

# TENNESSEE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Volume 38, Number 4

December 2014



## Wildflower Societies and Grassroots Conservation

The New England Wildflower Society is the oldest—at age 114—of the native plant organizations with which TNPS can claim kinship. When TNPS got underway in 1978, the New England society was already having national influence in conservation and scientific research.

Today there are native plant societies in every state, along with several regional societies. The Southern Appalachian Botanical Society is one of the oldest, founded in 1935 as the Southern Appalachian Botanical Club at the University of West Virginia. Its focus is on the botany of the Eastern States, and it publishes the journal *Cas-tanea*.

An even wider reach is taken by the North American Native Plant Society, founded in 1985 as the Canadian Wildflower Society, which published the magazine *Wildflower*. As more members were attracted from the U.S., the emphasis changed. The organization changed its name in 1999, gave up the magazine's name to Lady Bird Johnson's organization in Texas, and began publishing a 16-page quarterly *Blazing Star*.

Perhaps the oldest of the state organizations is the North Carolina Wild Flower Preservation Society, founded in 1951. However, the largest of the state societies is the California Native Plant Society. Founded in 1965, CNPS today has almost 10,000 members, 34 regional chapters, 19 paid staff



Watercolor of rattlesnake plantain by  
Sewanee artist Jim Ann Howard.

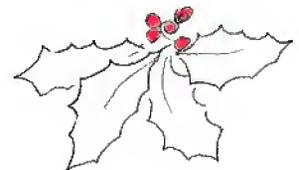
## New Officers Ready to Begin Two-Year Terms

A slate of officers, including President-elect Susan Sweetser, are about to begin two-year terms at the head of TNPS.

Susan is joined by Todd Crabtree, vice-president; Lorie Emens, treasurer; and Margie Hunter, secretary. Both Todd and Margie actually continue in their positions. Darel Hess is retiring as treasurer after four years.

Newly elected directors are Dennis Horn, Larry Pounds, and Louise Gregory. Louise, a resident of Decatur County, is the new member of the board.

New terms begin at the first of the new year. The board of directors will hold its first meeting of the year at 11 a.m. January 10 at the Wilderness Station of Barfield-Crescent Park in Murfreesboro.



Merry Christmas  
&  
Happy New Year

Continued on page 3

# TNPS Newsletter

December 2014

Vol. 38, No. 4

This newsletter is a publication of the Tennessee Native Plant Society and is published four times a year, generally in February, June, August, and November.

The Tennessee Native Plant Society (TNPS) was founded in 1978. Its purposes are to assist in the exchange of information and encourage fellowship among Tennessee's botanists, both amateur and professional; to promote public education about Tennessee flora and wild plants in general; to provide, through publication of a newsletter or journal, a formal means of documenting information on Tennessee flora and of informing the public about wild plants; and to promote the protection and enhancement of Tennessee's wild plant communities.

Dues for each calendar year are:

Regular: \$20

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[lathamdavis@bellsouth.net](mailto:lathamdavis@bellsouth.net)

TNPS Website:  
[www.tnps.org/](http://www.tnps.org/)



## A Letter from the President

So this is it, my last column for the newsletter as president. I won't rehash things from my last article, but I do want to thank all the board members from the past four years for all their help and support. I especially want to recognize the contribution that Darel Hess made as treasurer. Darel had to quickly assume the job when Kay Jones (along with Bill) made a move to Virginia to be closer to family. I almost went into panic mode, but Darel transitioned seamlessly to allay all my fears. The treasurer's position really is one of the most important cogs in the TNPS machine and is for the most part overlooked. I want everyone to know what a tremendous job Darel did over the past four years. You know the treasurer is keeping a tight ship when the president never has to worry about a single money issue. Thank you, Darel!



I hope I've left the organization in as good of shape for Susan as Mary did for me. One of the nicest things about being president is getting to work with great people. And I hope you all remember to offer Susan help and encouragement. It doesn't take a lot to really make you feel good about what you are trying to accomplish when someone offers to help.

The field trip committee is planning next year's schedule of excursions. Todd Crabtree does a wonderful job chairing this committee and finalizing the calendar. If you would like to lead a trip or suggest a place to visit, please let Todd or one of the committee members (myself, Dennis Horn, Larry Pounds, and Mary Priestley) know and we will try to work your suggestion into the schedule. As trip leaders, we sometimes struggle to find new sites to visit, so any suggestion will be greatly appreciated.

It has been a great honor for me to serve you as president for the last four years, but it is time for an infusion of new blood with new ideas. Thank you to everyone for all your support; it made my term so enjoyable and rewarding.

And for one last time, I get to say...  
See you on the trail!

*Bart*

### UT Botanist Walter Herndon Has Died

Walter R. Herndon, emeritus professor of botany at the University of Tennessee and life member of TNPS, died June 25 of this year.

Walter received his Ph.D. from Vanderbilt University and taught at Middle Tennessee State University and the University of Alabama before moving to the University of Tennessee in 1961 and becoming chairman of the botany department. He served in university administrative roles, resumed teaching, and retired in 1994. He is survived by his wife Faye and four children.

The family requests memorials be made to the Walter R. Herndon Botanical Garden Endowment or the H. R. DeSelm Botany and Plant Ecology Endowment at the University of Tennessee.

## Conservation Among Native Plant Societies

—Continued

members, and a budget of more than \$1.8 million. It lobbies for legislation to protect natural areas and native species, finances research, publishes two periodicals, and conducts workshops and other educational programs. In many ways it is the west coast version of the New England Wildflower Society.

Many TNPS members are familiar with Wild Ones, an organization with a chapter focus promoting use of natives in gardens and public landscapes. The Tennessee Valley Chapter is located in Chattanooga. Chapters exist in 16 states. Its mission is to raise public awareness of the benefits of native plants but also seeks “to partner with other organizations to preserve native plants and biodiversity from loss due to development and other forces.”

A distinctly different approach is taken by the Center for Plant Conservation, dedicated solely to preventing the extinction of U.S. native plants. With offices at the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis, the center is a network of 39 leading botanical institutions. It was founded in 1984.

The center operates the only coordinated national program of off-site (ex situ) conservation of rare plant material. This conservation collection ensures that material is available for restoration and recovery efforts for these species. The Center for Plant Conservation also works in research, restoration, technical assistance, education, and advocacy through the efforts of the network organizations and the national office.

The CPC network maintains the National Collection of Endangered Plants. Believed to be the largest living collection of rare plants in the world, the collection contains more than 750 of America’s most imperiled native plants. Live plant material is collected from nature under controlled conditions and then carefully maintained as seed, rooted cuttings, or mature plants.

This broad array of botanical organizations illustrates the great variety of interests in native plants and environmental protection.

In 2003 *Marilandica* the journal of the Maryland Native Plant Society, published an essay by Stanwyn G. Shetler, botanist emeritus of the Smithsonian Institution.

Shetler provided an overview of regional and state native plant societies at that time and the programs that drove them. He mentioned in particular removal of invasive aliens, plant rescues, landscaping with natives, and seed exchanges. While complimenting some of these efforts in general, Shetler offered criticism.

“Shouldn’t native plant societies be strong advocates of natural process in the revegetation of land, minimizing intervention and letting nature be nature whenever possible,” he said.

He goes further, taking the position that a native, “regardless of source, near or far, becomes an alien or exotic the moment it is sowed or transplanted by human agency.”

Sowing and transplanting, he said, interfere with scientific research into the natural processes of propagation and plant migration.

In concluding, Shetler said, “Surely, native plant societies should spend more time studying nature and less time planting and manipulating it. There are only three rules for saving species—save habitat, save habitat, save habitat! That reality alone should govern our future agenda.”

Hmmmm. Food for thought.

—Latham Davis

## Offering Certificate in Native Plants

TNPS is again joining Chattanooga’s Reflection Riding and the Tennessee Valley chapter of Wild Ones to sponsor a Certificate in Native Plants.

The certificate is earned by completing four (six-hour) core courses and eight (four-hour) elective courses for a total of 56 hours. In addition, students are required to complete 40 hours of volunteer service in the community. Classes will be held at the Reflection Riding and Nature Center.

Information about the program is posted on our webpage, [tnps.org](http://tnps.org). For more information or to register, contact Corey Hagen at [chagen@reflectionriding.org](mailto:chagen@reflectionriding.org) or 423-821-1160.



Photo by Latham Davis

*Trailing Arbutus*

## Book Explores Fiery Gizzard

Mary Priestley, a former TNPS president, is the author of a new book, *Fiery Gizzard: Voices From the Wilderness*, about the natural treasures of this well known cove and natural area in Grundy County and its human influences.

Richly illustrated by the author, the book is available in paperback from Amazon.

# Try Your Hand at Botanical Drawing

Here we are, well past the first frost and months away from our favorite spring wildflowers. If you, like me, find these winter days (and nights) a little too gloomy, you might try an old remedy for the doldrums that can also expand your knowledge and love of nature. You need only a pencil or pen and paper to begin a journey into botanical drawing.

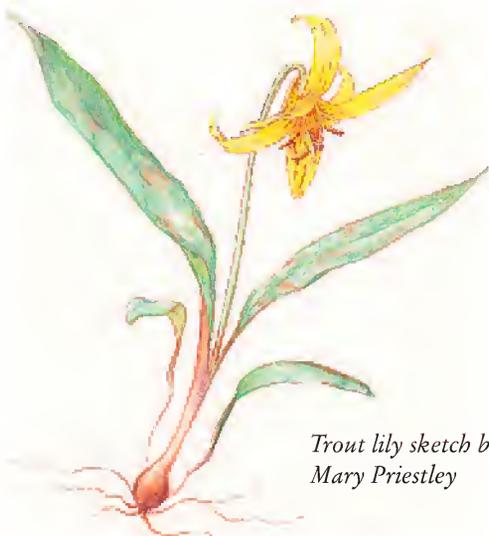
Mary Priestley, who contributed the first two illustrations on this page, said, “I’ve been at it for several years now, and I think it’s as satisfying a hobby as there is.”

Now is the time to start, even though you don’t have the flowering plants in front of you. Begin with what you can find in your winter garden or among the photographs and drawings in your field guides and other books.

Mary explains why botanical drawing is not as difficult as you may think.

“First,” she says, “plants, unlike most animals, aren’t bilaterally symmetrical. With animals, you have to make the halves match. Sketch one beautiful monarch butterfly wing, and you’re not finished until you do the second one.

“Second, plants don’t usually move fast enough to be a problem. Your cat might lie there for a few hours, but a squirrel in the yard? Forget it. Also, because they aren’t mobile, you don’t have to find a plant’s center of gravity. A drawing of a bird on a twig has to have at least one foot beneath its center of gravity, but a plant can lean and then lean some more before it begins to look awkward.



Trout lily sketch by  
Mary Priestley



“Next, plants don’t look back at you, so there’s no chance of drawing them cock-eyed—always a danger with animals. Last, all organisms just get more beautiful and interesting with age. Craggy, wrinkly old trees or spent trilliums won’t get their feelings hurt the more decrepit you draw them, whereas your husband just might!”

Mary suggests that as you’re getting started, you might use fruits and vegetables or cut flowers from the grocery store for your subjects, or twigs and acorns from the yard. Southern magnolia and rhododendron leaves are a nice challenge but not too daunting.

With practice, you’ll be ready when the first ephemerals appear. Mary advises you to begin in spring with members of the former lily family: trilliums, trout lilies, and Solomon’s seal.

“You can never draw too many Sweet Betsy trilliums. Bloodroot is the same way—so much personality!” she said.

“When I draw a flower, I first outline the ‘shape’ in pencil—lines for stems, leaf midvein, and margins; circles, cones, ellipses, or some general shape for the flowers,” she said. “Eyeballing or estimating sizes works fine for plants.”

You might want to check the TNPS field guide, which mentions key features that you’ll want to include. (Sweet Betsy’s stamens are blunt at the tips, whereas those of sessile trillium have prominent beak-like projections.)



Euonymus americanus with  
pencil notations by Jill  
Carpenter.

Once you get these basics down and you like the composition, you can complete the drawing in pencil or switch to another medium for the final drawing, including as many details as you choose.

“Pen and ink is a very forgiving medium,” Mary said. “Carefully go over a pencil sketch in pen, erase the pencil lines, and you’ll surprise yourself with how good your drawing is! Hatching or cross-hatching is an easy way to shade and add contour. Put an artist’s mat around your work, and it will look good enough to hang on the wall.”

Even if you don’t frame your botanical drawings, Mary recommends keeping them together in a sketchbook. “It’s great fun to go back through and look at your work. Date your drawings, add some comments about the subjects, and voila! You’ve got a nature journal!”

You can also find good information about botanical



Crabapple by Jill Carpenter

drawing in many books and videos.

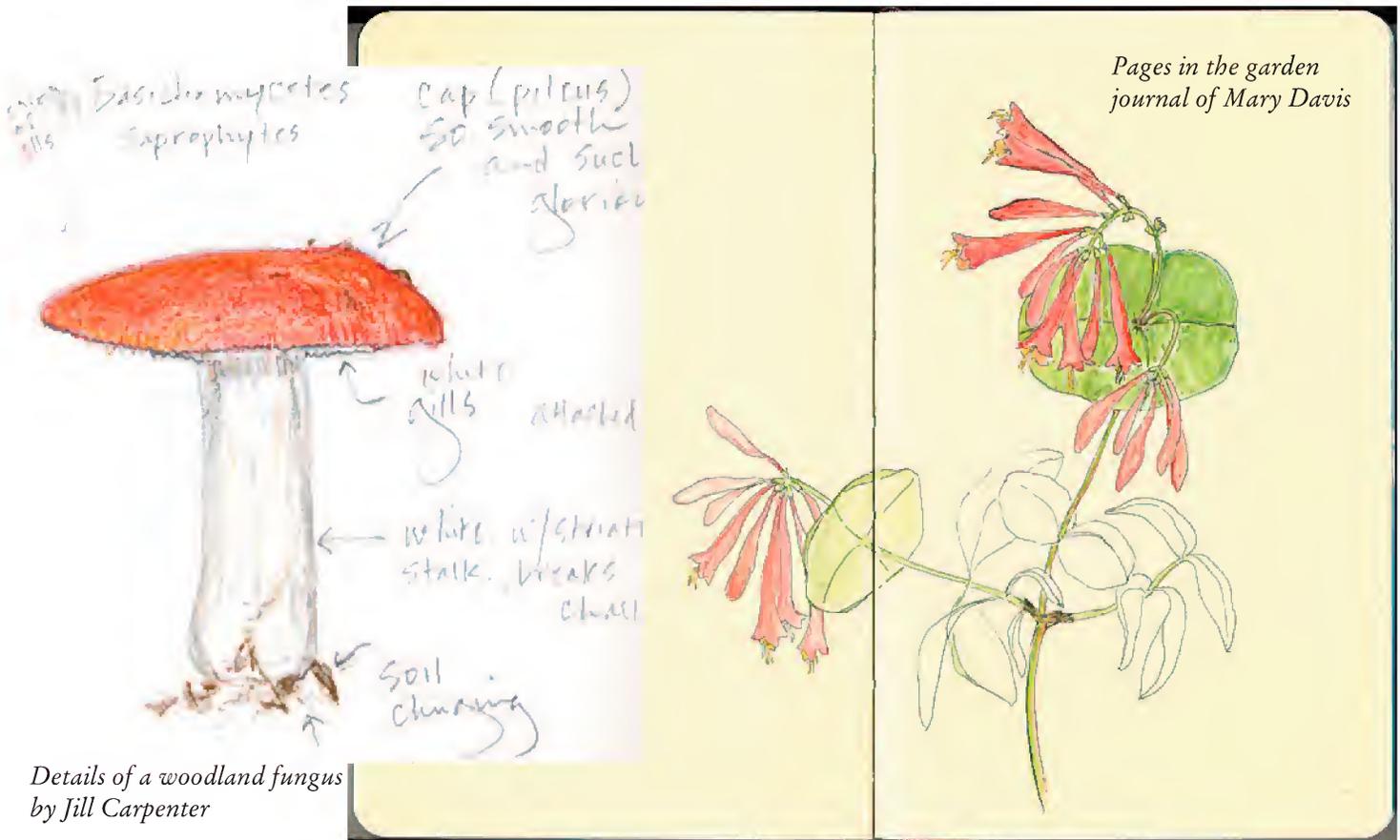
“I started with Keith West’s *How to Draw Plants* and still refer to it a lot,” said Mary.

She also suggests a free online tutorial on botanical drawing with pencil and watercolor by Val Webb ([valwebb.wordpress.com](http://valwebb.wordpress.com)). Webb offers drawing classes online, as well, that you can take at your own pace. [Craftsy.com](http://Craftsy.com) is another site for drawing and painting videos.

Recalling the summer she took a workshop on scientific illustration at Highlands Biological Station in North Carolina, Mary mentioned

two five-day workshops in natural science illustration at Highlands next summer. Check them out online. A little practice in winter, then: “What a wonderful way to spend a few days in the mountains!”

—Latham Davis



Details of a woodland fungus by Jill Carpenter

# Winter Gardening

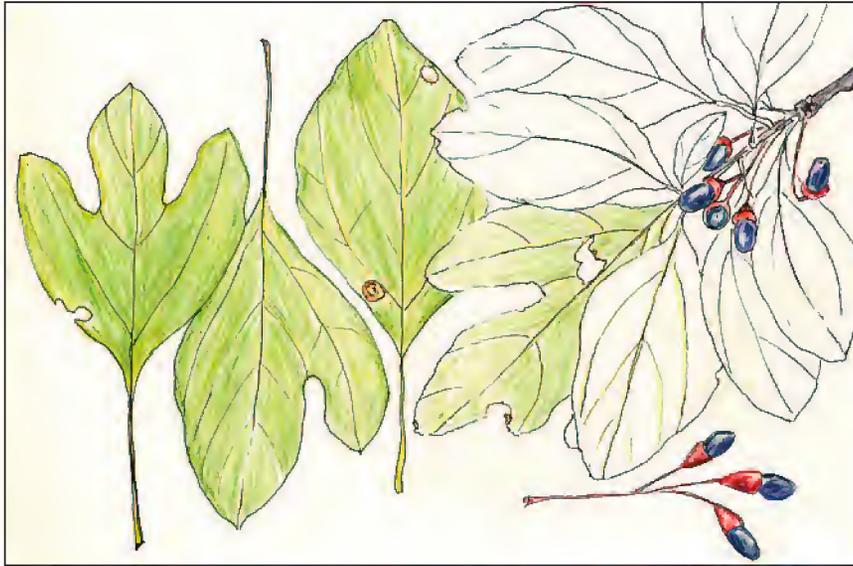
by Katrina Hayes

This time of year is perfect for moving native shrubs and flowers to a new place where they can get: more sun, more shade, or maybe more moist soil. A lot of native plants have basal rosettes in the fall and winter that make identification easier, and shrubby plants can be marked before they lose their leaves.

Tennessee's ground never freezes solid, so plants moved now require much less watering than plants moved at other times of year. The plants will still have to be watered whenever there is a week without rain, as the roots regrow over the fall and winter to replace the roots cut by the transplanting. Now is a good time to move the evergreen Christmas ferns (*Polystichum acrostichoides*) and the bright blue flowered spring bloomer Jacob's ladder (*Polemonium reptans*) to more desirable locations.

I love digging wild columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*)—one of the first plants to feed hummingbirds in the spring with its dangling blooms—and the pretty purple late summer short's aster (*Aster shortii*) out of my mom's lawn and moving them to my property. At this time of year I have successfully moved wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*) with its spring lil brown jug flowers—a good shady ground cover with its interesting flowers. I have recently moved purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*) and cutleaf or green-headed coneflower (*Rudbeckia laciniata*) and the pink prairie rose (*Rosa setigera*) from their shady sites to a more preferable full sun site, and thinleaf coneflower (*Rudbeckia triloba*) and tall hairy agrimony (*Agrimonia gryposepala*) out of my driveway into a shady bed. I am also separating crowded orange coneflower (*Rudbeckia fulgida*) into single plants to a more spacious and sunny place. I was too late to move the bright purple New York ironweed (*Vernonia noveboracensis*) and soft blue mistflower (*Conoclinium coelestinum*) in the driveway before the plants went dor-

mant. Trumpet vine (*Campsis radicans*) and cross vine (*Bignonia capreolata*) are often still above ground for fall moving—both great at feeding hummers with their elongated flowers in shades of crimson/orange and red-yellow. Currently I've been moving rough-leaf dogwood (*Cornus drummondii*) and coralberry (*Symphoricarpos orbiculatus*) and strawberry shrub out of a crowded bed, into more spacious sites. I love the fuchsia pink berries of the coralberry and the scented blooms of the strawberry shrub. Be careful to dig a wide shallow area for



Sketch of sassafras leaves and fruit by TNPS member Mary Davis

the dogwoods as their spreading roots can make them difficult to transplant. The roots of strawberry shrub (*Calycanthus floridus*) and redbud (*Cercis canadensis*) tend to grow more downward—redbud is a dependable understory small tree that heralds spring with its magenta eye-popping flowers. It is possible to cut partially around a larger shrub (more than one or two feet tall), wait a month for

the plant to recover while keeping it watered, then move it to its permanent new home. The shrub will be more successfully transplanted by giving it a month to regrow roots. I have huge Chickasaw plums (*Prunus angustifolia*) that were originally plum sprouts inconveniently spreading into my mom's lawn. The sprouts are easy to move at this time of year, to put trees into new places.

Gardening in fall makes up for the hot summer months when Tennessee can go a month without rain—rain is more dependable in the fall and winter. I use Margie Hunter's *Gardening with the Native Plants of Tennessee*, the TNPS wildflower book, and William Carey Grimm's *The Illustrated Book of Wildflowers and Shrubs* for plant identification and growing conditions. The term thickets means the plant can take some shade, as at the edges or in the woods; understory or subcanopy means shade. Experiment in your landscape—some plants are able to take more shade or sun than they prefer.

*Katrina Hayes, life time member of TNPS since 1995, National Board Secretary of Wild Ones Native Plants and Natural Landscaping, and trip facilitator (native plant rescue leader) for Georgia Native Plant Society.*

## TNPS FIELD TRIPS

Mineral Slough, Ghost River, Fayette County  
October 4, 2014

An enthusiastic group of 23 folks gathered to tour the Mineral Slough area of Ghost River State Natural Area. We followed the path from the parking lot into the grassy field to look for the highlight species of the trip, willow-leaf aster (*Symphotrichum praealtum*). There were numerous plants of this state endangered species, but just lots of buds and not one single flower open.

For some reason, asters in particular seemed to be late this year, but not other species. We were able to show the key characteristics used to separate this species from other similar ones.

As we crossed the road to the Mineral Slough boardwalk we took a slight detour to check out the banks of a small depressional pond. Immediately, a few bold flowers stood out: narrow-leaf sunflower (*Helianthus angustifolius*), purple gerardia (*Agalinis purpurea*), and nodding ladies-tresses (*Spiranthes cernua*). As we were looking at the sunflowers, there were a couple of plants that seemed to be different, with yellow disks (not dark brown) and wider leaves. After sending pics to a few people to review, all impres-



*Agalinis purpurea* (Purple gerardia)

sions were this might be muck sunflower (*Helianthus similans*). The next week Allan Trently collected the top of an individual, and we sent it to Dr. Ed Schilling at UT for verification. After he examined it, he changed his mind and now thinks it is a yellow-disked variety of narrow-leaf sunflower, but he is running a genetic analysis to confirm this diagnosis.

On to the boardwalk where a gorgeous American beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*) greeted us. Looking down on either side of the boardwalk was some white turtlehead (*Chelone glabra*) along the edge of the water. The slough is a cypress/tupelo swamp, but the predominant tree is tupelo



Photo by Bart Jones

Beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*)

(*Nysa aquatic*). The trees were full of fruit just beginning to ripen to the characteristic black color. At the other end of the boardwalk there is an open area of water where we found spatterdock (*Nuphar lutea*), American bur reed (*Sparganium americanum*), and curlytop knotweed (*Polygonum lapathifolium*). As we got back to dry land we were met with a literal wall of arrowhead-leaf tearthumb (*Polygonum sagittatum*) with stems that sport tiny hooks so that they grab onto clothing and even skin like Velcro. Scattered among this wall were the brilliant orange flowers of jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*) that are crucial nectar repositories for migrating hummingbirds each fall.

We left Mineral Slough and went to the WMA part of the Ghost River complex and traversed the dirt road that transects it. This area is noted for its very sandy soils which end at the tops of bluffs overlooking the Wolf River. This combination gives a surprisingly xeric aspect to the plant communities here. Along the road were species like bluecurls (*Trichostema dichotoma*), late blue aster (*Symphotrichum patens*), and fragrant goldenrod (*Solidago odora*). As the elevation increased, plants associated with dry habitats began to appear. Large stands of yucca (*Yucca filamentosa*) interspersed with prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia humifusa*) occurred on either side of the road. Also notable were the large short-leaf pines (*Pinus echinata*).

On the way back, we found another rare Tennessee plant, sand post oak (*Quercus margarettae*). This scrubby oak is only found at this location in Tennessee, with the next closest populations being about 75 miles south in Mississippi. They are naturally small oaks and in drier conditions can look quite stunted. We found one "giant" that was probably 30 feet tall.

We had a great day of beautiful weather, good friends, and great plants. Who could ask for more!

—Bart Jones

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# Wild Ones Native Plant Symposium January 24

The Tennessee Valley Chapter of Wild Ones will hold its fourth annual Native Plant Symposium Jan. 24 at Chattanooga State Community College.

The theme this year is “Living Landscape” and will feature programs by author Doug Tallamy, author and TNPS member Rita Venable, and landscape designer Kelly Holdbrooks.

The all-day symposium is organized with both casual and experienced gardeners in mind. Learn about the many benefits of using native plants in the landscape.

Programs begin at 9 a.m. and continue until 4 p.m. in the Chattanooga State Humanities Auditorium located on the main campus at 4501 Amnicola Highway.

Interested persons may obtain a symposium brochure and register on-line at [www.tennesseevalley.wildones.org](http://www.tennesseevalley.wildones.org). The brochure provides instructions on registering by mail for persons who prefer not to use the online registration.



*A bumble bee encounters a crab spider.*

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