

The News From Native Plant School

September 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



Upcoming classes

September 8, 2016 from 1-4pm
Ethnobotany and Native Plant Folklore

April Anderson

Have you ever wondered how "boneset" or "rattlesnake master" got their names? Explore historical uses of native plants and the stories which connect them to our predecessors. Enjoy a hike to look at some of the native plants we discuss. (Adults)

September 9, 2016 from 4-7:30pm
Shaw Wildflower Market

October 13, 2016 from 1-4pm
Fall Flowering Perennials and Grasses

Scott Woodbury

November 10, 2016 from 1-4pm
Grapevine Wreath Making

April Anderson

Learn how to identify, ethically harvest, and weave beautiful grapevine wreaths of various sizes to decorate your home. See how weeds and pods can be incorporated into your design. We will be outdoors during part of the class to gather our materials, so please dress for the weather. (Adults and teens)

Classes held at Shaw Nature Reserve.
Please register in advance at

shawnature.org/NPS

Shaw Wildflower Market in the Whitmire Wildflower Garden Friday, Sept 9th from 4 - 7:30 p.m.

Shop for locally produced native plants, food and crafts. The Shaw Wildflower Market is geared for new and experienced gardeners and people looking for locally made products for a greener community. Wildflowers from Missouri Wildflower Nursery and trees from Forest Keeling Nursery and Forest ReLeaf will be available as well as seeds, wine, bread, meats, art, crafts and more. Live music provided by Downstream.

This event is planned rain or shine. Regular admission rates apply. Bring checks and cash to pay vendors.

www.shawnature.org/swm



*"This world is but a canvas to our imagination."
~Henry David Thoreau*

Prairie Day

FOLLOW THE HERD TO
PRAIRIE DAY
AT SHAW NATURE RESERVE

Biennial Event
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.,
Saturday, Sept. 17, 2016

Hitch up the wagons and head out to Prairie Day at Shaw Nature Reserve in Gray Summit. This fun-filled family event portrays prairie heritage through activities and demonstrations, and showcases the Reserve's 250-acre re-created tall grass prairie. Hike with a naturalist through the prairie to learn about prairie life, check out the teepee, play pioneer games, listen to a live band, and watch weavers, spinners and other craft demonstrations.

Douglas Tallamy

Acclaimed author and ecologist Douglas Tallamy explains the reasons behind the decline of native flora and fauna, and how we can work to reverse it from our own backyards.

A Call For Backyard Biodiversity

<http://www.americanforests.org/magazine/article/backyard-biodiversity/>

Gardening Tips

- Attend Shaw Nature Reserve Wildflower Market on September 9th, 4-7:30pm.
- September is a good time to plant perennials and grasses. Mulch to a depth of 1-2 inches. For trees and shrubs be sure to mulch to a depth of 2-3 inches.
- Divide and move perennials and grasses September thru October.
- Mulch where needed to reduce weeding and maintain moisture and protect from winter freezing and drought.
- September and October are best months to kill invasive bush honeysuckle. Cut and spray stumps with 10% glyphosate. Properly dispose of cuttings if they contain berries to prevent spreading the seeds and reinfesting the newly cleared area.

We are Giving Away Oaks on Sept 9th

At the Shaw Wildflower Market we will be giving away trees for as long as supplies last. We have selected 3 species of Oak that are especially good at attracting nesting birds because of the large insect populations they support. Oak acorns are an important source of food for wildlife. I hope you have space for one of these plants in your landscape.

White oak, *Quercus alba*

Grows 50-80' in sun and dry-avg soil. Fall color is yellow to red. Long lived. Host plant to Northern Hairstreak, Banded Hairstreak, Yellow-Based Tussock Moth, Ilia Underwing, Cecropia Moth, Curve-Lined Looper, Northern Walkingstick, and many other insects.

Chinquapin oak, *Quercus muehlenbergii*

Grows 40-60' in sun and dry-avg soil. Long lived. Yellow fall color. Host plant to moths, beetles, and other insects.

Post oak, *Quercus stellata*

Grows to 35-50' in sun and dry-avg soil. Yellow to apricot fall color. Host plant to Horace's Duskywing, Northern Hairstreak, Similar Underwing, and many other insects.

Catalpa Sphinx Caterpillars Abundant

Scott Woodbury observed this beauty plus dozens more defoliating a Catalpa tree in the Whitmire Wildflower Garden. It has an amusing entry in the Princeton Field Guide. "The Catalpa Sphinx, *Ceratomia catalpa*, is a "barfer" and a thrasher. When molested, the larva regurgitates a somewhat viscous green fluid from the foregut and thrashes violently, which, among other things, serves to spread its regurgitant over the potential predator." Next time we are in the garden we will have to see if we can witness this interesting behavior.



Wild Ones Native Garden Grants

The St Louis Wild Ones chapter offers grant money to help grow native plant community gardens. If you are thinking about planting a garden in your community, school, or church consider applying for this grant to make your garden dreams a reality.

<http://stlwildones.org/wild-ones-native-garden-grants/>

Events

John Cleaveland Missouri Prairie Painting Exhibit

Sept. 10--Nov. 11 at Missouri Botanical Garden, Monsanto Hall, Ridgway Visitor Center, 4344 Shaw Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri 63110

Enjoy this exhibition of Missouri prairie paintings by artist John Cleaveland, a nationally recognized painter who captures the landscapes of the Midwest, focusing on the open prairies of Missouri with its diverse flora and expansive skies. Cleaveland created this exhibit in honor of the 80th birthday of Dr. Peter Raven.

The artist is donating 10% of the proceeds from the sale of his paintings at this exhibit to Missouri Prairie Foundation and Shaw Nature Reserve.

Native Plant Expo and Sale

Saturday Sept 24 9 am - 2 pm
at Schlafly Bottleworks

Displays, crafts, and wares for native plant gardens. Buy plants and trees for fall planting. Share Missouri native seeds and plants.

<http://www.stlouisaudubon.org/calendar/content/native-plant-sale-2016.pdf>

Honeysuckle Sweep Week

Oct 29-Nov 6
More info in next months newsletter.

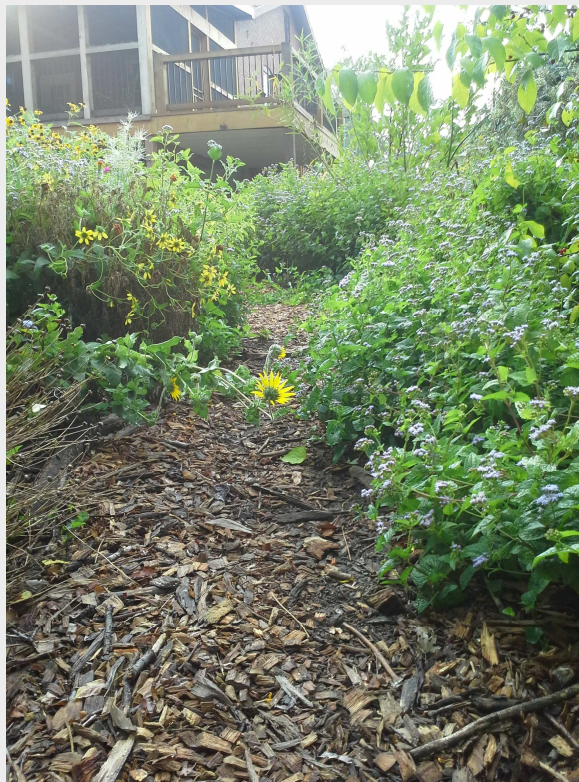
www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/sustainability/sustainability/biodiversity-st.-louis/honeysuckle-sweep-for-healthy-habitat.aspx



Monarch on Milkweed
Photo by Darla Preiss

It is OK to Kill Your Plants

By Besa Schweitzer



Every year in late summer our gardens can start looking a little out of control. The tall plants are flopping, ground covers are invading the paths, seedlings are popping up everywhere. Just take a deep breath and remember, it is OK to get rid of overly ambitious plants. Just because you bought a plant and lovingly placed it in the garden does not mean that it can become an out of control thug.

There are many ways to get rid of plants that are in the wrong place without killing them. Try moving them to another area in the garden. Taller plants may not flop so much if they are placed with other tall plants or against a fence to provide support.

Ground covers that have covered too much ground can be divided and planted where they have more space to roam. Alternatively, give your plants to friends and neighbors. Everyone likes free plants and you may have plenty. Bring your plants to a plant swap like the one at Schlafly on Sept 24th, (more details in left column). Lastly, don't forget, it is OK to kill your plants. Just pull them out and send them to the compost pile. It is OK.

Each garden plant deserves enough space to fully develop. Don't crowd your species so close together. Thin out the aggressive growers. Keep plants within set boundaries and don't let them crowd the path. Cut taller plants back short in early summer. Late summer bloomers can be cut back so they don't flop and will still bloom. Plants along the path can be cut back away from the path to encourage them to grow in the other direction. If a plant just isn't working in a space, get rid of it. It is your garden, you are in charge.

Design Strategies Can Make Native Gardens More Acceptable

Robert Weaver wrote a timely piece in the St Louis Post Dispatch addressing the recent weed ordinance news in Maplewood.

http://www.stltoday.com/news/opinion/mailbag/design-strategies-can-make-native-gardens-more-acceptable/article_12eb958d-f41a-5375-aa12-292d1590a04a.html

We believe that native plants are acceptable for the front yard garden. It should make no difference whether you use native plants or more traditional ornamentals. Design and maintenance are the key to a beautiful garden.

New Shaw Nature Reserve Coloring Book Available

Get a copy while they last! The new Shaw Nature Reserve adult coloring book is available in the visitor's center for \$10. Drawings by Barbara Woodbury Rieger.



"I'm lucky to have spent my childhood summers among woods, streams, meadows, and marshes, but most suburbanites have never searched for frogs' eggs, caught fireflies in a jar, or peeked into a grassy nest of adorable baby mice. As the years pass, fewer and fewer people will long for the call of bullfrogs. Today's children, growing up on lawns and pavements, will not even have nostalgia to guide them, and soon the animals will be not only missing but forgotten."

~ Sara Stein, Noah's Garden

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>

Avian Adventures - for the Birds

By Cindy Gilberg, 2007
Photo by Danny Brown



Outside my window is a constantly moving and colorful avian dance. Hummingbirds are tenaciously defending their nectar sources and will do so until their departure in October. Goldfinches hang onto coneflowers as they extract the seeds they love so much. Bluebirds and Phoebe's swoop down to capture various insects. As the days get shorter signaling the last hoorah of summer, a multitude of birds begin their long migrations southward. Our region is on a major flyway for many of these travelers who visit us for brief periods in the fall and again in the spring. Numerous other bird species are either year-round residents or come to stay for the winter months.

Recognizing basic needs such as food, water and shelter and providing those needs year-round is important. Diversity of plants in your garden is the key to ensuring that a diversity of our feathered friends will visit. Water gardens with small, shallow rivulets or waterfalls provide water and additional habitat for birds while also an exciting garden feature for the gardener. A very small percentage of birds actually visit birdfeeders and most prefer natural habitat that favors their needs.

The smorgasbord should include plants that provide seeds or berries and a habitat conducive to insects, a favorite food of many birds in the summer. Deadheading flowers is a common practice for many gardeners but prevents nutritious seeds from ripening. Avoid using insecticides (harmful to birds too!) and allow the birds to be part of your biological control program. After the first frost don't be so quick to clean up the garden. Pruning perennials to the ground not only removes both seed and cover for many birds, it can also cause crown damage or winter kill in many perennials.

One of the most popular birds is the ruby-throated hummingbird. They arrive in April when the wild columbine (*Aquilegia*) and bluebells (*Mertensia*) are blooming in our woodlands. These quick-flying, diminutive gems that frequent our gardens are especially attracted to tubular-shaped red, orange and pink flowers that provide nectar. They dart about for nectar, returning again to the shelter of large shrubs and trees, so include some in your garden design. Provide favorite nectar sources such as blazing star (*Liatris*), beebalm (*Monarda*), Phlox and catchfly/pinks (*Silene*). Larger plants, for example, red buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*) and trumpet creeper (*Campsis*), are among other desirable nectar sources.

Prairie and savannah plants appeal to a wide array of birds such as wrens, sparrows, cardinals, finches and my favorite – the indigo bunting. Blazing star (*Liatris*) is at the top of the list again, inviting numerous butterflies when in bloom and then birds that nibble at the seeds. Plant an assortment of flowers from the aster family, the most familiar being Aster, coneflowers (*Echinacea*), black-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia*), goldenrods (*Solidago*) and sunflowers (*Helianthus*). Grasses add unique form and texture to the garden as well as an abundance of seed. Little bluestem (*Schizachyrium*), prairie dropseed (*Sporobolus*) and side oats grama (*Bouteloua*) are wonderful additions to garden designs.

As autumn turns to winter insect populations decline and many birds shift their diet to fruits, most commonly provided by shrubs and trees. Migrating birds such as orioles and tanagers search for high-fat fruits offered in fall by dogwoods (*Cornus*) and spicebush (*Lindera*). I love watching the large flocks of cedar waxwings visit our cedar trees (*Juniperus*) to eat the frosty blue berries. Hawthorn (*Crataegus*), blackgum (*Nyssa*) are other welcome additions in any garden setting. To complete the garden design add some shrubs, most notably winterberry (*Ilex*), Viburnum and Sumac. All of these have attractive fruit that create winter interest in the garden.

Look over the plants lists for attracting birds and notice that many plants attract more than one group of birds in different seasons. Incorporate any or all of these plants into a conventional sunny garden design or looser more natural design – either way you will notice an increase of avian visitors.