



February 2024

ORGANIZATIONAL UPDATES

First Board meeting and HudsonAlpha tour

by [Charles Pannell](#) on 29 Feb

The Wild Ones Board of Directors had its first meeting on 22 February to set strategic goals for the organization, review upcoming events and activities, share updates on our non-profit filing, initiate a budget and open a bank account. Some of the strategic areas of focus for Wild Ones in the coming months include: inspirational speakers, plant ID hikes, native garden tours and weed wrangles. If any member would like to assist with these strategic objectives, please reach out to me or a Board member.

In February our members also toured the HudsonAlpha greenhouse to learn about industrial-scale greenhouse operations and seed-banking. While a greenhouse tour is

peripheral to the main strategic objectives of the Wild Ones North Alabama chapter, it was a privilege to tour this incredible facility and have the opportunity for Q&A with greenhouse staff. As someone who is working on my own greenhouse, I learned a lot! Many thanks to the team at HudsonAlpha for generously devoting their time and energy to host the tour.



Wild Ones North Alabama members at the HudsonAlpha greenhouse tour. This, along with some other upcoming activities, was a member-only event.

NATIVE PLANT SPOTLIGHT

Guest article

***Claytonia virginica* (Spring Beauty)**



Spring Beauties (*Claytonia virginica*) are a sight to behold when flowering en masse. A rare yellow morph *Claytonia virginica* var *hammondiae* exists in a few restricted populations in New Jersey. Photos courtesy of [juliezickefoose](#), [Eric M. Powell](#) on iNaturalist.

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The dainty Spring Beauty (*Claytonia virginica*) carpets meadows, pastures, floodplains, forests and lawns from March to May throughout Eastern North America. The species was named by Carl Linnaeus in 1753 in honor of John Clayton, a minister and amateur Virginia plant collector whose early catalog of Virginia specimens was instrumental to Linnaeus' early understanding of eastern North American flora.

Emerging from swollen underground plant stems known as "corms", the Spring Beauty's early flowering allows it to take advantage of sunlight in the leafless early Spring forest. Its flowers track the arc of the sun as it travels across the sky and will close both at night and on cloudy days to save energy and to protect its pollen. Each blossom lasts only three days, and when the Spring Beauty senses shade from newly emerging leaves on overhead trees, the above-ground parts will *senesce* (wither and die), withdrawing its nutrient reserves into its corm to await next year's Spring.



Pictures showing the petal markings, capsules, and foliage of the Spring Beauty. Images courtesy of [Flown Kimmerling](#), [Molly Nash](#) and [Steve Tobin](#) of INaturalist.

Spring Beauties generate great quantities of nectar and pollen for early spring pollinators, and the pink inwardly pointing markings on its flower petals advertise to pollinators that a delicious reward lies within. Although Spring Beauties are an important food source for at least 30 insect species, the pollinator most closely associated with this wildflower is the aptly-named Spring Beauty Miner Bee (*Andrena erigeniae*), whose lifecycle is perfectly timed to the flowering of the species. The Spring Beauty Miner Bee carries pollen in pink “saddle bags” back to its underground tunnels.



The spring beauty miner bee (*Andrena erigeniae*) carries pink pollen in pom-pom-like “saddle bags.”

Photos courtesy of [Riley Walsh](#), [Chelsea Gottfried](#) on iNaturalist

After pollination, the Spring Beauty sets seeds in three-part capsules, which catapult their contents in mid-May. Each lustrous, black seed is about 2-3 mm long and partly surrounded by a white lipid structure known as an “elaiosome”. Ants gather the seeds of Spring Beauties in their nests, remove the fatty elaiosome, and discard the seeds in a nutrient-rich trash heap where conditions are perfect for new Spring Beauties to emerge. Approximately 30% of all Eastern US spring ephemerals rely primarily on ants for seed dispersal in a process known as “myrmecochory”.

Ethnobotany

The radicle seeds will slowly develop into the Spring Beauty’s tuber-like “corm” - the key energy storage structure that permits early spring flowering. Shaped like inch-long potatoes, the corms are eaten by various rodents when other food is scarce. Humans also consume the “Fairy Spud,” which is rich in Vitamins A & C and has a sweet, chestnut flavor. It can be eaten raw or cooked and has been enjoyed by feral foragers throughout North America’s history. In his popular 1962 book “*Stalking the Wild Asparagus*”, famous outdoorsman and survivalist Euell Gibbons makes the following observations about eating the Spring Beauty corm: “We tried them fried, mashed, in salads, and cooked with peas, like new potatoes. All these ways were completely successful, but, as regular fare, we preferred them just boiled ‘in the jackets.’ My friend grew so fond of this food that he was afraid he would experience withdrawal symptoms when the supply was exhausted.” Beyond the corm, every part of the Spring Beauty is edible, from its energy rich stalk, to its thin lanceolate leaves and its sweet colorful flowers. However, now that you know how important these dainty flowers are to the wider ecosystem, you might just admire their beauty and leave them for the pollinators!

“I have read many definitions of what is a conservationist, and written not a few myself, but I suspect that the best one is written not with a pen, but with an axe.”

- Aldo Leopold

***Pyrus calleryana* (Callery Pear)**



Some key features to look for when identifying Callery pear include white oval lenticels on smooth gray-brown branches, alternately arranged, toothed, ovate leaves (often brilliantly colored in autumn), and long thorny spur shoots (not always present) containing buds.

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History

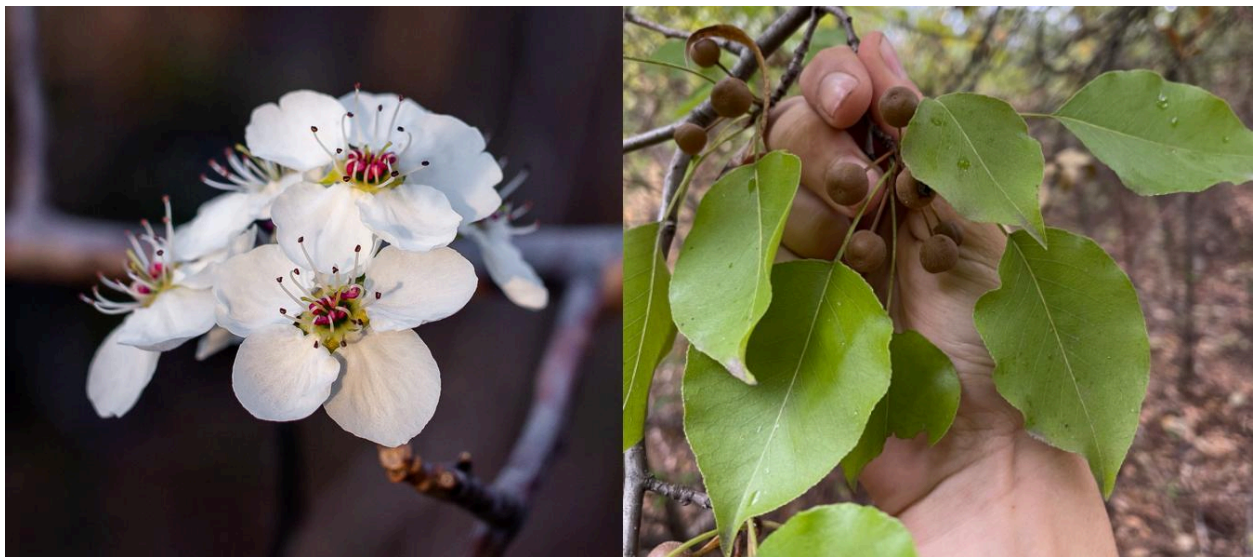
The Callery pear (*Pyrus calleryana*), like most of our worst invasive species, is a native of East & Southeast Asia. It was collected in Asia at the turn of the 20th century by the USDA’s newly formed, “Foreign Seed and Plant Introduction” office to address fire blight that was killing cultivated European pear orchards. The Callery pear’s adaptability to a wide range of growing conditions, climates and soils was observed in its native China and has contributed to its invasiveness in the United States.

Callery pears are naturally self-incompatible (cannot pollinate themselves), and because the horticultural industry relies on clonal cuttings for plant propagation, most of the original Callery pears were sterile. Named clonal cultivars such as “Bradford” were widely planted throughout the 1960s-2000s, but when new cultivars were introduced to address

“Bradford’s” tendency to split in windstorms, the Callery pear began producing fertile marble-sized fruits, which the birds spread.

Today the Callery pear has largely fallen out of favor in the horticultural industry, but the damage has been done. The wild-type F1 offspring of outcrossed pears are compatible with one another. This spring, pay close attention to the large number of white flowering globular trees along roads, rural areas and waste spaces. While some of these trees may be plums, serviceberries, dogwoods, or viburnums, most will be callery pears. Some states, such as Ohio, have recently banned the sale and cultivation of Callery pears. If you are unlucky enough to have this tree on your property, do us all a favor and dispatch it!

There are no pear trees native to North America, but there are many plums and cherries in the keystone genus *Prunus* that are good substitutes. Serviceberries (*Amelanchier*), crabapples (*malus*), and hawthorns (*Crataegus*) - all in the family Rosaceae - are other suitable native alternatives.



Follow your nose to the white, rancid-smelling flowers with purple-tipped anthers to identify a callery pear. The leaves are distinctly thick, glossy, rippled and ovate (egg-shaped) with serrated margins. Plums have a fruity flower fragrance and yellow-tipped anthers. The tall, crowded upright form of a Callery pear and this year’s (or last year’s) hard fruit is another indicator of the species. Pictures courtesy of [mgram](#) and [gwaithir](#) from iNaturalist.

Control:

Basal bark, cut stump and hack and squirt (herbicidal) methods are effective year-round. Find more details on identification and control here:

<https://extension.psu.edu/callery-pear>

As invasive species become increasingly common, we must begin to think not only about how to eliminate them, but also how we can use them to power industry and economic activity. Pear wood is prized for musical instruments and fine furniture and can be used for firewood or charcoal. There's a whole industry ripe for the picking in Callery pear control!

THE ETHICS OF PLANT COLLECTION

Article Co-authored by botanist Lynne Weninegar and Charles Pannell

This article is intended to provide a brief overview on the ethics of plant collection and provide information on the relevant laws and customs in Alabama. Wild Ones members must embody the highest ethical standards pertaining to plant collection, and this article is intended to ensure all members are informed of those standards of conduct.

Collection Guidelines:

- There are specific laws pertaining to plant collection and propagation for profit, collection of federally protected plant species, and the import/export of plant species between states and countries. A partial listing of those laws is included below.
- Permits are generally required to collect plants, and specific permits must be acquired from federal, state, county or city agencies when collecting from public property (including highways). Individuals should always carry a physical copy of the permit when collecting.
- When collecting from private property, the land owner must always be contacted to secure written permission prior to entry. Private property is generally indicated (in Alabama, Tennessee, and many other states) by purple paint on trees, fences or other objects. Tax records and apps such as [Regrid](#) can be used to identify property owners.
- The 1-in-20 rule: when collecting plants or parts of plants (eg whole plants, fruits, seeds, cuttings, fronds, etc), never take more than 1 plant in 20 or 5% of reproductive or vegetative material. In general, Wild Ones members should only collect entire plants from their own private properties or during sanctioned plant

rescues (where all permits and permissions are in place and where the destruction of the population is imminent). Plant collections for herbaria should be left to trained botanists.

The most important priorities for the ethical plant collector are:

1. To protect special concern, rare, threatened and endangered species from poaching and to report such activity when observed
2. To prevent the establishment or spread of non-native, invasive plants, animals, fungi, bacteria, and viruses
3. To know and ensure the specific growing conditions (soil, hydrology, pH, light, symbionts, etc) of a plant species acquired via collection.

One of the advantages of Wild Ones is that it brings together a network of like-minded native plant enthusiasts growing thousands of species on private property. While it is (currently) not easy to acquire straight species and local ecotype plants from the nursery trade, one or more local Wild Ones members is likely to have the plants you need. There is no need to poach from the wild - all you need to do is ask a member.

Further information about the legal statutes, customs, and permit application process can be found in the following links:

- Federal:
 - [Legal Protection of Plants in the United States, Faith Campbell, September 1988](#)
 - [Collection permits. USDA Forest Service](#)
 - [Wildflower ethics and native plants](#)
 - [Plant and Animal Collecting on National Forests](#)
 - [36 CFR § 291.11 - Casual collecting on National Forest System lands.](#)
 - [USDA Passes & Permits](#)
 - [Bureau of Land Management: Can I Keep This?](#)
 - [Seeds of Success program \(Native Seed Conservation\)](#)
- State Laws & Ordinances:
 - [Alabama summary of plant protection regulations, updated 2015](#)
 - [Alabama Department of Agriculture & Industries](#)
- General information:
 - [FAQ: How can I obtain permits to make seed collections?](#)
 - [Feral Foraging Foraging Rules & Regulations on Public Lands](#)

CLASSIFIEDS

Because local ecotype plants are still difficult to find in the nursery trade, the classifieds section will include requests for plants and offers for plants. Please send responses to wildonesnorthal@gmail.com.

Plant Requests:

- Linda Curreri is looking for local ecotype (or locally adapted) seeds and plants of the following species:
 - *Rudbeckia hirta* (black-eyed Susan)
 - *Eupatorium maculatum* (spotted Joe-Pye Weed)

Plant Offers:

- Rhonda Zook has local ecotype white and red oak seedlings (unsure of species) if anyone needs to add this keystone tree to a landscape.

UPCOMING EVENTS

WILD ONES NORTH ALABAMA

Wild Ones North AL March Seminar: Plants Native to North Alabama

Who: Wild Ones North AL members and the general public

What: For her Advanced Master Gardener project titled Homesteading on the Prairie Flower Farm; Using Right Plant-Right Place to Create Sustainable Landscapes Soozie Conner Pline documents how she is creating a sustainable landscape by reducing runoff and erosion, restoring native plant and animal habitats, developing edible and esthetic gardens and introducing pollinators and farm animals all while building land value through conservation practices. Soozie's presentation titled Plants Native to North Alabama was developed through observations and trial and error as she and her husband Dan began planting native plants on their 5-acre farm in Limestone County in 2021. This is an ongoing venture that she loves to share and, in the process, hopes her talk will encourage, inspire, and educate you!

When: Thursday, Mar 21st, 6:00-7:30 PM

Where: South Huntsville Public Library (7901 Bailey Cove Rd, Huntsville, AL 35802)

Wild Ones North Alabama Wildflower Hike (members only)

Who: Wild Ones members

What: Spring Wildflower Hike. Look for upcoming communications on the date(s) and location(s).

When: March/April, TBD

Where: Huntsville, AL, region, TBD

Wild Ones Tennessee Valley Native Plant Symposium

Who: Wild Ones members (including members from North AL)

What: Annual Native Plant Symposium of the Wild Ones Tennessee Valley chapter. Registration and details coming soon.

When: April 12th - 14th

Where: Chattanooga, TN

Wild Ones North AL April Seminar: Foraging for native and invasive plants

Who: Wild Ones North AL members and the North Alabama general public

What: Jesse Akozbek, AKA the Feral Forager, will lead Wild Ones on an ethnobotanical journey to explain the principles of foraging and cooking wild plants, including native and invasive species and what plants to forage in early spring.

When: Thursday, April 18th, 6:00-7:30 PM

Where: South Huntsville Public Library (7901 Bailey Cove Rd, Huntsville, AL 35802)

Wild Ones May event: Tour of Paint Rock Forest Research Center (members only)

Who: Wild Ones North AL members

What: Join us for a tour of the famous Paint Rock Research Center where Bill Finch will explain the exciting research the Center is doing on the flora of North Alabama. Be sure to bring water, a hat, bug spray, and appropriate outdoor attire.

When: Sunday, May 5th, 1:00-2:30 PM

Where: 3400 CR-10, Trenton, AL 35774

Wild Ones North AL June Seminar: Why Plant Native Plants

Who: Wild Ones North AL members and the North Alabama general public

What: Why should you plant native plants? Planting native plants provides food for many insects, which in turn feeds our birds. Additionally, native plants provide natural pest control and soil management. This presentation focuses on which native plants attract which insects and how to plant and maintain a native garden. Join us for a special guest lecture from Wild Ones Middle Tennessee membership chair Alicia Allen who will guide us on a journey.

When: Thursday, June 20th, 6:00-7:30 PM

Where: South Huntsville Public Library (7901 Bailey Cove Rd, Huntsville, AL 35802)

Wild Ones North AL July Seminar: Cultivating Native Fruit

Who: Wild Ones North AL members and the North Alabama general public

What: Alabama Cooperative Extension System commercial horticulture agent Holt Akers-Campbell will offer best practices in the propagation, planting, and management of some of our most cherished native fruits including pawpaw, American persimmon, blueberry and elderberry. We will discuss planting for wildlife value, managing for fruit yield, and how these fruits can fit into residential landscaping.

When: Thursday, July 18th, 6:00-7:30 PM

Where: South Huntsville Public Library (7901 Bailey Cove Rd, Huntsville, AL 35802)

Wild Ones North AL August Seminar: Year-Round Gardening with Native Plants to Support Pollinators and Wildlife

Who: Wild Ones North AL members and the North Alabama general public

What: Donnie is Vice-President of Middle Tennessee Wild Ones, and a member of The Tennessee Native Plant Society. Since retiring from teaching high school arts in 2018, Donnie has dedicated his time to building an award winning native plant garden in his backyard and becoming a champion seed germinator. Donnie grows over 250 plants for his Wild Ones Chapter plant sales every spring and fall. He works to rescue native plants from local build sites in Nashville. He presents to garden long groups around the Middle Tennessee area. Donnie and his native garden were featured on Nashville Public Television's Volunteer Gardener.

When: Thursday, August 15th, 6:00-7:30 PM

Where: South Huntsville Public Library (7901 Bailey Cove Rd, Huntsville, AL 35802)



UPCOMING EVENTS
ALLIED REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Shoals Area Annual Arbor Day Tree Celebration

Who: Anyone

What: The Shoals Area Annual Arbor Day Tree Celebration will be hosted by Alabama Forestry Commission, Alabama Treasure Forest Association, and Tennessee Valley Authority at the Lauderdale County AFC office. This event will provide information on proper tree planting methods and the importance of native vegetation in our community. Attendees will have an opportunity to choose from a variety of native tree and shrub species that can be planted in a landscape or forest setting. Native seed packages will also be available for attendees.

Native trees will include: Bald cypress, crabapple, eastern redbud, flowering dogwood, common persimmon, red buckeye, pecan, river birch, catalpa, red maple, willow oak and water oak.

Native shrubs will include: American hazelnut, sweetshrub, common witch hazel, sweetspire, sparkleberry, spicebush and bottlebrush buckeye

When: Wednesday, Mar 6h, 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Where: 1212 Waterloo Rd, Florence, AL 35630

Learn more: Call 205-300-6272 or 256-248-5204 or see [Facebook](#) for details.

Trails & Trilliums

Who: Friends of the South Cumberland & Tennessee Naturalists

What: Three days of guided hikes, workshops and talks by 50 top naturalists from across the state. Visit Stone Door, Savage Gulf, Greeter Falls, Collins Gulf. The trails, waterfalls, overlooks and wildflowers are unparalleled. 20th Annual Naturalist Rally sponsored by the [Friends of South Cumberland State Parks](#) with proceeds benefiting South Cumberland and Savage Gulf State Parks. We **welcome Tennessee naturalists from across the state as we celebrate Earth Day!**

When: Fri-Sat, Apr 19th-21st

Where: Beersheba Springs Conference Center, 58 Hege Ave, Beersheba Springs, TN 37305

Learn more: <https://www.trailsandtrilliums.org/>

Flower Power Day

Who: Anyone

What: Drop in for all kinds of seed & garden activities for National Library Week! Make and take a wildflower "seed bomb" in the Friends of the Library Children's Reading Garden.

Other make & take items will include: paper flower hats, "seed window" craft, and coloring pages. Check out the latest gardening books, and check out actual seeds for your garden from our South Huntsville Seed Library. Visit with representatives from local gardening organizations, and more.

Guest speaker: Charles Pannell of the "Wild Ones North Alabama Chapter"

When: Saturday, May 4th, 10:00 AM -3:00 PM

Where: South Huntsville Public Library

Learn more: <https://events.hmcpl.org/event/2024-05-04/flower-power-day>

Native fruit: growing and foraging Pawpaw, American persimmon, blueberry, and elderberry

Who: Anyone interested

What: A collaborative event on native fruit between Extension and Feral Foraging: Alabama Cooperative Extension System commercial horticulture agent Holt Akers-Campbell will offer best practices in the propagation, planting, and management of some of our most cherished native fruits including pawpaw, American persimmon, blueberry and elderberry. We will discuss planting for ecological value, managing for fruit yield, and how these fruits can fit into landscaping or small farm systems. Additionally, Jesse of Feral Foraging will show you how to forage these wild fruits safely and responsibly! You will learn how to scout and positively identify them as well as how to process and preserve what you've gathered! A lot of these fruit trees can be found in many places at different times, but Jesse will share some secrets with you on when they are easiest to find and where to go looking! Online registration reserves your seat.

When: Thu, Aug 1st, 5-7 PM

Where: Limestone County Extension Office, 1109 Market St W Suite A, Athens, AL 35611

Learn more:

<https://www.aces.edu/event/native-fruit-growing-and-foraging-pawpaw-american-persimmon-blueberry-and-elderberry/>

Mushrooms & Woodland Medicinals: growing & foraging high-value fungi, ginseng, and other forest botanicals

Who: Anyone interested

What: Alabama Cooperative Extension System commercial horticulture agent Holt Akers-Campbell will offer an introduction to “forest farming”: producing wild-simulated ginseng, gourmet mushrooms, and other high-value woodland crops. There will be a live demonstration of inoculating a shiitake mushroom log. Additionally, Jesse of Feral Foraging will show you some of the important species that can be found and gathered and the forest types they are associated with. Many deep-forest herbs are sensitive to over-harvesting, so we’ll also learn about how to interact with these species responsibly and even how foraging them can be beneficial to their populations! Register online to reserve a space.

When: Sat, Dec 7th, 2-4 PM

Where: Morgan County Extension Office, 3120 Hwy. 36 West Suite B, Hartselle, AL 35640

Learn more & Register:

<https://www.aces.edu/event/mushrooms-and-woodland-medicinals-growing-foraging-high-value-fungi-ginseng-and-other-forest-botanicals/>

[READ MORE ON OUR WEBSITE](#)



Native Plants, Natural Landscapes