

# *The News From* Native Plant School

**February 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](#)**



**SHAW NATURE RESERVE**  
a division of the MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN

## **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)

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

## **Nature Connection:**



Red Shouldered Hawks are constructing a nest in the lower woodland area of the Whitmire Wildflower Garden. They can be seen most days carrying sticks and hunting for food in the garden.

Photo by Danny Brown

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)

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## February Native Plant Highlight

### *Carex eburnea* – cedar sedge

*Carex eburnea* is short-statured (6"-8" tall) and has extremely fine textured foliage that is a delightful emerald-green color. It favors shaded sites and thrives in moist to dry soils that are loose and well-draining. Because cedar sedge is stoloniferous and forms large, dense colonies, it is an ideal plant for use along paths, in-between stones and as a ground cover in both large and small gardens. Wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*), alum root (*Heuchera villosa*) and woodland stonecrop (*Sedum ternatum*) are just a few of the woodland plants that make good companion plants to cedar sedge. This sedge is found naturally from Georgia to Newfoundland and west to Alaska excluding the arid states and the Pacific Northwest.



## Gardening Tips:

Give your trees and shrubs a little attention:

Finish pruning shade trees, summer flowering shrubs, and hedges. Spring blooming shrubs and small trees, such as clove currant and serviceberry, may be pruned immediately after flowering. Late winter is a great time to prune wild hydrangea - prune back 50% of the stems in late February.

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

Winter is a good time of year to educate your neighbors about the dangers of tree topping. For more info see <http://www.treesaregood.com/treecare/topping.aspx>

Late winter is a great time to consider any plans for your landscape so that you are ready to plant in spring. Think about adding plants that add interest in different seasons or perhaps a small water feature for birds. Enhance views or plant low-maintenance ground covers - there are many possibilities.

February and March is the time to plant stratified seed. You can plant indoors with grow lights or outside in a cold frame. Attend the Seed Propagation class for tricks of the trade.



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“Climate is what we expect, weather is what we get.”  
~Mark Twain

## Edgar Denison's Legacy in a Patch of Blue-eyed Mary



### Scott Woodbury

In 1992 the Whitmire garden received its first blue-eyed Mary seed. It came from Edgar Denison, a modern Johnny Appleseed who maintained a blue-eyed Mary patch at his Kirkwood home where he could easily collect seed to give away. From shirt-pockets full of seed, Edgar sowed blue-eyed Mary along Hidden Valley and the River Trails at Shaw Nature Reserve and at Emmenegger Nature Park in Kirkwood. He shared seed for the patch existing in the English Woodland Garden at Missouri Botanical Garden and for countless other patches growing at the homes of friends and neighbors who were given or snatched seed from beneath the bows of the old white oak by his sidewalk on Adams Street.

There were several other plants that Edgar passed around St. Louis; plants like rosy turtlehead, southern blue flag iris, and pink New England aster to name a few. They were usually given with the appropriate pedigree to a good home and with strict planting instructions. Edgar once dug up a gift tree at a neighbor's to see if it had been planted correctly. It was, and he planted it back satisfied that his instructions were followed.

He rescued southern blue flag iris *Iris virginica* var. *shrevei* from a wetland at the intersection of Interstate 44 and 141 in Fenton before a highway construction project. That very iris has been preserved and will be reintroduced along I-44 by the Henry Shaw Ozark Corridor Foundation to mark their new sign at the I-270 intersection in the spring of 2005.

Similarly, Edgar rescued rose turtlehead *Chelone obliqua* near Hannibal, Missouri after a plough cut through the rare patch leaving roots exposed and stems buried. Subsequently, this species has been reintroduced to a number of natural areas and has become so common among St. Louis gardeners that it is readily available at native plant nurseries.

Other pedigreed plants which Edgar shared with Shaw Nature Reserve staff include Rose mallow *Hibiscus militaris* from DeSoto, Copper Iris *Iris fulva* from Mingo

Rose mallow *Hibiscus militaris* from DeSoto, Copper Iris *Iris fulva* from Mingo Wildlife Refuge, Cardinal flower *Lobelia cardinalis* collected along the Meramec River in Pacific, *Oenothera triloba* from St. Francis State Park, and multi-colored New England asters *Aster novae-angliae* from a prairie near Hannibal.

Edgar was born in Stuttgart, Germany in 1904 and immigrated to the United States in 1927. He spent a lifetime enjoying wildflowers, first as a student in Germany, then as an amateur botanist leading hikes in Missouri. He later became one of Missouri's most celebrated wildflower enthusiasts through his popular field guide, Missouri Wildflowers. Denison, who died in 1993, was also a pianist, master gardener, and artist who drew and painted hundreds of Missouri Wildflowers. His artwork has been enjoyed by many at exhibits and is now available in a series of note cards at bookshops located at Shaw Nature Reserve in Gray Summit, and at MDC nature centers in St. Louis, Jefferson City, Springfield, and Kansas City. Few people have accomplished as much in a lifetime. Fewer still have touched the lives of so many people through so many instruments and he played them all exceptionally.

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