

# The News From Native Plant School

March 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](http://shawnature.org/NPS)



## Upcoming classes

March 10, 2016

### Pruning Native Trees, Shrubs and Vines

Thinking about pruning this winter? Come learn the art of pruning. Learn how to remove large branches safely, prune dead and damaged wood and crossed branches. Also learn how to thin densely-branched trees and rejuvenate shrubs. Learn when to prune, how much to prune and explore strategies to keep plants short and dense or tall and graceful.

### Partners for Native Landscaping Workshop, March 26

The workshop is full! I hope you were one of the lucky ones and registered early. See you there.

April 14, 2016

### Gardening With Native Groundcovers

Many non-native evergreen groundcovers have become invasive species in the St. Louis region including English ivy, winter creeper and periwinkle. Many alternative native groundcovers exist and are useful for reducing maintenance. Come explore the Whitmire Wildflower Garden in search of the ideal groundcover for your garden.

Please register at [shawnature.org/NPS](http://shawnature.org/NPS)

## Augusta Bottoms Consort

Augusta Bottoms Consort will be playing at the members only Shaw Wildflower Market on Friday, May 6, free to members.

The sale is open to the public on Saturday but without live music.

[shawnature.org/swm](http://shawnature.org/swm)



Augusta Bottoms Consort is a versatile music ensemble which explores a variety of musical landscapes. They perform acoustic music in several genre including original songs, folk, bluesy jazz, ethnic music and other styles. The four-piece group live near the fertile bottomland fields of the Missouri River in Augusta, Missouri. The sounds of Augusta Bottoms Consort are earthy, thought-provoking, energizing and unique. Lyrics and the band's rich melodic blend reflect their long relationships as friends who have relished the fun of playing together for almost 25 years. The members of Augusta Bottoms Consort, Gloria Attoun, Michael Bauermeister, Paul Ovaitt and Rebecca Mayer bring to the stage guitars, mandolins, dobro, accordion, banjo, acoustic bass, recorder, panpipes, harmonica, percussion and lots of other gadgets. Their songs conjure up musical landscapes that defy boundaries. See them in the Grolier's Book of Knowledge under Folk Music. For more information on the band and their four CDs, go to [www.augustabottomsconsort.com](http://www.augustabottomsconsort.com)

## Landscaping Classes

Dave Tylka is again offering his Native Landscaping for Wildlife and People class through a series of short continuing education classes at Meramec Community College, starting in April.

They've created a new section for just such classes, focused on native plants, called Go Native.

<http://www.stlcc.edu/Continuing-Education/Classes/index.asp?Cat=XGAR>

Cat=XGAR

<http://www.stlcc.edu/Continuing-Education/Classes/index.asp?Cat=XNAT>

Cat=XNAT

You also might consider his 8-week, 3-credit class beginning at the end of March:

[https://selfservice.stlcc.edu:9199/SLCC/](https://selfservice.stlcc.edu:9199/SLCC/bwckschd.p_disp_detail_sched?term_in=201610&crn_in=14210)

[bwckschd.p\\_disp\\_detail\\_sched?term\\_in=201610&crn\\_in=14210](https://selfservice.stlcc.edu:9199/SLCC/bwckschd.p_disp_detail_sched?term_in=201610&crn_in=14210)

Dave is also teaching a couple classes at the Missouri Botanical Garden.

[http://](http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/learn-discover/adults/classes-tours-workshops.aspx)

[www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/learn-discover/adults/classes-tours-workshops.aspx](http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/learn-discover/adults/classes-tours-workshops.aspx)

Grow a Woodland Native Wildflower Garden in the City

Tuesday, March 15, 6-8 PM

Monarchs and Milkweed

Tuesday, April 19, 6-8 PM

## Gardening Tips

- Cut down and remove dead leaves, stems and seed heads from perennials and grasses.
- Mulch where needed to reduce weeding and maintain moisture.
- Plant trees, shrubs, vines, perennials and grasses through May.
- Recycle all plastic pots.
- Divide and move perennials and grasses March thru May. Divide ferns while fronds are less than 3 inches to minimize damage.
- If you have not done so by now, replace worn, punctured and broken parts on irrigation system before turning on in April.

## A Winter Visitor

By Ana Grace Schactman



Photo by Ana Grace Schactman. A majestic bald eagle looks out over East Glendale road in Webster Groves.

The Eagle had come for the carcasses. That's how Nature works. The next time we see the Eagle flying over I will thank it for it's visit and wish it well.

Early morning, January 4, 2016, I heard crows cawing in our front yard in Webster Groves, and I went out to see what they were fussing about.

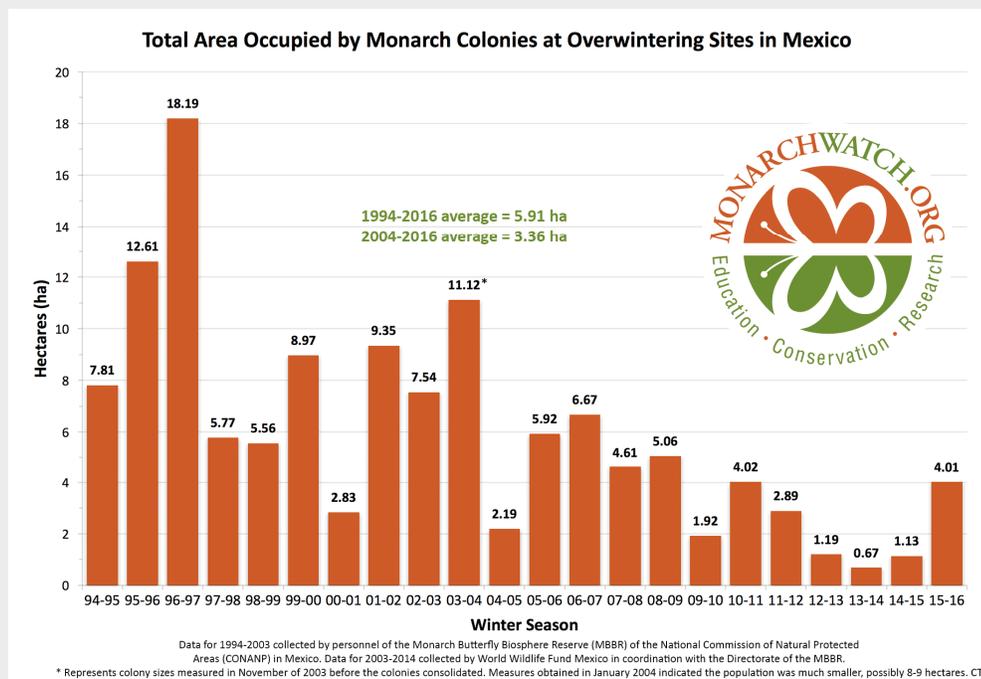
A mature Bald Eagle was perched in one of the tall Oak trees in our front yard, determined to outstay the troupe of crows.

The Eagle was eyeing something on the ground, and when I said a few calming words, the crows suddenly flew away.

Our wild yard is filled with Missouri native trees and plants, and attracts a wide variety of birds, small animals and pollinators.

Last summer, I noticed a family of red squirrels living here. Over the weekend, two of the squirrels had been hit by speeding cars in front of the house, and I brought their bodies back to the yard to bury them.

## Monarch Numbers Improve this Winter



Read all about it at <http://monarchwatch.org/blog/>

# Meaningful Gardening: Tricks of the Trade to Bring Life to Your Garden

As you think about creating a new garden, consider ways in which you can garden more meaningfully. Many landscapes are full of plants that have little or no value to wildlife. These gardens are full of flowers and shrubs that are attractive to the human eye, but provide little more than just a pretty picture. The gardens are lifeless. For those of us who garden with natives, we know the garden can be much more. It can be a habitat, a life sustaining force in our backyards.

<http://www.wildones.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Meaningful-Gardening.pdf>

## New Seed Classes

Inside Look at Shaw Nature Reserve: Seed Bank Tour  
Friday, March 11, 2016  
10 AM to 12 PM

Collecting and Conserving Seeds of Native Plants  
Friday, April 01, 2016  
10 AM to 12 PM

Sign up at:  
<http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/visit/family-of-attractions/shaw-nature-reserve/things-to-do-at-shaw-nature-reserve/events.aspx>

*"It's spring fever....You don't quite know what it is you DO want, but it just fairly makes your heart ache, you want it so!"*  
-Mark Twain

## Honeysuckle Sweep March 5-13

By Besa Schweitzer

The second week of March this year there is a new event in town. It is called the Honeysuckle Sweep for Healthy Habitat.

"In an effort to energize the greater St. Louis region around improving habitat for our native plants and animals, area conservation organizations join together to spotlight invasive bush honeysuckle and the need to remove it so that large swaths of land can become productive areas for native habitat, recreation and enjoyment. To that end, organizations will host public events and volunteer removal days during the first ever Honeysuckle Sweep Week, March 5-13, 2016."

At right is the cover of the new brochure on eradicating bush honeysuckle.

The idea is based on Missouri's very successful operation clean stream, a yearly river cleanup event that has been going on for 48 years and involves over 2,000 volunteers. Operation Clean Stream introduces Missourians to a day of floating on a beautiful river while picking up trash and for many is a day to remember. Children enjoy hunting for beer cans in the rocks. Adults brag about how many tires they have pulled out of a stream bank and fit into their canoe. Once someone learns the value of picking up trash out of our streams they make a habit of picking up trash wherever they go.

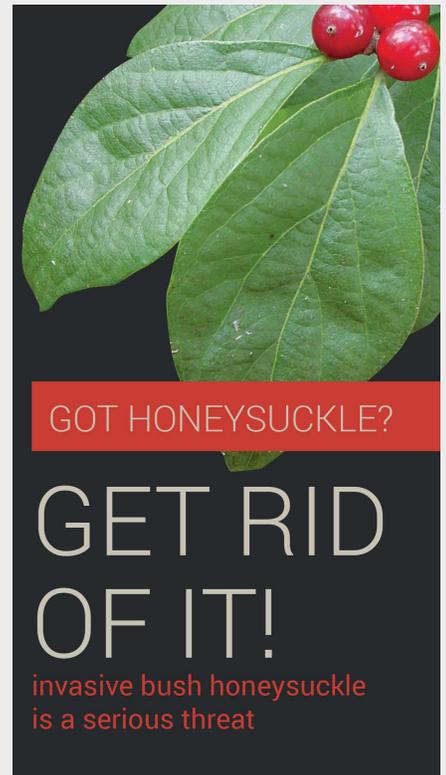
Honeysuckle Sweep brings the same hope of public education and responsibility. Many people do not know what a honeysuckle bush is or why it is a problem. Educating the public with this focused event will help bring the problem to the front of our minds. Once people spend a day removing honeysuckle in their neighborhood park they will learn how to identify it and see that it also lives in their backyard. As we see invasive shrubs during our daily lives we should do something about it by removing them. Gradually we will get the problem under control with a lot of help from our friends.

Although honeysuckle can be found in almost all public spaces it is possible to imagine a different future. The task may be daunting, but can be achieved with a concerted effort from the community. Back in 1967 the rivers of Missouri were filled with trash. Any river was a convenient place to dump whatever you didn't want, even old cars. The amount of trash was so overwhelming it was hard to enjoy a float trip. Today our rivers are clean and the public values them as beautiful places for recreation, not trash cans.

Come to the Honeysuckle Sweep. Let's make honeysuckle choked parks a thing of the past that is unacceptable in the public eye. We are going to educate the public to remove honeysuckle where they see it. Help us make the Honeysuckle Sweep for Healthy Habitat an enduring and successful event this March.

Learn more at  
<http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/sustainability/sustainability/biodiversecity-st.-louis/honeysuckle-sweep-for-healthy-habitat.aspx>

Download the Garden's new brochure on eradicating bush honeysuckle  
[http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/Portals/o/Gardening/Invasives/SC\\_HoneysuckleBrochure\\_2016\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/Portals/o/Gardening/Invasives/SC_HoneysuckleBrochure_2016_FINAL.pdf)



# Cup Plant's Overwintering Residents

By Cori Westcott, the 2015 recipient of the Volunteer of the Year Award from the St. Louis Audubon Society.

<http://stlouisaudubon.org/wordpress/2015/12/cup-plants-overwintering-residents/>



"You get used to the overall look of a wild garden, which is very different from a manicured garden. If something does die, you don't mourn it—there's not a great big hole left because there's so much richness, so much variety, so much more life overall."

~ 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>

# Bumble Bees

The first bee you see this spring will probably be a bumble bee. Female bumble bees emerge from their underground nests earlier in the spring than other bees. Their large bodies and ability to regulate their body temperature by shivering and basking in the sun keeps them active on cool days in spring and late into fall. Look for them on early blooming plants like willows and late blooming flowers like goldenrod. The bumble bee will collect pollen in her pollen basket on her hind leg and carry it back to her nest to feed her babies.

Although commonly seen as a pest, some flies can benefit bees. The flower fly (Volucella) has learned to mimic the bumble bee so that it can enter the bumble bees nest and lay eggs. The fly larva act as nest cleaners, feeding on dead bees and other detritus. Thus, the bumble bee colony benefits from its guests / house cleaners and the fly larva have the protection of the bumble bee colony.

To find a bumble bee nest keep your eyes on the ground. They are generally located in bare patches of soil that are well drained and on a slight slope. The entrance hole is as small as the bee and may sometimes have a pile of excavated soil next to it like an ant nest. Watch for bees flying low to the ground in a zig zag pattern and watch for them to land. Keep a few patches of undisturbed bare soil in you yard to invite bumble bees to nest.

# Seen in the Greenhouse

Life in our greenhouse is great this year. Germination is high and transplanting is well under way. We also have a new staff member, James Faupel, to help us with all the work. We have been focusing on growing more milkweed this year to fulfill the need for more host plants for monarch caterpillars in residential landscapes. Look for them at our market on May 6-7.

