

The News From Native Plant School

March 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 shawnature.org/NPS



Upcoming classes:

Please register at shawnature.org/NPS

2013 Schedule

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)

Friday, May 10, 4:00 p.m. to 7:30
p.m. MBG/SNR Members Only
sneak preview sale with music from
the band Rosewood [http://
www.myspace.com/rosewoodband](http://www.myspace.com/rosewoodband).
Vendors will offer food, wine, beer,
photography, crafts and of course,
the widest variety of Missouri Native
Plants.

Nature Connection: The Year of Food The Majestic Willow

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

In his best-selling book *Bringing Nature Home*, author Doug Tallamy states that native willows (genus *Salix*) host 456 species of butterflies and moths. Of particular note is the viceroy butterfly which is a monarch mimic. Viceroy's don't taste bad to birds, they just look like the bitter-tasting monarch...shhh, don't tell the birds!



Silky willow, *Salix sericea* is a shrub under 6 feet tall. Winter flower buds are orange-apricot with white pussy-willow like flowers appearing in mid to late March. It is located at the edge of the pond in the lower woodland next to the rustic gazebo.

Sat, May 11, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Sale for the general public
[Shaw Wildflower Market](#)

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

“If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement, and mystery of the world we live in.”

– Rachel Carson

Wild Ones:

Wild Ones: Native Plants, Natural Landscapes promotes environmentally sound landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restoration and establishment of native plant communities. Wild Ones is a not-for-profit environmental education and advocacy organization.

Next meeting is March 13, 7 p.m. at The Heights community center in Richmond Heights. Butterfly gardening presentation by Tom Krauska, aka Tom Terrific. All are welcome.

<http://stlwildones.org/>



Nature Connections for children and families

Native Plant School classes for kids!

Nature Connections is a series of outdoor discovery classes in the Whitmire Wildflower Garden for children and their families. Participants will learn about and discover nature through tours of the Whitmire Wildflower garden which will include hands-on activities, stories, snacks and spontaneous encounters with wildlife and plants.

[Nature Connections: What's That Critter Up To? - April 12th](#)

[Nature Connections: Crime Scene Investigation \(CSI\): Pollination, Predation and](#)



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 p.m. Discussion will be lead by Larry Melton. All reading selections will be on-line texts or available at your library.

Larry Melton, a volunteer in the SNR Visitor's Center, will be facilitating the study group. He is a retired East Central College history teacher and is also currently researching the motivations behind the transition of the Gray Summit Extension established in 1926 through the Arboretum era to the Nature Reserve as we know it today. Larry specialized in the early 19th century "Romantic" period of U.S. history and the era of Western American Trails. He has also been interested in the evolution of natural history as an American literary genre.

For more information or to sign up please email lcmelton67@gmail.com or call 636-583-2013. Please include your full name, phone number, contact email address, and put "SNR RD GRP" on subject line.

Greenhouse Update:

Horticulturalist Terri Brant has been filling our greenhouse with baby plants which will be for sale this May 10-11 at the Shaw Wildflower Market. Next time you are at SNR stop by the head house and take a peak. Don't miss her upcoming class on native plant propagation.



Volunteer Group Activities:



We would like to thank all of our volunteers that came out in February to pull honeysuckle and privet. The SNR horticulture team has developed a series of group volunteer work days to attack invasive species and trash at the Gray Summit intersection of I-44. Join us at our next work day in March. RSVP to david.middleton@mobot.org



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 leaves are short to minimize damage to leaves.

If you have not done so by now, replace worn, punctured and broken parts on irrigation system before turning on in April.

“In the end, our society will be defined not only by what we create but by what we refuse to destroy.”

- John Sawhill, past president of the Nature Conservancy

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Tips for a Successful Native Garden

By Cindy Gilberg

Replacing a percent of high-maintenance lawn with a more sustainable low-maintenance landscape is a growing trend for the future. “The increased requests I get for assistance is proof that people are using more and more native plants each year, not less” states Scott Woodbury, head of the Horticulture Department at Shaw Nature Reserve. He goes on to say that an increasing number of people “are turning to native plants to landscape their homes, churches, businesses, and public parks. Compared to traditional high-maintenance landscapes, people are switching to native landscapes because they are more cost-effective to maintain and are good for the environment.” Even so, there still exists some misconceptions in regards to using native plants in the landscape. Some novices feel as if by planting natives their garden will suddenly become ‘wild’. Native plants simply represent a viable, alternative list of reliably hardy plants that can be integrated into any landscape. A plant list does not dictate the design style, rather, it is the gardener who decides their style and needs, adjusting the plant list accordingly. Likewise, selling your lawn mower does not automatically produce a native garden or habitat. Scott calls this the “shock and awe” approach and it is likely to produce a weed patch and draw the attention of neighbors (rightly so!), resulting in weed ordinance problems. Having worked with cities, weed ordinances and homeowners, Scott adds “Weed ordinance issues are tricky. Most of them originate from a complaining neighbor and not a city inspector so rule number one is to be neighborly. Rule number two is to start small and expand on your successes. Rule number three is to learn the basics of garden design. Most homeowners who get in trouble break one of these three rules.”

First of all, consider that the word ‘garden’ includes in most of its definitions the word ‘cultivate’. This implies that human hands are at work, manipulating and controlling the garden environment to some degree. Therefore, the element of intent goes hand in hand with planning a well-designed garden. If you are having some ordinance issues or you are not happy with your garden, review the following design principles and strive to include at least a few. A little planning goes a long way in creating an attractive, low-maintenance native landscape. Line functions as one of the most important concepts in the landscape. Think of pathways, bed edging, fencing or mown turf as examples of line. Line visually guides the eye and points to a focal point. Focal points can be as simple as your front door, a bench, a sculpture or a planted urn. Small water features are also welcome sights and need not be elaborate. A line leading to nowhere and a view without a focal point are disappointing.