



June 2023

photo by Lynda P.

## Healing the Earth one landscape at a time

### **Dear Members of Wild Ones, Smoky Mountains Chapter:**

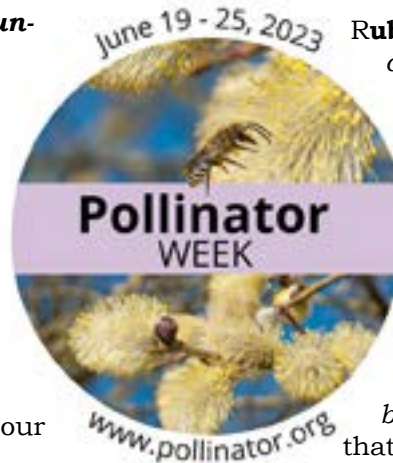
Greetings, Wild Ones members and supporters! As the sun shines brightly and the air fills with the sweet scent of blossoms, we find ourselves on the brink of National Pollinator Week. This special occasion, taking place from June 19th to June 25th, allows us to honor and appreciate the invaluable role of pollinators in East Tennessee's ecosystem. Join us as we explore the enchanting world of native Tennessee plants that attract and support our local pollinators.

### **The Importance of Pollinators**

Pollinators are the unsung heroes of our environment. Bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, and other pollinator species diligently visit flowers in search of nectar and inadvertently transfer pollen from one bloom to another, enabling the plants to reproduce. This process is vital for the production of fruits, seeds, and new plant growth. In East Tennessee, we are fortunate to have a rich diversity of native pollinators that contribute to the health and resilience of our natural landscapes.

### **Native pollinators of East Tennessee**

East Tennessee is teeming with remarkable native pollinator species, each with its unique characteristics and ecological significance. Here are a few notable pollinators you may encounter in our region: **Eastern Tiger Swallowtail Butterfly** (*Papilio glaucus*): One of the largest and most striking butterflies in East Tennessee, the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail features vibrant yellow wings with black stripes. These graceful butterflies visit a variety of flowers, including native wildflowers, and are particularly fond of plants such as milkweed and Joe Pye weed. **Common Eastern Bumblebee** (*Bombus impatiens*): Bumblebees are known for their fuzzy bodies and ability to perform "buzz pollination," where they vibrate their flight muscles to release pollen from flowers. The Common Eastern Bumblebee is a crucial pollinator for native plants like the coneflower and wild bergamot.



**Ruby-throated Hummingbird** (*Archilochus colubris*): As the only hummingbird species commonly found in East Tennessee, the Ruby-throated Hummingbird is a delightful sight. These tiny birds have iridescent green feathers and a shimmering red throat. They are attracted to brightly colored, tubular-shaped flowers such as native coral honeysuckle and cardinal flower. **Mason Bees** (*Osmia bicornis*): Mason bees are solitary bees that play an essential role in pollination.

They are excellent pollinators for fruit trees, berries, and early spring-blooming flowers. You can provide nesting sites for them by drilling holes in logs.

### **Native Tennessee Plants for Pollinators**

To support our local pollinators, it's crucial to cultivate gardens and landscapes that offer nourishment and habitat. Please see the following article for a short list of native Tennessee plants that will entice and sustain our valuable pollinator species: As National Pollinator Week approaches, let us embrace the opportunity to celebrate and protect our local pollinators. By cultivating gardens filled with native Tennessee plants that attract bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, and other pollinators, we can create vibrant and sustainable habitats for these essential creatures. During this special week, take the time to learn more about East Tennessee's native pollinators, explore the remarkable beauty of our native plants, and discover ways to support and conserve these invaluable species throughout the year. Together, we can make a difference in preserving the delicate balance of our ecosystem and ensuring a thriving future for both pollinators and native plants.

Happy National Pollinator Week!

Stacey Sadler Lucchesi  
Wild Ones, Smoky Mountains Chapter  
president



## Blooms to Expect in June: Discover the Spectacular Native Blooms of East Tennessee

- ❁ Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)
- ❁ Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*): With its vibrant purple petals and prominent cone-shaped center, the Purple Coneflower is a beloved favorite among pollinators. It blooms from late spring to early fall, attracting bees, butterflies, and even goldfinches that feed on its seeds.



The Common Eastern Bumblebee and the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail are both attracted to Purple Coneflower

- ❁ Bee Balm (*Monarda spp.*): The colorful and aromatic blooms of Bee Balm are a delight to both humans and pollinators alike. This native Tennessee plant, available in various shades of pink, red, and purple, is a favorite of bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. Its tubular flowers are perfectly suited for the long tongues of hummingbirds, while bees and butterflies feast on its abundant nectar. Bee Balm not only adds beauty to your garden but also serves as a vital source of food for our native pollinators throughout the summer months.
- ❁ Butterflyweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*): As a member of the milkweed family, Butterflyweed is essential for supporting the declining population of monarch butterflies. Its vibrant orange flowers and slender leaves provide nectar for butterflies and serve as host plants for monarch caterpillars. By planting Butterflyweed, you contribute to the conservation of this iconic butterfly species.

- ❁ Eastern Bluestar (*Amsonia tabernaemontana*)
- ❁ Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*)
- ❁ Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*): Known for its intense scarlet-red flowers, the Cardinal Flower is a magnet for hummingbirds and butterflies. This striking plant thrives in moist habitats, such as near streams or in rain gardens.
- ❁ Eastern Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*)
- ❁ Ohio Spiderwort (*Tradescantia ohiensis*)
- ❁ Wild Indigo (*Baptisia tinctoria*)

- ❁ Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*)
- ❁ Wild Geranium (*Geranium maculatum*)
- ❁ Solomon's Seal (*Polygonatum biflorum*)
- ❁ Joe Pye Weed (*Eutrochium purpureum*)
- ❁ Rose Mallow (*Hibiscus moscheutos*)
- ❁ Wild Lupine (*Lupinus perennis*)
- ❁ Blazing Star (*Liatris spicata*)
- ❁ Mountain Mint (*Pycnanthemum spp.*)
- ❁ New England Aster (*Symphotrichum novae-angliae*)



These are just a few examples of native plants that you may find blooming in East Tennessee during June. Keep in mind that the blooming times can vary slightly depending on weather conditions and specific locations within East Tennessee. Also remember to check the plant's growing preferences. Although many native plants do well in full sun and poor soil, some prefer shadier, moist and richer soil locations.

Hummingbirds love to visit Butterflyweed.



Photo by Macey Brown



**Embrace the**

## **NRCS Pollinator Program!**



We have exciting news to share: the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Pollinator Program supports the creation of native pollinator habitats. And the best part? They'll cover part or all of the costs! It is paid by acre or square foot. In order to qualify, participants in the NRCS Pollinator Program will be provided with the specific seed mix requirements by the NRCS.

You have the freedom to source the seeds from a supplier of your choice or NRCS can recommend suppliers. Your habitat will focus solely on native plants, ensuring a tailored environment for local pollinators. It is essential to maintain blooming throughout the growing season, from spring to fall. Seed mixes will also include a small amount of native grasses for added diversity.

Ready to get started? Contact your local county USDA office in person or on the phone to obtain a farm record number from the Farm Service Agency (FSA) coordinator. Then, work with the NRCS District Conservationist in the same building to apply for and secure the grant. Let's make a difference together! Join the NRCS Pollinator Program and create a haven for bees, butterflies, and more. Together, we can nurture and protect these vital pollinators. Follow this link to find your county office: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/getting-assistance/technical-assistance/technical-service-providers#servicecenter>

## **Upcoming Events**

*Saturday, June 17th • 9 – 10 am*

### **Instructional Walk Through the Native Plant Garden at Seven Islands State Birding Park**

There is a \$6 fee for this event, which goes directly to Seven Islands State Birding Park; space is limited, register online: [https://tn-stateparks.com/parks/event\\_details/Seven-Islands/#/?event=wild-ones-guided-hike](https://tn-stateparks.com/parks/event_details/Seven-Islands/#/?event=wild-ones-guided-hike)



*Sunday, June 18th • 6:30 – pm*

### **Zoom Membership Meeting: We are Growing Like Wild! Let's Vote in a new Secretary!**

<https://wildones-org.zoom.us/j/82727224475?pwd=RIR0ZE1wbk0wKzgwaDdnQTJHLL2FiZz09>

Meeting ID: 827 2722 4475

Passcode: @Va0w#

**MEMBERS ONLY**



*Wednesday, June 28th • 6 – 8 pm*

### **Monthly Seminar: Growing Greener Communities through Tennessee Smart Yards**

with Dr. Andrea Ludwig

The Carriage House at Knoxville Botanical Gardens, 2649 Boyds Bridge Pike, Knoxville, TN, 37914  
in-person and live-streamed via Zoom:

<https://wildones-org.zoom.us/j/81880180934?pwd=TWh2WTRhMW0rNi95U0hIN1hCc2xkdz09>



### **Wild Ones Smoky, Mountains Chapter New Website**

Visit our new website where you'll find all the latest news and a schedule of upcoming events. Be sure to bookmark the address and share it with your native plant-loving friends. Also visit our Facebook page:

<https://smokymountains.wildones.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/wildonessmoky-mountains>

# Introducing Missouri Gravel Beds for Urban Tree Planting

by Steacy Lucchesi

Recently, Knoxville Botanical Gardens And Arboretum (KBGA) shared with us an innovative technique that is changing the way cities like Knoxville tackle their green initiatives. Known as Missouri gravel beds, this method has proven to be an effective and efficient way to store bare root trees until they can be planted. By implementing this technique, cities can grow and plant trees throughout the season, ensuring a sustainable and thriving urban landscape.

In collaboration with the city of Knoxville, Urban Forestry, the Knoxville Botanical Gardens has adopted Missouri gravel beds as a strategy for urban tree planting. This time-tested technology, originally conceptualized by Professor Christopher Starbuck, Associate Professor Emeritus, Plant Science & Technology, University of Missouri, has given more options in the approach to tree cultivation, allowing for flexibility in tree procurement and planting schedules. Missouri gravel beds are designed to provide an optimal environment for root development and tree health. The beds consist of carefully selected gravel that provides excellent drainage, preventing water logging and offering the ideal moisture balance for the roots. By securely anchoring themselves in the gravel medium, the trees establish stability and resilience, preparing them for successful transplantation. Transporting trees grown in Missouri gravel beds is a breeze as they can be effortlessly lifted and pulled from the gravel without digging, and carried to the designated holes by hand or wheelbarrow, thanks to their light weight. Additionally, the planting process requires much shallower holes compared to planting ball and burlap trees. One of the results of this technique is its impact on tree survival rates. Over the years, trees grown in Missouri gravel beds at the Knoxville Botanical Gardens have displayed up to a 90% survival rate when replanted in their final locations. This success speaks to the effectiveness of this method in producing resilient trees capable of flourishing in our urban settings. The convenience of storing and transplanting trees from the gravel beds contributes to their overall success. This flexibility empowers cities like Knoxville to create vibrant and green spaces, enhancing the beauty and livability of our urban areas.

As residents of East Tennessee, we understand the significance of preserving our natural environment and enhancing the beauty of our cities. The utilization of Missouri gravel beds for tree planting presents an opportunity to achieve these goals. The implementa-

tion of this technique can contribute to the creation of sustainable, vibrant urban landscapes that provide shade, clean air, and a myriad of benefits for both residents and wildlife. During your next visit to the Knoxville Botanical Gardens, take a moment to appreciate the success of this method and envision the possibilities it holds for our own communities. Wild Ones, for one, can appreciate the beauty and resilience of urban trees, forging a greener and more sustainable future for East Tennessee.

If you're interested in finding out more, check this link: <https://www.knoxvilletn.gov/blog/One.aspx?por->



Bare root trees from the KBGA Missouri gravel beds ready for planting in 2022



## **Wild Ones/Smoky Mountain Officers:**

president - Steacy Sadler Lucchesi  
vice president - Regina Santore  
secretary - vacant  
treasurer - Marti Agler  
social media/website - Emma Oxford  
newsletter - Lynda Parker

*Established in 1977, Wild Ones is a national not-for-profit organization of members who teach the benefits of growing native plants and work together to grow and restore natural landscapes.*

**Wild Ones Mission Statement:** promote environmentally sound landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restoration and establishment of native plant communities.