



Newsletter

August 2025



Since Last Time ...

Hope all is well with you. The Board has been working on reviewing and updating the website. Several members are monitoring the new Community Native Garden at the Coomes Center in Abingdon. Plants are doing well.

The Board is compiling a member survey that will be conducted in the next 1-2 months. It helps the Board determine if we are meeting the needs of the members. We hope there will be a good level of participation in completing the survey.

The Mushroom Walk at the Blue Ridge Discover Center was AMAZING! It was a combined event with Washington County Master Gardeners. We identified and collected about 25 species. Hard to believe there were so many types of mushrooms during our 2-hour walk. Many thanks to Master Naturalist Lee Borg for that wonderful experience. We took time to eat lunch and socialize then it was followed by a tour of the rain gardens with Olivia Jackson. That was also an amazing tour. Oh WOW! You would not believe how many butterflies swarm that garden. It was such a great day. Look for the pictures in this newsletter.

We are looking forward to the Home Garden tour at Susan Brown's residence in Abingdon. Susan has a wide variety of gardens to share with us. This is a member only tour on August 9. Please see additional information in the Events section of the newsletter and on the website. We hope to see you there.

Stay cool. Let the Board know if you have any concerns or suggestions via the WOAHP Gmail address.

Paula Reynolds,
WOAH President

Calendar at-a-Glance

Details on pages 7-8

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

**September 9: Wildflower Walk,
Doe Mountain Reserve, Jen
Skarsaune**

**October 4: Native Plant and Seed
Swap: Members Only**

WOAH Merch



Summer means we need to beat the heat. Short sleeve tees, 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.



Native Trees & Shrubs - Woody Plants

Believe it or not, it is nearly time to think about what woody plants you might want to consider planting this fall. Well known English horticulturalist Snow Ferreniea trained at the world heritage gardens at Kew. Fortunately for us, she has been in the US since 1970 at various US gardens where she developed the wildflower gardens at Longwood Gardens; was Director of Garden of the Woods specializing in native plants; the original Wayside Gardens looking for new plants and at the NY Botanical Gardens. Here Snow provides a discussion of woody native plants which is a prelude to a power point presentation at the December meeting.

“Wildflowers” -- the familiar term we associate with our native flowers, which for the most of us is the burgeoning abundance of spring perennial wildflowers that fill the woods and wood margins around us and also the wealth of sun loving plants that form our meadows and prairies in summer and fall.

But what about the cornucopia of “woody plants” that also fill these areas? North America, in particular the southeast has a wealth of amazing trees and shrubs unmatched anywhere else in the world. Most have long been great favorites of mine. Surprisingly the majority of them are not recognized as native plants coming from our woods and fields. We seem to fixate on the Maples - red and sugar, maybe an oak or two and white birch. In the evergreen realm we might grow the odd pine or juniper, some of which we call cedars! Overlooking all the wonderful plants that could be gracing our landscapes. In many cases providing year-round interest.

The term “Woody Plant” is used to denote plants that have woody stems that do not die back to ground level for the winter. They remain above ground carrying dormant buds on their stems for the following growing season display. These branches often create beautiful architectural features in the winter landscape, while providing shelter and food for birds.

Most trees tend to prefer to grow in sun, many forming the shade needed by the others. Some are shade tolerant and will do well in high shade where they receive good light. Not necessarily full sun. Trees in this group are usually tall – 40’-70’ sometimes more. Most are lovely grown as single specimens.

Then there are the lower growing trees, which typically range from about 20’-35’. Some are sun loving while others form the understory plants we see when walking out in the woods. A favorite area that I call “the transition zone”, is where the sun fades to shade and the shade moves into a sunny situation. Each for a period of time. Here, the quality of light is good while neither end of the spectrum is so intense that it’s detrimental to the plants growing there. A great many of our native plants, both perennial and woody thrive in this area of changing light.

Then there is the plethora of shrubs. Most of which have multiple stems and once again while some do best in full sun, others form the understory, so belong in a shady spot.

All these “woody plants” are quite diverse offering the gardener a large palette to choose from to fit the area(s) we want to develop or change the cultural conditions that we have, along with our personal tastes and aspirations. The majority provide ornamental flowers in an array of colors, forms and sizes, while some are fragrant. Others display attractive, eye-catching fruit or seed heads, pleasing foliage with a good number turning various shades of yellow, gold, red and scarlet creating an eye-catching fall display. Finally, there is their winter aspect. All the way from evergreens in various shades from icy blues, yellows and many shades of green; to the attractive form of the deciduous ones to those with handsome bark that can be a high lite in the winter landscape, especially when backlit by the sun. They are so often over-shadowed by foliage during the growing season.

Adding trees and shrubs to our gardens can be quite an investment. So ideally, we should evaluate the area(s) where we are planning to make some changes to create a garden or add a new border. This way we will have guide lines for our selection of plants that are suitable to the location and we will have the opportunity to amend the site as necessary. Ideally the woody plants should go in first. Because they take longer to establish and begin to develop their shape and size. Frequently they form the framework for the area in question, that will help develop the main body of the area. In some cases, they will be creating the shade we are looking for.

When developing a garden and selecting the plants, I focus on creating a seasonal flow through the garden. So there is always something of interest to look at and enjoy.

The climate in our area is ideal for fall planting for most things. It's important to know the cultural requirements of the plants you are interested in so you have a good ideal (if not a sound understanding) of the growing conditions they need and what their dimensions are going to be. I can attest to the fact that this saves a lot of headaches, work and moving of plants later on!!

So with a glass of refreshment in your hand, take time to saunter around your garden while contemplating what you want – “The Dream”; followed by what is going to make sense and work for you to make these changes and improvements – “Reality”. Compromise might just be needed.

I have put together a list of some of the trees and shrubs that have much to commend them that I would recommend for consideration. Most I have grown for years. But as there is not room for it here this list is available at the web site under the tools/resources tab. [Resources - Wild Ones Appalachian Highlands Chapter](#)

Mushroom ID and Native Garden Walk at Blue Ridge Discovery Center

On July 24th twenty-five members of Wild Ones and Master Gardeners found that an abundance of rain in the past few weeks was certainly timely for mushroom activity. We appreciated the experience and guidance of Master Naturalist Lee Borg in identification of the approximately 25 different species of mushrooms found during our walk at the campus of the [Blue Ridge Discovery Center](#) (Thank you for hosting us BRDC). Lee's enthusiasm is particularly focused on culinary mushrooms, but her identification skill is essential to also cull out those "walk by" mushrooms that could be less than beneficial for one's digestive system. Below are photos of a few of the mushrooms that were found and identified during this walk.

After a pause for lunch, Olivia Jackson, provided a wonderful summary of the facilities at the BRDC where the historic schoolhouse will be celebrating it's 100th birthday later this year. The native gardens have also benefited from the rains producing some of the tallest and most abundant native plants and respective butterflies etc. we have seen (Photos below).



Common names or genera of some mushrooms collected during the walk include: black chanterelle, puff ball, eyelash cup, orange and white coral, false turkey-tail, hedgehog, russula, lactarius, bolete, berkeley polypore, witch's hat, jelly, and bird's nest fungi.



Lee Borg describes mushrooms as they are discovered.



Oliver found an edible green Russula



Bird's nest fungus



Eyelash cups fungus



Blue Ridge Discovery Center
Native Gardens Tour

BRDC Rain Gardens and Native Gardens



Tennessee Naturalist Program Classes

The Tennessee Naturalist Program (TNP) mission is to inspire the desire to learn and share Tennessee's nature. The Bays Mountain Chapter is offering the TNP core course to become a Certified Tennessee Naturalist starting August 15 at Bays Mountain Park and Planetarium in Kingsport. Classes will be held weekly on Friday evenings.

To become a Certified Tennessee Naturalist, students must complete 10 naturalist core course classes and 40 hours of approved volunteer work. The classes feature both classroom lecture and outdoor field components. Class topics include naturalist skills, geology and ecology, aquatic environments, nocturnal environment, reptiles and amphibians, birds, mammals, invertebrates, forests, and plants. Volunteer hours can be done in a variety of naturalist and conservation activities for many different organizations across the state.

Registration information and the full schedule are available on the Bays Mountain Chapter Website: [Tennessee Naturalist Program](https://www.tennnaturalist.org).

Email info@tnnaturalist.org with questions.

Upcoming Event Details

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

WOAH Members Only, Pre-registration Required, Free Event,
Home/Private Garden Tour

We are excited to offer a home garden tour by Susan Brown, a WOA member. She spent 3 years transitioning some of her 12 wooded acres to native plants. Susan consulted with Christy Shivell, owner of Shy Valley Nursery in Fall Branch, TN. Christy will be joining us to talk about her design and planting of various areas. We will divide into groups: native plantings, rain garden, hillside fruit and nut trees, trail through the woods, battle with invasive plants.

Time: Saturday, August 9th, 11:00 am – 1:00 pm (Rain Date 8/16/25)

Location: Abingdon, VA, Members please use email to register for the tour: wildonesappalachianhighlands@gmail.com. and the address will be provided by email closer to the date.

September 9: Living on the Edge, Members Guided Nature Walk at Doe Mountain Recreation Area with Jen Skarsaune

WOAH Members Only, Pre-registration Required

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 1 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/>

Participation will be limited to maintain a high-quality experience for all attendees.

WOAH members can register via e-mail 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: Doe Mountain Adventure Center

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

Upcoming Event Details (Continued)

October 4: Native Plant and Seed Swap

WOAH Members Only, Native Plant and Seed Swap with Potluck Diner

Fall is a great time to share both native plants and seeds from our gardens. Our annual event on Saturday October 4th, is one of the benefits of being a Wild Ones Appalachian Highlands 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 free plants, and meet members.

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

Time: Saturday, October 4th, 3:30 – 6:00 pm

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

Wheelchair Accessible, Public Restroom