pod to open and release them to the world.

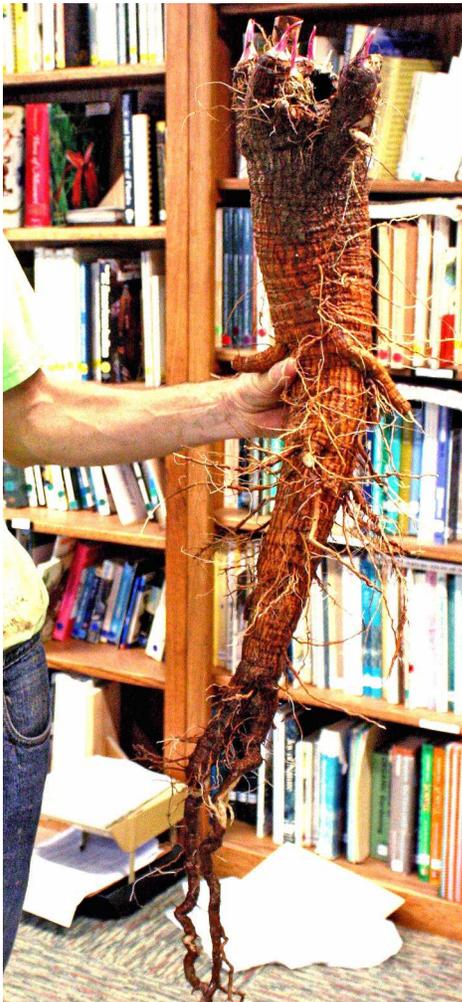
When we are collecting wild indigo pods for next years garden we need to remove the weevils before storing the seeds. One way to remove them is to thoroughly crush the seeds by stomping them and place them in the sun. Watch the weevils race away to find cover, leaving the seeds weevil-free.

Where Do Butterflies Spend the Winter?

by Judy Burris

Have you ever gazed out of the kitchen window at your beautiful wildlife garden on a cold winter's day? It looks so barren and lonely. Have you ever wondered where the butterflies go during this time of year? As humans, we get to bundle up in our fuzzy flannels and spend the winter months indoors all snug in our homes, drinking hot chocolate. But what about the butterflies – our delicate winged wonders? www.beautifulwildlifegarden.com/where-do-butterflies-spend-the-winter.html

Guess The Plant

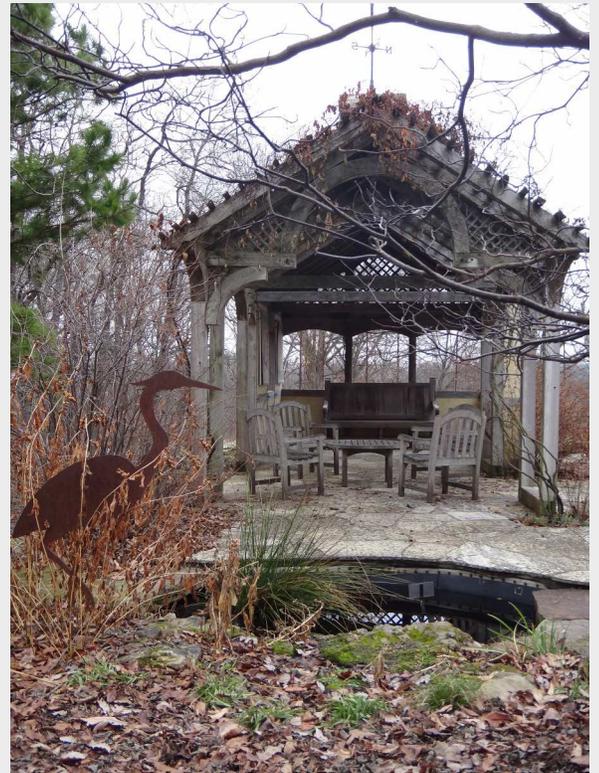


Come for a Visit this Month

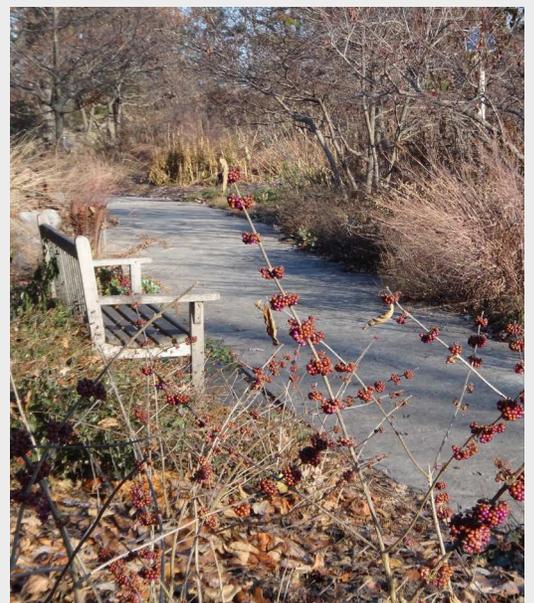
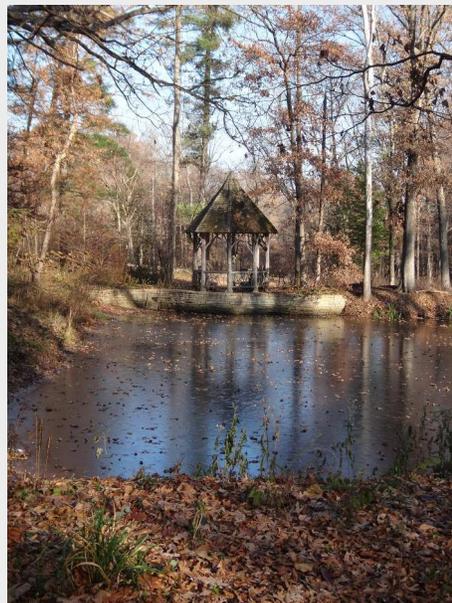
The garden takes on a whole new look in winter. Larger vistas open up when the leaves come down branching structure shows through. The gazebos and pergolas scattered throughout the garden deserve a close up look at their craftsmanship and use of local materials.

It is a good practice to leave dead plant stalks standing through the winter for insects and birds that use them for cover. A fun exercise to do while walking through the garden is to come up with a unique name for each shade of brown and grey you see.

December is a time to spend with the ones you love so bring them to the garden and share your love with them.



Photos by Darla Preiss, Shaw Nature Reserve volunteer.



Citizen Science

BeeSpotter is a partnership between citizen-scientists and the professional science community designed to educate the public about pollinators by engaging them in a data collection effort of importance to the nation. It is a web-based portal at the University of Illinois for learning about honey bees and bumble bees and for contributing data to a nationwide effort to collect baseline information on population status of these insects. <http://beespotter.org/>

Bumble Bee Watch is a collaborative effort to track and conserve North America's bumble bees. This citizen science project allows for individuals to upload photos of bumble bees to this website. We need your help! Because these animals are widely distributed, the best way to keep track of them is with an army of volunteers across the country armed with cameras. With any luck, you might help us to find remnant populations of rare species before they go extinct. Be sure to snap a photo and then sign in and submit your data via our Bumble Bee Sightings form. Have fun while learning more about bumble bees and the vital role they play in our environment! <http://www.bumblebeewatch.org/>

"What one can't see on a woodland walk is that a great deal of that wood is underground. Plunging below the forest floor, sometimes as deep as the trees are tall, a dense network of roots excavates the soil to a spongy consistency that holds up to 90 percent of rainfall, letting the accumulated water trickle only gradually toward low-lying wetlands. By comparison, as much as 90 percent of the rain falling on a lawn is immediately lost as runoff, and with it the soil's mineral fertility."
~ Sara Stein

An archive of this newsletter is available at: <http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/visit/family-of-attractions/shaw-nature-reserve/gardens-gardening-at-shaw-nature-reserve/native-landscaping-for-the-home-gardener/native-plant-school/the-news-from-native-plant-school.aspx>

Deer Resistant Landscaping with Native Plants, Oh Dear!

By Cindy Gilberg, reprint from 2009

For those of us who live in deer country, gardening can be an exercise in futility. Deer are adaptable. As we move into their territory we often replace their original habitat with a well-watered and fertilized smorgasbord of plants. Gardeners soon discover that browsing deer can do a large amount of damage in a short amount of time. As a result, deer control and the discovery of browse-resistant plants is on the mind of those of us who face this challenge.

First things first. Absolutely don't feed the deer (corn, sorghum, etc.) as this is an invitation for them to stick around and see what else is on your 'buffet table'. Next, repellents are useful, but require several applications. Fences over nine-foot tall work well, especially for protecting vegetable gardens, but can be expensive for larger areas. Deer are primarily nocturnal though much of our suburban deer populations are active during the day as well. Most are unafraid of human activity or even dogs.

As for deer-resistant plants the search may be frustrating. I'm told that hungry deer will eat most anything and that their favorite native plants include asters, phlox and lilies. The good news is that there seem to be many native plants that deer tend to avoid.

Deer rely on their sense of smell to determine whether an area is safe and which plants are desirable to eat. So it makes sense that plants with aromatic foliage, such as wild bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*), deter deer. Other plants are distasteful or poisonous, such as the ground cover squaw weed (*Senecio obovatus*). Some plants repel deer because of their texture – coarse, rough, hairy, or spiny. This group includes native plants like rattlesnake master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*) and prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia humifusa*). A deer resistant garden has a high percentage of these types of plants mixed in so that deer are confused and move on. By using a combination of deer resistant plantings and repellents you can achieve a more peaceful coexistence with deer.

All native plants contribute in some way to a well-rounded, healthy habitat for animals. Listed here are but a few of the many that have good landscape qualities.

Perennials for sun:

Aster (*Aster* aka *Symphyotrichum*)
Blazingstar (*Liatris* spp.)
Coneflower (*Echinacea* spp. and *Rudbeckia* spp.)
Little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*)
Prairie dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*)

Perennials for shade:

Beebalm (*Monarda bradburniana*)
Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*)
Solomon's seal (*Polygonatum commutatum*)
Wild geranium (*Geranium maculatum*)
Wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*)
Dogwoods (*Cornus* spp.)
Winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*)
Red buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*)
Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*)
Fragrant sumac (*Rhus aromatica*)
Blackhaw (*Viburnum prunifolium*)

Photo by Danny Brown

