



Newsletter

September 2024



Since Last Time ...

It was a beautiful late evening on September 7 when Monica Hoel, from the Emory & Henry University Alumni Office, gave WOAAH members a tour of the university's native meadow project, which is just off campus in the Emory & Henry Cemetery in Emory, VA.

The nearly 3-acre meadow is sunlit in the background of this picture that shows Monica explaining how E&H arrived at the decision to partner with U.S. Fish and Wildlife to install the meadow. She described the community outreach efforts, the controlled burn used to prepare the site, and the planting process.

You might want to investigate whether partnering with U.S. Fish and Wildlife is right for your land:

<https://www.fws.gov/office/virginia-ecological-services>



Mendy Bechtold, a non-traditional student and intern at E&H who is well known to many of our members, explains some of the many ecological benefits of the meadow. A class project last year determined that the soil dwelling arthropod community is quickly developing in the meadow. Less formal observations involve bird and insect inventories by Mendy, Monica, and Russ McDonald, a Virginia Master Naturalist.

Mark Merz
2024 WOAAH President

Calendar at-a-Glance

October 26: Members' Fall Plant & Seed Share at Steele Creek Park in Bristol

November 14: WOAAH Annual Meeting at The Summit in Bristol



Connecting people and native plants for a healthy planet

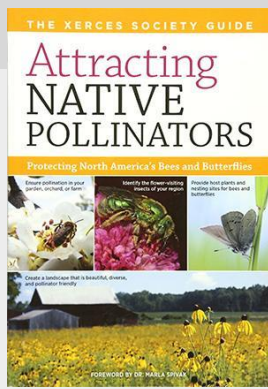
NEW MERCH WOAH HATS!



Check out the ball caps and bucket hats in many colors and options. You can still buy shirts, with the chapter logo in the front and the "Get Wild" design on the back.

www.bonfire.com/get-wild-6/, or scan the QR code on the left with your phone's camera.





Bookshelf: Review by Mark Merz

Attracting Native Pollinators

By The Xerces Society

This book has been sitting on my bookshelf for I don't know how long. I'm not even sure where I got it, but there it was when I needed something new for inspiration during breaks from battling Johnson grass and dallis grass to make room for native meadow plants in my side yard. I've been doing this mechanically with a pickax, so it's been slow and tedious work. It's been a real pick-me-up to dip into the text and thumb through the pictures of this informational and beautifully photographed book.

The book is authored by senior staff from Xerces in collaboration with a San Francisco State University biology professor, so the reader feels from the outset that passion for the topic combines with authoritative information to result in a guidebook that will make a difference in preserving pollinators. They divide the book into four main sections: Pollinators and Pollination, Taking Action, Bees of North America, and Creating a Pollinator Friendly-Friendly Landscape.

Pollinators and Pollination is the section that will build your basic knowledge about pollinators—why you should care, plant and insect biology, and how modern land use practices disrupt pollinator populations. Taking Action involves the how-to, nuts and bolts of how to apply what you've learned about plants and pollinators to actually manage your landscape encourage native pollinator species. WOAHA members will be heartened to read that the first of four conditions to “support the greatest variety and abundance of pollinators” is “a diversity of plants, preferably native!” This section provides concrete advice for how to improve nearly every category of land use to make them more habitable for pollinators: which plant species to plant, site preparation, maintenance. The third section makes explicit the Xerces Society's focus on native bee species. Even in the book's preface, there is the explanation that, unlike butterflies, resources on native bees haven't been widely available to the public and that conservation methods for native bees will benefit other pollinators. So, it's here, in the Bees of North America section, that you'll find in-depth profiles of bee genera, along with nice photographs. You'll get enough information to identify most bees to the genus level. The final section *Attracting Native Pollinators* is a collection of resources—diagrams of ways that different settings can be planted as pollinator gardens, regional plant lists, plant profiles for species that can be used as pollen and nectar providers, and butterfly host plants.

My first encounter with the Xerces Society was during the 2017 Earth Day March for Science in Washington D.C. Their demonstrators were eye-catchingly dressed as bumblebees and the signs they carried warned of a pollinator crisis, of which I was not then aware. But I paid attention, as I continue to pay attention to information on pollinators that is increasingly in the news and included in the broadening concerns of organizations like ours. *Attracting Native Pollinators*, because it will help tune my eyes, ears, and mind to a bustling and buzzing world of essential action, will make my native plantings even more interesting and important to me than they were!

You can find out more about the Xerces Society here:

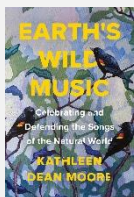
<https://www.xerces.org/>



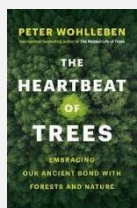
And More Books!

Many of you already know that WOAHA Vice President Melanie Smith is, in addition to everything else she does as a Virginia Master Naturalist, WOAHA board member, and FrogWatch USA, is a school librarian in Smyth County. She sends us, as I hope she will continue doing, descriptions of a few gems recommended by the American Library Association.

The American Library Association (ALA) is the oldest and largest nonprofit library association in the world and its book and audiobook reviews (“Booklist”) are widely respected. Recently, they published a Booklist edition focusing on nature inspired reading. Here are some of those recommendations, courtesy of the July 2024 issue of Booklist.



Earth's Wild Music: Celebrating and Defending the Songs of the Natural World. By Kathleen Dean Moore, 2021. Counterpoint. Moore's essays are “drawn from a lifetime of loving the world.” She writes of family, “evolutionary marvels,” and adventures in the wild, emphasizing the songs and calls of birds, frogs, whales, bats and wolves within our planet's soul sustaining symphony.



The Heartbeat of Trees: Embracing Our Ancient Bond with Forests and Nature. By Peter Wohlleben. Translated by Jane Billinghurst. 2021. Greystone. Wohlleben illuminates the ways in which our “ancient bond” with trees shaped the evolution of our senses and how trees communicate, respond to their surroundings, feel pain, and create “heartbeats.”

And for the little ones:



Little Land. By Diana Sudyka. Illustrated by the author. 2023. Little, Brown. Grades K-3. Sudyka's quietly astounding picture book speaks to environmental stewardship in a story that traces the history of a verdant piece of land through various epochs of geological time until the arrival of city-dwelling humans, which puts a strain on the environment. But tending to that land, Sudyka emphasizes, can restore balance once again.

There Are Many Ways to Get Involved!

Volunteer Wild Ones does not require formal training classes, volunteer work hours, or continuing education hours for membership. However, the Chapter has events that do require volunteer member help. On Saturday, Oct. 12th, between 10:00am and 4:00pm, the Chapter needs several more volunteers to help with our information table and kids' wildlife arts activities at the Friends of Steele Creek Wildlife Weekend. Please send an email to wildonesappalachianhighlands@gmail.com if you can volunteer a few hours. There is a WOAHA Board that meets a little less than once per month, and our chapter also has various committees. Perhaps you'd like to serve on one! Let us know with an email to the above address.

Newsletter Send in your own member profile. As you've seen over the last several months, your profile can take many forms. It can be as simple as telling a little about yourself and how you got involved with native plants, or you can include photos and go into more detail.

Write about your garden. What are you hoping to accomplish, what resources did you use, what strategies did you employ? Do you have before and after pictures that show what you've done?

Have you read a good nature book that you'd like to review?

Your fellow WOAHA members would love to hear from you! Send your text and photos to markmerz243@gmail.com.

Member Profile: Stan and Anne Tucker

Stan and Anne moved from Houston to the Damascus area in 2012 to be closer to family and closer to nature. The ecosystem differences between city and country were significant but friends and mentors with similar interests in Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists and now Wild Ones allowed us to readily adapt and grow. While classes provided many basics, the continuous exchange of information with friends in these groups has been invaluable.

With a house that is sited in mostly shade at the edge of woodlands and having been planted with numerous non-natives, we have been slowly removing some of the more invasive plants and replacing them with natives (think burning bush vs Virginia sweetspire or ninebark). A "front yard" hillside area that was entirely Japanese stiltgrass is now creeping red fescue no mow grass. All the same, many non-natives remain and some such as peonies are welcome to remain. If a minimum of 70% native plants is sufficient we are good but it remains a work in progress.

One challenge has been to maintain the hayfield and cattle pasture part of the farm compatible with natural buffer areas. As an example, newly introduced natives are considered for potential toxicity to cattle before they are brought in.

An approximately one quarter acre area was initially covered by a grove of large invasive Ailanthis trees was removed and now serves as Anne's native meadow/ pollinator garden next to Stan's vegetable garden. (Photos below)



As a retired scientist Stan still approaches gardening like an experiment and we enthusiastically participate in Blue Ridge Discovery Center, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, Wild Ones and other community activities that support our amazing natural heritage.

The October Plant Swap

Last year's fall plant and seed swap was my first Wild Ones event, and it was THE BEST introduction to WOAHI I can imagine. The food was great. I met people who have since become friends. All the plants that I rehomed have become important elements of my home landscape. I'll share a few pictures, mostly ones I took just a few minutes ago. I have fellow WOAHI members to thank for each one of them!



Event Details

October 26

WOAH Plant/Seed Swap and Potluck Dinner

Fall is a great time to share both native plants and seeds from our gardens. Our annual event is one of the benefits of being an official Wild Ones member! This is an opportunity to thin out your flower beds of native plants and bring your labeled plants or seeds to swap and share.

Please start to gather your extra plants or seeds and identify them for the swap. If you don't have any extras, just come and take some home!

The Swap will be followed by a potluck supper and social hour. Please bring your own beverage and a dish to share. This will be a great opportunity to learn about natives, get plants, and meet members.

You will be charged \$2 at the gate for parking.

Date: October 26, 2024,

Time: 3:30-6:00pm

Location: Steele Creek Park, 4 Little Ln, Bristol, TN, 37620 – Civitan Shelter

November 14

WOAH Annual Meeting (3rd Birthday Party)

On November 14th we will celebrate our third anniversary as the Appalachian Highlands Chapter.

There will be a short business meeting with a social hour afterwards. We will hold the election of 2025 officers.

This is a great time as members to reflect on what we have accomplished and to discuss our future goals.

Water and coffee will be provided. Please bring your favorite light refreshment and your nametag.

The Summit building is set back from Volunteer Parkway with an access road between Eastman Credit Union and Bank of Tennessee. There is a cut-through on the Parkway divide for a left turn if you are coming from the downtown Bristol area.

Date: Thursday, November 14th, 2024

Time: 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm (Eastern Time)

Location: The Summit, Expedition Room, 1227 Volunteer Pkwy, Bristol, TN, 37620