

# The News From Native Plant School

May 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

### Shaw Wildflower Market

May 7th from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

<http://shawnature.org/swm>

### Members only sale

May 6th from 4 to 7:30 p.m.

May 12, 2016

### Spring Flowering Perennials and Grasses

Scott Woodbury

Missouri is full of showy native perennials, grasses and sedges for gardening. This class will focus on showy and useful landscape plants that bloom in spring and how to garden with them. Students will gain knowledge on planting design and plant placement considerations for sun and shade.

1 Spot Left!

June 9, 2016

### Flower Arranging with Native Plants

Terri Brandt

Bring a small to medium vase to class and bring it home full of beautiful native flowers. Learn how expert flower arranger, Terri Brandt creates beautiful floral arrangements using a wide-array of plant materials and flowers. Class will be held in the horticulture greenhouse area at Shaw Nature Reserve.

Please register at

## National Wildflower Week May 2 - 8, 2016



Across the nation, wildflowers growing beside highways, in gardens and elsewhere are valued for their natural beauty. And as Lady Bird Johnson once said, they "give us a sense of where we are in this great land of ours." What better way to commemorate these beautiful features of our landscapes than getting outside or learning more about them?

### About Wildflower Week

The first full week of May marks National Wildflower Week each year. Of course, wildflower season peaks at various times throughout the country, so whether you celebrate the first week of May or mid-July, the point is to get outside and smell the flowers!

### Why Do Wildflowers Matter?

Wildflowers and native plants help conserve water, reduce mowing costs, provide habitat for birds, butterflies and other wildlife and protect the soil from erosion. In addition, native plants can require fewer resources to maintain than plants that aren't native to a region. But many wildflowers nationally are in danger from habitat loss, invasive species and other factors. We hope you will enjoy participating in National Wildflower Week-related activities wherever you are and appreciate all that wildflowers have to offer.

<http://www.wildflower.org/nww/>

Photo by Darla Preiss

## Garden Tours

The Sustainable Backyard Tour  
Sunday June 12th.

[www.sustainablebackyardtour.com](http://www.sustainablebackyardtour.com)

St. Louis Native Plant Garden Tour  
Hosted by Bring Conservation Home  
and St Louis Wild Ones.

Saturday June 18 from 9 am -4 pm.

[www.stlouisaudubon.org/NPT/](http://www.stlouisaudubon.org/NPT/)

## We are Looking for a few Great Volunteers

Garden volunteers are special people. They care. They have a sense of commitment to something greater than their own personal needs. They have a direct impact on achieving the mission and goals of Shaw Nature Reserve. We recognize that our volunteers provide a resource of talent that is unavailable in any other way. We value this contribution and hope to offer each volunteer a satisfying, productive, and rewarding experience. Take action to bring more significance to your daily life. Become a part of a vital volunteer community. Shaw Nature Reserve is seeking volunteers to assist with gardening outdoors in the Whitmire Wildflower Garden and Trial Gardens. Tasks include weeding, mulching, potting, planting, watering and seed collecting. Volunteers are needed between the hours of 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday thru Friday. Email to apply, [scott.woodbury@mobot.org](mailto:scott.woodbury@mobot.org)

## Native Bees

Carve out 30 minutes to listen to MDC's Mike Arduser's talk on native bees, as presented at the 7th Annual Agroforestry Symposium this past February.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=51cPbdMx-UA>

## Don't Forget! Shaw Wildflower Market:

Saturday, May 7, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Members night Friday, May 6, 4-7:30 p.m.

## How to make the most of the Shaw Wildflower Market:

### Before the Sale - Do your Homework

#### Become a member

Special sneak preview sale for members only on Friday.

Membership -

<http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/members/become-a-member.aspx>

#### 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.

### 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. Cover potting soil with garden earth. 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 on our website.



## Gardening Tips

- Attend Shaw Nature Reserve Wildflower Market on Mothers Day weekend
- 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.

## Living Landscapes Workshop

May 14: Living Landscapes Workshop: Native Plants Get Us Back to Our Roots

Learn from experts about the beauty and benefits of using plants native to Missouri in your landscaping. At this workshop, with lunch included, you will learn:

- best plants to support monarch butterflies and other beneficial insects
- basics of native plant design and maintenance
- best natives for specific landscaping needs

<http://grownative.org/events/may-15-native-plant-workshop-in-arcadia/>

## Eco-regional Planting Guides

Eco-regional planting guides, Selecting Plants for Pollinators, are tailored to specific areas of the United States. You can find out which ecoregion you live in and get your free guide by entering your zip code below. Inside each guide you'll find 24 pages of native planting information. All in full PDF Format.

[www.pollinator.org](http://www.pollinator.org)

## St. Louis Native Plant Garden Tour

By Marsha Gebhardt



The Wild Ones St. Louis Chapter and the St. Louis Audubon Society are partnering to present their second annual St. Louis Native Plant Garden Tour on Saturday, June 18. The tour is intended to educate and encourage home gardeners about the use of native plants for the benefit of birds, pollinators, and people. With decades of collective experience, the tour hosts are looking forward to sharing their spaces and responding to your questions.

The tour sold out in 2015 when 200 tickets were made available. The feedback from attendees was so positive that the 2016 Tour will make 300 tickets available. The attendance has been limited to ensure that participants will have opportunities to talk with the hosts and the volunteer docents at each home. The tour will feature ten gardens selected for their variety of styles and maturity. It will be centered in central St. Louis County, including Clayton, Ladue and University City. On-line ticket sales are being handled through the St. Louis Audubon Society website. Tickets also can be purchased at one of four retail garden centers.

[www.stlouisaudubon.org/NPT/](http://www.stlouisaudubon.org/NPT/)





# Native Landscaping for Pollinators

Monday, May 2 at 7 PM  
Carbondale Civic Center  
200 South Illinois Ave.  
Carbondale, Illinois

Presenter Dave Tylka is the author of *Native Landscaping for Wildlife and People*. As a widely recognized educator, biologist, nature author, and photographer, he brings together a wealth of information on native species and ideas that can inspire any gardener.

Healthy, diverse landscapes attract a wide diversity of pollinators. Dave will describe where native landscaping opportunities can be found around your home and will present practical advice on how to get started—locating areas for native plant beds, preparing the sites, selecting the right plant for the right place and learning how to maintain your native plants.

This program is **FREE** and **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**. Sponsored by the Sierra Club, Shawnee Group

If you are interested in pollinators you will enjoy upcoming NPS class *Monarch Gardening* on July 14.

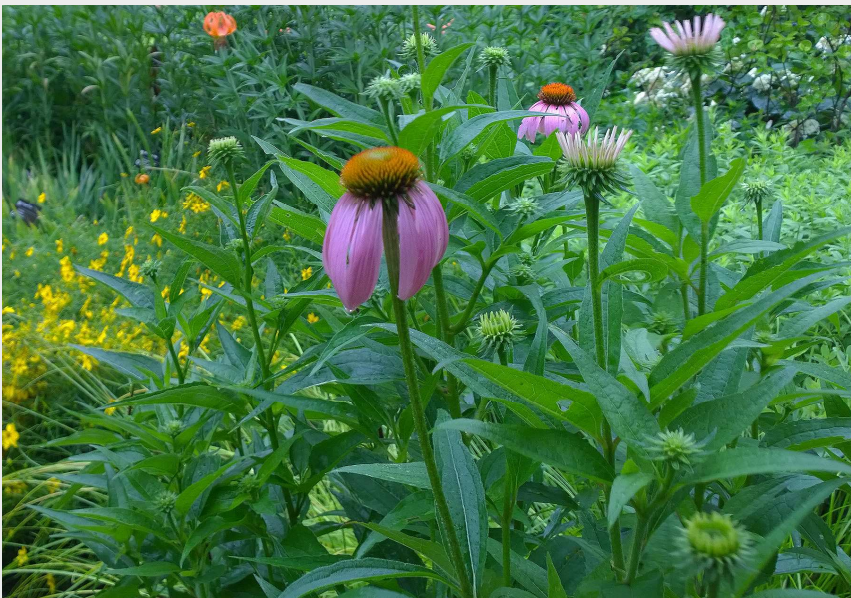
## Editors Note:

Please send me your before and after photos of your yard. I am especially interested in pictures of the transformation of honeysuckle infested woodlands to native plant gardens.

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>

# Native Plant Focus on Purple Coneflower

By Scott Woodbury



One popular plant in the native garden is purple coneflower, *Echinacea purpurea* with its sweet scent of rose, purplish ray petals and orange disc flowers full of nectar and pollen. Its nectar is loved by butterflies and bumblebees alike though the hairy buzzing bees are doing most of the pollinating. Turns out, smooth-slender butterfly legs aren't as effective as stout hairy bee legs at catching pollen. It also helps if you have a hind leg pollen basket. Yes bumblebees have these to carry their pollen, nectar and spit. Who would have thunk it? Purple coneflowers are also visited by skippers, brush-footed butterflies, bee flies, sweat bees, mason wasps, syrphid flies, fireflies and the predators who love to eat them... hummingbirds and praying mantises. The world is so full of a number of things. Don't forget to pull up a beanbag chair for a front-row seat at one of the greatest feeding frenzies on earth. And it's right in your own backyard.

A common misconception about purple coneflower is that they are sun-worshipping prairie dwellers. Not so. In nature they grow in the woods, open woods that is, or savannas where the trees are widely spaced, limbs are high and only patchy-filtered sunlight reaches the ground floor. That's why I like to call it queen-of-the woods. In older neighborhoods like Webster Groves, gardens with trees like these have what is called high shade. Purple coneflowers thrive in this environment. Gold finches devour purple coneflower seeds in late summer but a few seeds are missed and sprout the following April. Seedlings develop quickly and are easily transplanted in May or June.

## Blister Beetles and Native Bees

If you find a blister beetle in your garden you must have native bees. The blister beetle (family Meloidae) life cycle is dependent of finding a native bee host, so they are good indicators of a healthy native bee population. Blister beetles lay their eggs on flower heads where a newly hatched larva can catch a ride on a visiting bee. The bee unknowingly takes the beetle larva back to it's nest where it can eat pollen and nectar. Blister beetles get their name from a chemical they produce (cantharidin) that can blister human skin. Blister beetles are best admired from a short distance.