



March 2024

ORGANIZATIONAL UPDATES

Achieving non-profit status and Soozie Pline seminar

by [Charles Pannell](#) on 1 Apr

In March our Wild Ones North Alabama chapter received non-profit recognition by the State of Alabama. Our chapter is officially the first fully chartered Wild Ones chapter in Alabama, and our efforts will simplify the non-profit application process for growing chapters throughout the state. Treasurer Lyn Weir opened a bank account for the North Alabama chapter and initiated a budget, so that speaker's honoraria can be covered.

During the Third Thursday March Seminar Soozie Pline told her story of the transformation of her 5 acre property to incorporate Alabama native plants in a fascinating presentation titled "Plants that are Native to Alabama." Soozie was an energetic and entertaining speaker

with many insights into the plants that thrive in our region. Some of our lucky members and guests even left the seminar with Alabama crotons (mentioned by Soozie) provided by a generous Wild Ones member (hat tip to Jerry). This reflects the true objective of Wild Ones - to bring together people passionate about saving, propagating and sharing native plants. Feel free to bring plants or seeds that you are ethically propagating to any upcoming seminar, social or meeting.



Wild Ones North Alabama members eagerly listen to Soozie Pline's presentation on Plants that are Native to Alabama.

Some members have expressed an interest to have more time to socialize during meetings, but due to the limited time available at the library each month, we will plan members-only "social hikes" to get to know each other, to explore new areas, and to learn about fascinating plants from knowledgeable members. If you have suggestions for places you'd like to visit with the group, please let me know.

NATIVE PLANT SPOTLIGHT

Lithospermum canascens (hoary puccoon)



Hoary puccoon flowering in a cedar glade in Madison County.

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Lithospermum canescens is a plant in the Borage family (Boraginaceae) that is one of the first flowering plants to emerge in glades, prairies and savannas. It has showy, bright orange 5-lobed tubular flowers that unfurl from indeterminate coiled stalks. Like many members of its (Borage) family, it has a hairy (ie “hoary”) appearance, and its epithet *canescens* refers to its stems’ and leaves’ covering in dense, fine hairs. The genus *Lithospermum* refers to its hard, stone-like (*litho-*) seeds (*-spermum*). *Puccoon* is a Powhatan word for a dye plant, and Native Americans used the deep tap roots of hoary puccoon to create a vibrant red dye.



Bouquets of *Lithospermum canescens* emerge in early spring on the prairies and savannas. Photo courtesy of iNaturalist [calumetkathleen](#).

Hoary puccoon is self-incompatible, and each plant produces either pin or thrum flowers. Pin flowers have stigmas above the stamens (inside the flower tube) and thrum flowers have stamens above stigmas (see diagram [here](#)). The purpose is to protect each flower from being pollinated by the same plant. Hoary puccoon produces few viable seeds, and an arbuscular soil mycorrhizal association is hypothesized to be required for successful germination and growth. While this plant has been noted for its horticultural potential, its deep tap root and low seed germination rate have made it difficult to propagate. If you happen to have this plant on your property, consider yourself lucky!

Hoary puccoon is reportedly a larval host plant for the hoary edge skipper (*Cecropterus lyciades*). It grows in sandy to rocky soil and does not like to have wet feet.



Virginia bluebells (*Mertensia virginiana*) is another plant from the Borage family with tubular (now blue) flowers that provides nectar and pollen for dozens of bees, butterflies, moths, skippers and other insects in early Spring.

PLANT IDENTIFICATION



An assortment of species from the carrot family that can be found in Alabama (or nearby) all showing different umbel arrangements. Photos courtesy of iNaturalist contributors [pdpratt](#), [jordan1069](#), [mattmsa](#), [apistopanchax](#), [grinnin](#) and [lena111](#).

Apiaceae (The Carrot family)

The carrot family (*Apiaceae*) is a great place to start with plant identification. Plants in this family have flower clusters (inflorescences) arranged in umbels (leading to its former family name Umbelliferae). Leaves are alternately arranged, often lacy in appearance with deep dissections. While many plants from this family are aromatic and important spices and vegetables (such as carrots, celery, cumin, and coriander), there are also many **deadly** dangerous plants from the carrot family in Alabama. Several species produce furanocoumarins (such as *Angelica* and *Heracleum*) that cause severe and potentially permanent skin disfiguring photo-dermatitis, so be extremely careful when handling unknown species from this family. Socrates himself committed suicide by drinking tea from the deadly poisonous *Conium maculatum* (poison hemlock - not to be confused with our native threatened Hemlock tree *Tsuga canadensis*), which now grows as an exotic invasive plant in North America.

Some plants in this family have tiny umbels or are otherwise diminutive such as the Harbinger-of-Spring (*Erigenia bulbosa*) and native carrot (*Daucus pusillus* - "pusillus" means very small). One extinct North African plant in this genus, the legendary [*Silphium*](#) was used as a perfume, medicine and spice and is believed to have been harvested to extinction by the Ancient Romans.



The tiny Harbinger of Spring (*Erigenia bulbosa*) is an early spring ephemeral that can be seen on Monte Sano. This tiny plant was used as a food source for Native Americans and blooms concomitantly with *Cardamine* and *Claytonia*.

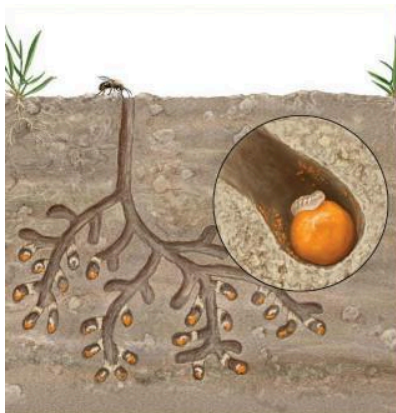
As you continue your journey to learn the native plants inhabiting our state, [this resource](#) on the meaning of various specific epithets may be useful!

GROUND NESTING BEE RESEARCH



The **Ground Nesting Bees** Community Science Project needs your help to collect data on native bee populations and nesting sites. Your contributions will help us to better understand the importance of native bees and how to protect them in our local environments.

A group of researchers from the Entomology Department at Cornell University is promoting conservation of ground-nesting bees. The researchers built a community science project, “Project GNBees,” to map diverse ground-nesting bees. From this, the researchers hope to facilitate the study of the nesting requirements of ground-nesting bees and their biology across space and time.



What to look for:

Many bees nest in large aggregations. Monitor flight activity in the early spring through late summer. Entrances in grass and soil are indicators of bee activity.



It takes a broad coalition of actors to make a meaningful number of observations that can become a tool for conservation and research. Through promoting native plants, the researchers believe native bee species will benefit too. Joint efforts such as this are both meaningful and necessary. As you continue to plant native species and convert your landscape to insect-friendly sustainable management practices, please consider contributing to this community-driven science project.

GNBee: [website](#)

iNaturalist: [project](#)

Instagram: [projectGNBee](#)



We need your help to report nesting aggregations by uploading a photo of a bee entering or exiting its nest to **iNaturalist (GNBee)**
Learn more at GNBee.org



Cornell CALS
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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)

UPCOMING EVENTS
WILD ONES NORTH ALABAMA

Wild Ones Tennessee Valley Native Plant Symposium (Wild Wander Weekend)

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 (various locations)

Learn more: <https://tnvalleywildones.org/wp-content/uploads/Wild-Wander-Digital-Program.pdf>

[Register](#)

Huntsville Botanical Garden's Spring Plant Sale

Who: Anyone

What: Ready...set...*spring!* into gardening at the Huntsville Botanical Garden Spring Plant Sale. Quality and selection are top priority, and the variety of plants, wildflowers, herbs, trees, shrubs, vegetables and native plants at the HBG Spring Plant Sale will provide the best selection for gardens throughout North Alabama. Gardening enthusiasts will also enjoy finding hard-to-find native plant species and unique new cultivars, all in one convenient place. Additionally, there will be plants available for purchase that were grown from HBG collections.

When: Sunday, April 12-14th Fri: 8 AM-6:30 PM; Sat: 8 AM-4 PM; Sun: 11 AM-4 PM

Where: Huntsville Botanical Garden, 4747 Bob Wallace Ave SW, Huntsville, AL 35805

More info: <https://hsvbg.org/event/spring-plant-sale-2/2024-04-14/>

Wild Ones North Alabama Member Social Hike (members only)

Who: Wild Ones members

What: This will be a social hike to meet other members and learn about plant identification. Please RSVP if you plan to attend.

When: Saturday, April 20th, 10 AM

Where: Bethel Spring Nature Preserve (2641 Cherry Tree Rd, New Hope, AL 35760)

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 May Seminar: Gardening for the Birds: Creating a Backyard Wildlife Habitat

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

What: Since retiring, Herb Lewis has dedicated himself to landscaping, birding, and photography. Over the past 20 years, he has channeled his knowledge and experience into creating a natural wildlife habitat within his own backyard garden to attract native and migrating birds. Herb shares his success and techniques for attracting birds through presentations, workshops and training events. His birding interest has expanded into the establishment of the Lewis Birding Trail and Lewis Bird Watch at the Huntsville Botanical Garden. Herb also assisted the Land Trust of North Alabama in developing a bird viewing facility at their Chapman Mountain Nature Preserve.

The presentation illustrates the benefits of gardening for the birds. Some of the techniques for developing a backyard wildlife habitat to attract a wide variety of birds are included along with personal photographs of the birds in the garden environment. The program shows methods for incorporating native plants, providing shelter, and incorporating water features into the garden habitat. The goal is to share the resulting enjoyment and benefits from expanding the vision of backyard gardening.

When: Thursday, May 16th, 6:00-7:30 PM

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

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)

Wild Ones North AL September Seminar: Foraging Ahead: Native Habitats for the Urban Setting

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

What: My name is Aaron Stiles and I run Foraging Ahead, a landscape design service dedicated to reintroducing native habitats to the urban setting. Habitats are more than just gardens that use native plants- they are dynamic ecosystems that support a wide variety of life. By utilizing native ecosystems as a model, we can create small sanctuaries for the plants and animals that make Alabama so beautiful.

When: Thursday, September 19th, 6:00-7:30 PM

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

Wild Ones North AL October Annual Members meeting (members only)

Who: Members of Wild Ones

What: The organization will have an open event to elect new officers, reflect on the year behind us, discuss what worked and didn't, review strategic objectives, plan for the new year ahead, and discuss opportunities for one or more winter weed wrangles.

When: Thursday, October 17th, 6:00-7:30 PM

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

Wild Ones North AL November Seminar: Southeastern Grasslands Institute

Who: Land owners and the North Alabama general public

What: The director of Southeastern Grassland Institute's seed collection and banking program Marcello DeVitis will join Wild Ones, the Land Trust of North Alabama and the UAH community to share a presentation on SGI's seed collection, banking and germination program. Marcello will share details about how land owners can get involved.

When: Thursday, November 14th, time TBD

Where: UAH

UPCOMING EVENTS ALLIED REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

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