

The News From Native Plant School

January 2016



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

Invasive Species: Plumegrass

Plumegrass (*Erianthus ravennae*), native to Europe, is spreading throughout the St. Louis region. It can be seen along Hwy. 100 in Wildwood, at I-270 and I-44, and scattered in St. Louis, Franklin, Washington and Jefferson Counties. It has been slowly spreading in the past decade but its numbers seem to be increasing noticeably. Be cautious when gardening with this 10-foot tall invasive ornamental grass and eradicate it when it is found spreading. In the photos it is spreading along a wild stretch of wetland/creek near the intersection of Hwys. 21 & 47 in Washington County.



Native By Design

Feb. 26: Native by Design: Landscapes Beyond Beauty

Save the date! The Grow Native! Illinois Event Committee is organizing a rockstar lineup of speakers for an event in Edwardsville, IL on February 26. They'll present information from the frontline of concepts surrounding the value of native plants in our landscapes.

<http://grownative.org/events/feb-26-native-by-design-landscapes-beyond-beauty/>

Who should attend?: Wildlife Habitat Professionals, Landscape Contractors, Land Care Professionals, Growers, Garden Centers, Forest Managers, Arborists, Landscape Architects and Designers, Engineers, Sustainability Managers, Green Building Professionals, Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, and general landscape enthusiasts.

Doug Tallamy is professor and chair of the department of entomology and wildlife ecology at the University of Delaware in Newark, Delaware, where he has taught insect taxonomy, behavioral ecology, and other subjects. Chief among his research goals is to better understand the many ways insects interact with plants and how such interactions determine the diversity of animal communities. Doug won the Silver Medal from the Garden Writer's Association for his book, *Bringing Nature Home*.

Tentative Agenda

8:00 a.m. Registration

8:30 a.m. Keynote: Hear from nationally renowned speaker, Doug Tallamy, why our landscapes need native plants

9:30 a.m. Panel Discussion: How-To of Native Plants

Learn key concepts and methods for integrating natives on your land

10:45 a.m. PechaKucha

Learn how professionals plant natives, promote pollinators, and practice sound stewardship

12:00 p.m. Workshop Concludes

Location

Lewis and Clark Community College, LeClaire Room at the Nelson Center, 600 Troy Rd, Edwardsville, IL 62025

Seeding the West Savanna



To help keep honeysuckle and other invasive plants out of the west savanna, we are sowing lots of grasses to carry a hot fire and kill those pesky persistent plants. Honeysuckle removal has been tried several other times in this woodland but this time we want it gone for good. Over the past few years we have thinned the forest canopy to be an open savanna.

At left, are photos of the same white ash tree before (above) and after (below) restoration.



Early winter is the best time to sow seeds so your seed mix can have a few months of snow and freeze/thaw to work the seeds into the soil. We mix our seeds with sawdust and wood shavings to keep them from clumping while they are sown. Our seed mix contains a wide variety of grasses and forbs that will do well in a north west facing savanna.

At the site, volunteers and staff fill their buckets with seed mix and spread out in a long line across the area to be seeded. As a group we walk back and forth across the savanna sprinkling seeds until our buckets are empty. Now we just sit back for the winter and hope for good germination next spring. Usually it takes about three years for a seeded area to establish. Weeds must be vigilantly removed for it to be successful.



Wonderful Wasps in the Wildlife Garden by Heather Holm

It's true; wasps are wonderful. They are pollinators, predators and beneficial insects performing very important biological control – keeping insect populations in balance. Their life cycles, feeding and hunting techniques are absolutely fascinating. Most are solitary nesting and contrary to popular belief, the majority of wasps in our landscapes don't sting humans!
<http://nativeplantwildlifegarden.com/wonderful-wasps-in-the-wildlife-garden/>

Answer to Guess The Plant



This is the taproot of *Silphium laciniatum*, compass plant, that was growing in our prairie. Did you have any idea how much plant was below the surface?

Come for a Visit this Month



Turtle head (above) has a smooth capsule that opens to release the seeds. Harry mountain mint seed heads (right middle) have a wonderful minty smell when you crush them. Ditch stoncrop (below) has seed capsules that look like a little box. Shake the seed head into the palm of your hand to see the dust-like seeds. Milkweed seeds (lower right) are stored like a tightly shingled roof until the wind blows each seed away on its own little parachute of fluff.

Photos by Darla Preiss, Shaw Nature Reserve volunteer.

After the flowers have past, seed heads are still worthy of the gardeners attention and admiration. Wildflowers have a wide variety of seed heads that can contain thousands of seeds. Look carefully at seed heads to see their textures and geometric patterns. Hibiscus seeds (below) are hidden in a fuzzy ball that pops open and lets the seeds fall when the plant is jostled.



Why Birds Need Native Trees

The Carolina chickadee is giving scientists a model to study the impact of nonnative trees on food available for breeding birds.

Article by Laura Tangley
<http://www.nwf.org/News-and-Magazines/National-Wildlife/Birds/Archives/2015/Chickadees-And-Native-Trees.aspx>

"Yards and gardens patched with grass and stitched with hedges all across America constitute a vast, nearly continuous, and terribly impoverished ecosystem for which we ourselves, with our mowers, shears, and misguided choice of plants, are responsible. We cannot in fairness rail against those who destroy the rain forest or threaten the spotted owl when we have made our own yards uninhabitable. Yet how quickly we could grow this land, spangle it with blazing stars, stripe it with red winterberries and white summersweet, let it wave again with grass!"

~ Sara Stein, Noah's Garden

Landowner Workshop

Backyard Maple Sugaring
Jan 28 & 30, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. at
Rockwoods Reservation

Do you have maple trees? Do you love maple syrup? This workshop will teach you how to develop your own backyard maple syrup operation. We cover everything from tree identification to cooking.

<http://stlwildones.org/four-reasons-to-try-maple-sugaring/>

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>

Organization Highlight, Forest ReLeaf of Missouri

This past year you may have noticed a new tree vendor at our Shaw Wildflower Market. Forest ReLeaf has been growing trees for many years but only this year has branched out into selling at markets as a way to raise money for their projects. The Forest ReLeaf facility is located in Creve Cour park and is run by four staff members and a small army of volunteers.



"Forest ReLeaf of Missouri operates the only nonprofit community-assisted tree nursery in the region. Since our inception in 1993, more than 150,000 trees have been planted throughout Missouri and Illinois – projects that have increased tree canopy in low-income areas, assisted with reforestation after major weather disasters and those undertaken to promote peace and healing in our communities.

We measure our impact in different ways: the number of free trees grown and given away each year, how healthy planted trees are a few years later and the stories we hear from tree recipients.

Our mission statement boils it down: Forest ReLeaf is a catalyst for restoring and sustaining our urban forests. With the help of thousands of volunteers, we are planting trees and enriching communities."

Forest ReLeaf is a great resource for the native plant community because they provide free native trees for community gardens, schools, and parks. If you are planning a project and would like to apply for free trees, fill out an application for their Project CommuniTree. They will start accepting applications for spring planting soon so get on their mailing list now.

If you would like to support this great non profit organization you could become a volunteer. Volunteers help pot up and care for thousands of trees each year. Forest ReLeaf also accepts donations, has great events, and (did I mention) sells trees at the Shaw Wildflower Market.

<http://moreleaf.org/>

