



Newsletter

May 2025



Since Last Time ...

Life is quite busy these days in the garden. WOAHH has been very active since the last newsletter. The Garden Faire in Abingdon was a huge success. WOAHH volunteers had a tabling event there and there was so much interest in Wild Ones and native plants. We had 3 new members join after Garden Faire as of this date. There were 58 visitors who signed up to receive information from WOAHH. WOW!! Thank you to all volunteers who shared their time and information with our visitors.

Then came Earth Day. Gail and Dick Olson and Anne and Stan Tucker staffed that tabling event. Again, there was a lot of interest in Wild Ones with 23 signing up to receive information and 1 new member added so far. Thank you for your volunteer time.

There is much to report after our plant swap May 3rd. We had members attending who have never been to our plant swaps. And several new members attended. We had so many plants to share with everyone and great door prizes too. Thanks to the door prize donors: Shy Valley Farm for a \$50 gift certificate, Wood Thrush Native Nursery for a Doll's Eyes plant, Wild Ones for a tote bag and notebook, and Teresa for a hanging bee habitat. Most importantly, socializing over potluck dinner gave many of us a chance to talk to new members and members we haven't seen lately.

More exciting news (from the Board perspective): Cindy Tauscher volunteered to enter all email addresses from Garden Faire sign up; Ken Moore volunteered to get us up to date with name tags for new members; and Mendy Bechtold has graciously agreed to perform webmaster duties and get our website updated. On behalf of the Board, thank all of you for your willingness to help.

We have more dates confirmed for events later this year. Be sure to read about events in this newsletter.

I think that covers it for now. HAPPY PLANTING! Feel free to send us pictures of your gardens to the WOAHH email address. We would love to post it in the newsletter.

Yours Truly,

Paula Reynolds, WOAHH President

Calendar at-a-Glance

Details on pages 6-7

June 14: The Cedars Natural Area Preserve Walk with Laura Young

July 24: Mushroom Discovery Walk with Lee Borg

August 9: Tour of Member's Native Garden, Susan Brown & Christy Shivell

September 9: Wildflower Walk, Doe Mountain Reserve

WOAHH Merch

Spring means we dress in layers and WOAHH has them all. Short sleeve tees, long sleeve tees, hoodies, sweatshirts, bucket hats and ball caps in many colors! It is the only fundraiser for our chapter.

Visit [Get wild. | Bonfire](#), or scan the QR code below with your smart phone's camera.



Tips and Tricks to Access Popular Books

WOAH Vice President Melanie Smith is a school librarian in Smyth County, which makes her one of the original human search engines. Here Melanie provides tips on how to most readily access some of the books that have been recommended in the WOAH newsletter over the past year.

As a librarian, I am asked a lot about books, and, especially, how to access popular or recommended books. “It’s always checked out!” And that is frustrating. I know. I am an avid reader myself! Here are some tips and tricks to getting those books that we recommend in our WOAH newsletter. Some of them, like the recently released “The Serviceberry,” are in high demand, but you CAN get access to a free copy.

- 1). Have the library place the physical copy of the book you want on HOLD. Or, request it through **INTERLIBRARY LOAN**, a free service where a library can borrow a book on your behalf.
- 2). Most libraries (in fact, ALL of them in our WOAH area in both **Virginia and Tennessee**) offer **Libby**. Libby (formerly OverDrive) is an app that you download for free to access ebooks, e-audio books, and magazines. The only downside to Libby is that, just like in the physical library, there are a limited number of copies of each item (except magazines) that you can download, and you might have to place your desired item on hold.
- 3). All of the libraries in this area also offer the **Hoopla** app for free. Hoopla is a digital library platform which offers ebooks, audiobooks, movies, TV shows and music. Just like Libby, you can download this app by using your library card. Depending on the version of Hoopla that your local library has, you can access up to four items per month. Unlike Libby, there is never a hold on these items.
- 4). Don’t forget other digital services your public library offers. For example, Smyth County Public Library in Virginia (branches in Marion, Saltville and Chilhowie), offers **Universal Class** (for free!!) which has gardening and crafting classes, among 500 other topics. You can also access major newspapers for free online through your public library. Simply visit your local library’s web page to access this plethora of resources.

If you haven’t figured out by now that your public library is a great source of information and entertainment, all for FREE, then I haven’t done my job. So here it is: **USE YOUR LIBRARY!** The services are many, easy to use and FREE!!

See the chart below for a list of WOAH reviewed books available on line.

Books Reviewed in Prior WOAHS Newsletters and Online Availability

A List of Books Reviewed in past WOAHS newsletters can be found on the WOAHS web site under the [“Books”](#) tab. This list indicates which of these are available on either Libby or Hoopla. WOAHS Reviewed Books available in on-line Library (some are text and some are audio) Libby or digital media Hoopla.

	SWVA Public Library Libby	Tennessee READS Libby	Hoopla
The Comfort of Crows: A Backyard Year	Yes	Yes	Yes
Braiding Sweetgrass	Yes	Yes	Yes
The Forest Unseen	No	Yes	Yes
Bringing Nature Home	No	Yes	Yes
Mayflies-Richard Wilbur	No	No	No
Eaarth-Making Life on a Tough New Planet	No	No	Yes
The Nature of Oaks	No	No	Yes
A Sand County Almanac and Sketches	No	Yes	Yes
Attracting Native Pollinators	No	No	Yes
Gathering Moss	Yes	Yes	Yes
The Light Eaters	No	No	Yes
The Middle of Somewhere	No	Yes	Yes
The Serviceberry	Yes	Yes	No
Bad Naturalist	Yes	Yes	No
A guide to Gardening with SW VA Native Plants * Available on line PDF Plant SWVA Natives Guide_web.pdf	No	No	No

Take a look at the Wild Ones National Reading List of 29 books on the Books tab on the Wild Ones Appalachian Highlands website. <https://wildones.org/wild-ones-reading-list/>

WOAHS Resources for Native Plants

A variety of resources are available on the WOAHS web page under the [tools tab](#) such as:

It's a rainy day for me to browse native plant Web sites, give me some starters:

- Bringing Nature Home, Doug Tallamy <http://www.bringingnaturehome.net>
- Homegrown National Park <http://homegrownnationalpark.org>
- Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center <http://www.wildflower.org/>
- VA Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries <http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/wildlife/habitat/>
- TN Native Plant Society <https://www.tnps.org/>
- VA Native Plant Society <https://vnps.org/>
- Tennessee-Kentucky Plant Atlas [Tennessee-Kentucky Plant Atlas](#)
- Digital Atlas of the Virginia Flora <https://vaplantatlas.org/index.php?do=browse:county>

Holston Conference-Emory & Henry Cemetery Native Habitat Meadow

Monica Hoel, newly retired Alumni Director for Emory & Henry; serves as Board Member for the Holston River Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalist, is an avid bird nerd, a Board member of the Virginia Society of Ornithology, teaches at the College for Older Adults, and is Chair of the Cemetery Board among a array of other activities. Monica previously provided Wild Ones a tour of the Cemetery Native Habitat Meadow and now provides an update and musings from the meadow.

From Meadow to Moonscape

Even knowing all the benefits of a controlled burn, seeing the aftermath was jarring.

This year marks the third growing season of a native habitat meadow in the Holston Conference-Emory & Henry Cemetery. "The meadow," as it has come to be known by Holston Rivers Virginia Master Naturalist volunteers who work there, is around 2.5 acres. Three years ago, a perfect storm happened: environmental concerns collided with fiduciary challenges. The cost of mowing the cemetery was growing ever-higher so the cemetery board was looking to reduce costs. Folks in the community looking for ways to benefit the ecosystem saw a large area of grass that could be repurposed for a stronger environmental impact. A friend from The Nature Conservancy told us about the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Partners program that helped private landowners create native habitat.

The Meadow was a hit, but there is still much education to be done. At the end of that first summer, we were left with what native plant aficionados know is a healthy field of winter habitat, overwintering grounds, and food sources. But someone who didn't know about those benefits mowed down the entire meadow of stalks that first winter.

As we entered the third growing season, our friends at U.S. Fish and Wildlife wanted to do a controlled burn to get the area ready for overseeding. There were no rogue mowers this year, so there was plenty of fuel for the Virginia Department of Forestry to safely and effectively burn the acreage.

But all the knowledge in the world about reducing invasives, preparing the soil, making the land more receptive to new seeds, and opening up the site for new germination couldn't settle a gnawing doubt after seeing the scorched earth: "Was this the right thing to do?"

Our native plant meadow that had just been filled with dry stalks (hopefully an overwinter home for native bees) and seed heads (definitely a source of food for flocks of birds) was suddenly transformed into a moonscape. It was hard not to worry how wildlife would respond to the sudden makeover.

The next day brought answers. A flock of Robins were combing the burned hillside for insects. A beautiful Northern Flicker was digging into the soil in search of ants and larvae. An American Crow was marching along the cusp of the slope grabbing who-knows-what with such success that he was soon joined by a murder of friends.

It was a beautiful demonstration of how adaptive wildlife can be. And, it was a good reminder that a certain amount of “good fire” is not only acceptable in nature it is beneficial.

Within a week of the burn, the entire meadow was turning green. Two weeks after the fire, the overseeding took place with a new mix of flower and grass seeds. Seven weeks later, returning plants are 3 feet tall and those brand-new seeds are benefiting from a lot of sun and rain. And soon, when all those new flowers are adorning the cemetery, we’ll all better understand the marvels of seasonal changes, adaptation, and a good fire.

“The Meadow” is located at the Holston Conference-Emory and Henry Cemetery at Linden St. and Cambridge Ave. in Emory VA.



Event Details

June 14 **The Cedars Natural Area Preserve**

Join Laura Young, the Southwest Regional Steward of the VA Natural Heritage Program, to visit one of the most unique natural areas in Virginia. The Cedars Natural Area Preserve is home to over 30 rare, threatened, or endangered plant and animal species and communities in southwest Virginia. It also protects and manages for springs, karst features, caves, and riverbanks that are home to over 60 rare, threatened, and endangered aquatic and cave species.

The targeted unique landscapes range from rocky limestone above ground karst with cliff break ferns and stone crop to dry, fire-maintained prairie glades loaded with big blue stem, hoary puccoon, yarrow leaved ragwort, and lobelias. We have woodland savannas full of milkweeds, mountain mints, and rattlesnake master that are abundant with butterflies and other pollinators during the summer months. As well as wet, rich, coves full of celandine poppies, Virginia blue bells, spring beauties, and bloodroot. We'll try to take a glance at a wide variety of different communities in various stages of restoration.

The Cedars is not a typical preserve in the sense of walking trails and parking areas, it exists for the resources first and the humans second. Plan to be walking through the forest, potentially on uneven ground, and through vegetation at times. It's recommended to wear long pants and sturdy hiking shoes or boots, and bring trekking poles if they would assist you. Bug spray and sunscreen are recommended as well as whatever food, water, and weather appropriate clothing items you need to have a good day in the woods.

Participation in this event will be limited to maintain a high-quality experience for all attendees. WOAHP members can register starting May 10th, and registration will be available to the others starting May 31st. Register by email to: wildonesappalachianhighlands@gmail.com

The Cedars are about 1 ½ hour drive from Bristol. Confirmation and directions to The Cedars will be provided to the registrants. by email.

July 24: **Mushroom Discovery Walk with Lee Borg**

Join Lee Borg at the Blue Ridge Discovery Center to identify and learn about various mushroom species growing there. Lee is a Virginia Master Naturalist with a passion for edible wild mushrooms. She retired from software engineering after 36 years, moved to the mountains, and began to notice mushrooms. Dazzled by the stunning variety of shapes and colors, curiosity drove her to have them identified. When told she had found a choice edible, something shifted in her mind about the possibility of obtaining good food from the forest vs. the grocery store. Lee has now safely consumed over 100 species of wild mushrooms, learned about the trees and plants that support them, and most importantly, how interconnected our natural world is.

Event Details (continued)

July 24: Mushroom Discovery Walk with Lee Borg (continued)

We encourage participants to bring a sack lunch and explore the wildlife habitat at the BRDC after the mushroom walk. Included are a wetland, rain garden and nature trail.

Participation in this event will be limited to maintain a high-quality experience for all attendees. WOA members can register starting June 24th, and registration will be available to the public starting July 10th.

Register by email to: wildonesappalachianhighlands@gmail.com

Time: 10:30 am – 1:00 pm

Location: Blue Ridge Discovery Center, 6402 Whitetop Rd., Troutdale, VA 24378,

August 9: Tour of member's Native Garden, Susan Brown and Christy Shivell

(WOAH members only event)

September 9: Living on the Edge, Members Guided Nature Walk with Jen Skarsaune

Join Certified Tennessee Naturalist and fellow Wild Ones member Jen Skarsaune to explore the flora and fauna of edge habitat at Doe Mountain Recreation Area. Learn about native plants in bloom and some of the pollinators that they support.

We will gather at the Doe Mountain Adventure Center before leaving on a 1-mile naturalist guided walk along one of Doe Mountain's trails. Wear durable footwear and weather appropriate clothing. The walk will take approximately an hour. Bring your curiosity, a water bottle and hiking stick. This is a FREE event. You do not need to purchase a day pass but please complete a waiver if you do not already have a DMRA pass. <https://waiver.smartwaiver.com/w/wvujn19nk2mezbgmb2ymw/web/>

This event is open exclusively to Wild Ones Appalachian Highlands members. Participation will be limited to maintain a high-quality experience for all attendees. WOA members can register via email to: wildonesappalachianhighlands@gmail.com. DMRA is about 1 hour's drive from Bristol. Confirmation will be provided to the registrants by email.

Time: 6:00 pm

Location: Adventure Center, 1203 Harbin Hill Road, Mountain City, TN 37683

From Shady Valley, take US421 to J Shoun Rd and Harbin Hill Rd to the Center. From Damascus, take TN91 South to Mountain City and TN 67 2.7 miles west to Harbin Hill Road. The Center coordinates are: 36.45635, -81.84616

More info: <http://dmra.gov>