

The News From Native Plant School

May 2014



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:

2014 Schedule

Friday May 9, 4-7:30 p.m.
Shaw Wildflower Market
Members only pre-sale

Saturday May 10, 9-4 p.m.
Shaw Wildflower Market

[Shaw Wildflower Market](#)

Thur, May 15, 1-4 p.m.
Container Gardening

Thur, June 12, 1-4 p.m.
Landscaping with Sedges

Friday Sept. 5, 4-7:30 p.m.
Fall Wildflower Market

Thur, Sep. 11, 1-4 p.m.
Landscaping with Vines

Thur, Oct. 9, 1-4 p.m.
Small Flowering Trees and Shrubs

Please register at
shawnature.org/NPS

Don't Miss It! Shaw Wildflower Market: May 10th

The Largest Selection of Native Wildflowers available in the St. Louis Area.

Members only pre-sale is Friday May 9, 4-7:30 p.m. with music by Augusta Bottoms Consort.

General public invited Saturday May 10, 9-4 p.m.

Plants will be for sale from Shaw Nature Reserve, Wild Ones, Missouri Wildflowers Nursery, Forest Keeling Nursery, Pan's Garden, Andy's Native Plants, Ozark Berry Farm, St. Francis Mountain Natives, and DJM Ecological Services. See side bar for a full list of vendors.

Event info at: [Shaw Wildflower Market](#)



Shaw Wildflower Market Vendors:

Plant Vendors:

Missouri Wildflowers Nursery
Forrest Keeling Nursery
Andy's Native Plants
Ozark Berry Farm
Pan's Garden
DJM Ecological Services
St. Francis Mountain Natives

Non Profit Organizations:

Wild Ones St. Louis
Audubon St. Louis
Missouri Native Plant Society
Habitat Helpers
Missouri Prairie Foundation
The Botanical Institute
Missouri Botanical Garden
Shaw Nature Reserve books

Market Vendors:

Edge-Clif Winery
Restore My Soul Photos
Great Harvest Bread
Williams Brother Meats
Doris Malon Baskets
Ross Malone Books
Berry Nutty Farm
Colleen's Irish Toffee
Yvonne's Honey
Janet's Felts
Mastermind Vodka
Jasbo Salsa

Music (Friday only)

Augusta Bottoms Consort

Gardening Tips:

For a more compact growth habit cut late summer and fall blooming plants back by 50%.

Sweep or blow clean all walkways and curbs on a weekly basis.

Nutsedge become visible during this month. Hand pull weekly or apply Sedge-Hammer or Pro Sedge according to label. Don't forget to add spreader sticker to spray tank.

Water new transplants and newly planted shrubs and trees unless rainfall is abundant.

Native Plant Highlight

Star tickseed

Coreopsis pubescens

This little yellow flower has a long bloom period that is sure to keep your garden shinning all summer. We are so impressed with it's garden worthiness that we are giving it away for free at this years plant sale as our feature plant. Yellow Flowers with an orange center bloom May through October. Grows 2-3 ft. tall in full sun to part shade and average soil. Good plant for container gardens.



“Spring is nature's way of saying,
'Let's party!'
-Robin Williams

Plant Sale Tips:

Before the Sale - Do your Homework

Become a member

Special sneak preview sale for members only on Friday.

[Membership](#)

Make a Shopping List

Look over your planting beds and decide what types of plants you need and how many. Look through your favorite native plant guides. We recommend Tried and True Missouri Native Plants for Your Yard. Plants available at the SNR booth are listed on our website. Create your dream plant list, include scientific name, and possible substitutions. Don't forget trees and shrubs! Sign up for our [monthly newsletter](#). Many useful plant lists can be found at the end of [Chapter Four: Landscaping with Native Plants, A Gardener's Guide for Missouri](#).

Come Prepared

Carpool with a friend if you can but make sure you have plenty of space to fit all your purchases. If you plan to hike during your visit to SNR, do it first so that your plants don't bake in your hot car. Allow plenty of time, you may spend longer shopping than you think. Bring plenty of cash and checks, some vendors don't take credit cards.

Be on Time

Many popular species sell out within the first few hours. Visit each vendor to look over what they have and then go back to make your purchases. Remember to pay each vendor separately.

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



By Scott Woodbury

Blue-eyed Mary is a Missouri wildflower that germinates in winter, enduring freeze and thaw before blooming in spring. Its bloom spans the month of April when Virginia bluebells, wild geranium and wild sweet William are each making colorful contributions to shady Missouri woodlands. In nature it grows along rivers in carpets where fall flooding carries away leaf litter, allowing seeds to germinate successfully.

In the Whitmire Wildflower Garden at Shaw Nature Reserve, leaves are raked up in November or December to mimic natural flooding and ensure seed sprouting. Blue-eyed Marys easily recognized by two round dark-green seed leaves that have purple streaks and freckles. On subzero days they freeze like lettuce in an old refrigerator then thaw, unharmed, like cold hands brought close to a wood stove on a winter day.

In 1992 the Whitmire garden received its first blue-eyed Mary seed. It came from Edgar Denison, a modern Johnny Appleseed who maintained a patch at his Kirkwood home where he could easily collect seed to give away.

From shirt-pockets full of seed, Denison sowed blue-eyed Mary along the river trail at Shaw Nature Reserve and at Emmenegger Nature Park in Kirkwood. He shared seed for a patch in the English Woodland Garden at Missouri Botanical Garden and for 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 Avenue.

Denison, who died in 1993, was also a pianist, a master gardener and an artist who drew and painted hundreds of Missouri wildflowers. His original watercolors will be on exhibit throughout April at Powder Valley Nature Center in Kirkwood.

I've known few people who have accomplished as much in one lifetime. Fewer still have touched the lives of so many Missourians through so many ways. To his friends and neighbors Denison seemed as common as a tick on a hot summer day, but a rare individual he was. A rare individual indeed!

Denison passed several plants 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. He once dug up a gift tree at a neighbor's to see if it had been planted correctly. It was, and Denison 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 Highway 141 in Fenton before a highway construction project.

Similarly, Denison rescued rose turtlehead *Chelone obliqua* near Hannibal, Mo., after a plow 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 that Denison shared with Shaw Nature Reserve staff include 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.

Plant Sale Tips:

After the Sale - Take Care of Your Plants

Protect Your Plants

Before planting keep your new plants in the shade, protected from strong winds, and well watered.

Right Plant, Right Place

Read your labels carefully and look up any cultivation information that you aren't sure about. Remember to put the right plant in the right place.

Plant and Water

Dig your planting holes larger than the pot size and then place the plant in with loose crumbly soil surrounding it. Keep the soil level of the plant in the pot the same as the soil level in your garden. Water thoroughly and mulch.

Continue Care

Keep a daily eye on your plants for several weeks. Make sure they haven't been dug up by a curious squirrel or armadillo. Keep them well watered and mulched. Throughout the summer check your plants once a week and water if it doesn't rain for a week. Trees need to be watered for two years and during severe droughts. Follow our [Native Landscape Maintenance Schedule](#).

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>

Cindy Gilberg's Five Favorite Native Plants



Blazingstars (*Liatris spp.*) – You can't go wrong with *Liatris* for full sun gardens. Approximately six species are commonly found in Missouri, each with a slightly different bloom time and cultural requirement. Select a few different species and you can have these glorious flowers blooming from June through September. The species that adapt well to average garden soils are *L. pycnostachya*, *L. scariosa* and *L. spicata*. Blazingstar has multi-faceted appeal for wildlife. It is attractive to several pollinators – butterflies, bees and other small insects and its ripening seed is a desirable autumn food source for countless birds and small mammals. From a gardener's point of view, the flowers are top of the list for use as cut flowers, both fresh and dried. The tall, lavender-purple spikes add a distinctive vertical element in the landscape, a welcome contrast to other mounded-form plants.

Fringe tree (*Chionanthus virginicus*) – A delightful small tree, fringe tree grows with a well-rounded habit to a height of about 10-15 feet. In May it becomes covered with panicles of fragrant white flowers, a breathtaking sight that makes it worthy of a special place in the garden. Male flower petals are longer than the female ones but the females produce showy dark blue berries in fall and fast becomes a meal for many birds. Shop for them in April so you can see them in flower and pick out one of each. Fringe tree prefers somewhat moist, rich soils though it is tolerant of average garden soils. Use it as a specimen tree or in as part of a woodland border. It is most dramatic when planted against a darker background.

Indian pink (*Spigelia marilandica*) – This clump-forming perennial for shade is a real show-stopper in June when its red trumpet flowers open to reveal bright yellow star-shaped throats. The flower color and shape makes Indian pink among the best of plants that attract hummingbirds. With a height of roughly two feet it, it thrives in average to rich soils in light to full shade. It is an underused perennial for woodland shade gardens despite being readily available at some nurseries. Indian pink is well worth hunting down and adding en masse to your shade garden.

Missouri evening primrose (*Oenothera macrocarpa*) – Large, buttery-yellow blooms grace this diminutive glade plant. Also known as Ozark sundrops, this *Oenothera* is found in rocky to average dry soils that are well-draining. It is among the most desirable choices for rock gardens and for use at the edges of sunny gardens. If you watch in the evening, you may catch a glimpse of night-flying sphinx moths pollinating the flowers. The species name refers to the large (*macro*) seed pods (*carpa*) that form, resembling oblong winged torpedoes. In the wild, these pods break loose and are rolled by the wind, spreading seed as they go.

Marsh milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*) - This milkweed is a prominent species for use in rain gardens and wet soils. A sun-loving perennial, it grows three-four feet and sports large clusters of pink to white flowers in July and August. The flowers are slightly fragrant and full of nectar that draws in a multitude of butterflies. Marsh milkweed also serves as the host plant for monarch butterflies – remember this when you see all those caterpillars and please refrain from harming them. They will soon be tomorrow's butterflies.