

April is Native Plant Month!

On July 18, 2019, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine signed House Bill 59 of the 133 General Assembly into law designating the month of April as Ohio Native Plant Month. This legislation makes Ohio one of the first states in the country to have an entire month dedicated to native plants! The bill enacts section 5.2514 of the Ohio Revised Code. Ohio House Bill 59 states "The month of April is designated as 'Ohio Native Plant Month' to increase public awareness of Ohio's native plants and the many benefits they provide to pollinators, Ohio's economy, and the health of Ohio's environment."

On March 26, 2021, U.S. Senators Rob Portman (R-OH) and Mazie Hirono (D-HI) praised unanimous Senate passage of their bipartisan resolution designating April 2021 as "National Native Plant Month." This resolution recognizes the importance of native plants to environmental conservation and restoration, as well as in supporting a diversity of wildlife.

Here is a list of Ohio's state plants and the native varieties which can be found growing in

the Western Wildlife Corridor preserves:

State Tree: The Ohio Buckeye, *Aesculus glabra*, was designated by the Ohio legislature as the state tree in 1953. The name "buckeye" comes from the nut's resemblance to a deer's eye. Residents of Ohio are often referred to as Buckeyes. In 2009 the Pawpaw, *Asimina triloba*, was designated as Ohio's native fruit.

State Flower: The non-native Red Carnation, *Dianthus caryoph*, was selected as the Ohio State Flower in 1904 to honor President William McKinley, who often wore a red carnation in the lapel of his jacket.

State Wildflower: The State Wildflower is the Large White Trillium (also known as Giant White Trillium or Large-flowered Trillium), *Trillium grandiflorum*. Found

in all counties of Ohio, this woodland wildflower became the state flower in 1986.

Nancy Linz, Co-Founder of Ohio Native Plant Month.org, contributed to this article.



Large White Trillium



Tim Sisson

Squirrel Corn — Buckeye Trace



Tim Sisson

Tim Sisson

Dwarf Larkspur — Buckeye Trace



Tim Sisson

Tim Sisson

Downy Yellow Violet — Buckeye Trace

Bluebird Nest Box Monitoring Update

There are now 12 bluebird nest boxes in or near open areas at Kirby Nature Preserve (the boxes are near the native plants garden, the barn and the prairie). Our first monitoring project was held in 2020. Results of our first monitoring project showed that we found two bluebird nests, three tree swallow nests, one chickadee nest and one house wren nest. We met one of our goals in increasing biodiversity by attracting more than just bluebirds! We also are meeting our goal of being aware of what is happening here on our properties, and sharing that information with our members, neighbors, and other organizations and institutions.

On April 6, 2021, the first nest monitoring walk along the Bluebird Trail at Kirby nature preserve showed signs of bird activity: moss cup nests were found in three of the nest boxes. It was discovered that a couple of boxes could not be opened due to normal wear and tear; these will be repaired within a week.

As colorful harbingers of spring, eastern bluebirds begin looking for cavity nesting sites in open areas during early spring. As cavity nesters that utilize open habitat, they require hollow tree branches or fence posts which were once common in our area. Today most wooden fence

posts have been replaced by metal ones and dead branches in orchards and backyards are trimmed to promote healthier trees. In response to declining bluebird numbers, nest boxes have been installed throughout parks, cemeteries and golf courses since the 1960's to replace natural cavities. Today, bluebird numbers have made an amazing comeback, but the work is not done. Numbers are still low in many areas due partly to fierce competition from other cavity nesters (mostly non-native house sparrows and starlings)! Installing nest boxes benefits many other species of cavity nesting birds as well. Monitoring boxes at local parks has revealed that 10 species of birds will use bluebird boxes, depending on where they are placed. Some may even be used by flying squirrels, white-footed mice and other assorted critters.

Nest box monitoring volunteers are trained so that they can identify the species using these new boxes and keep detailed records. Cleaning and maintenance of the boxes will also be the responsibility of these volunteers to increase success rates. Bluebirds can nest up to three times per year, so the monitoring season can be 7-8 months long!



Yellow Trout Lily, Spring Beauty and Virginia Bluebells — Bender Mountain

Tom Malone

Upcoming Events

Spring Wildflower Walks

Bender Mountain — Thursday, April 22; 11:00 am - 12:00pm

Buckeye Trace — Sunday, April 25; 11:00 am - 12:00pm

Kirby Nature Center — Saturday, May 22; 11:00 am - 12:00pm

As Spring approaches and nature brings new life to our landscapes, most of us will be ready for a hike or two. We are offering a series of wildflower hikes on properties owned and managed by Western Wildlife Corridor, an organization with a mission to protect, restore, and preserve natural habitat, and to provide education to foster connections with nature. WWC nature preserves offer some of the best places in Hamilton County to view our spectacular native Ohio wildflowers. We could see Cut-leaved Toothwort, Sessile and Drooping Trillium, Wild Ginger, Woodland Poppy, Blue-eyed Mary, Greek Valerian, Dutchman's Breeches, Wild Hyacinth, Miami Mist, Fernleaf Phacelia and many more.

Due to current covid concerns and to keep everyone safe, we will require registration so that we can limit the number of people on the walks, require that everyone wear a mask, and socially distance while on the trails. In addition to wildflowers, as a result of the good work WWC has done to remove invasive species, our native trees and shrubs will be leafing out among an abundance of wildlife. You will likely see a migrating warbler or two.

Cost: Free, but registration is required.

Registration: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/native-ohio-wildflower-walks-at-several-wwc-preserves-tickets-146684440109>

Habitat Restoration plus:

What's our habitat restoration all about? It's one of the most important things we do! If you've never done one of these before, we encourage you to join us, as it doesn't require any special skills. No registration is necessary, but please contact a project leader to make sure it hasn't been cancelled. For more information, please go to <http://westernwildlifecorridor.org/habitat-restoration/> and read the document *Habitat Restoration Frequently Asked Questions*.

Saturday, May 8, 9:30 am to 12:00pm

Habitat restoration at Whitetail Woods. Leaders: Gary 513.304.4303 and Tim 513.922.2104

Saturday, May 15, 9:30 am to 12:00pm

Habitat restoration at Kirby Nature Preserve. Leader: Matt 513.604.6728

Saturday, May 22, 9:30 am to 12:00pm

Habitat restoration at Buckeye Trace. Leaders: Tim 513.922.2104, Matt 513.604.6728 and John 513.304.2310

Saturday, June 5, 9:30 am to 12:00pm

Habitat restoration at Shady Lane. Leaders: Matt 513.604.6728 and Ed 513.919.5186

For the locations and directions on where we will meet for the habitat restoration projects, please check the WWC calendar: <http://westernwildlifecorridor.org/calendar/>

Mid-week hikes

Did you know that Western Wildlife Corridor volunteers do a mid-week hike almost every week? This is where we might do some light habitat restoration or trail building. Email Tim Sisson at hikertim419@gmail.com to be added to the distribution list.

SESSILE TRILLIUM

Sally Sisson Anderson - Artist in Residence, Western Wildlife Corridor

When I was painting a picture of sessile trillium (*Trillium sessile*) in the woods near my home several years ago, I saw that some of the trillium had four leaves, not three. They usually have three leaves. I was astounded at this rarity, so I called Dr. Vic Soucup of the Wild Flower Society. He came out and looked at these plants, and said these trillium were rare, but this does happen sometimes.

Actually sessile trillium are named this because there are three leaves on each plant. Trillium is from the Latin word 'tri' referring to the leaves occurring in threes. Sessile means stalkless, which refers to the flower having no stalk. Sessile trillium can also be called toadshade. These plants are herbaceous, long-lived perennial wild flowers.

They have a broad distribution in the central United States from Minnesota to New York, through the Midwest (Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee). There are eight types of trillium found in Ohio. At Bender Mountain there are the drooping trillium, as well lots of sessile trillium. In the Harrison area where I live, there are prairie trillium as well as sessile trillium. Prairie trillium are taller and the leaves have a small stalk. In eastern Ohio (Hocking Hills area) there are snow trillium which are early, white and small. Also in the Hocking Hills area, there are the white large-flowered trillium which is the state flower of Ohio. It is a protected species that should never be picked.

Back to the sessile trillium. It can be distinguished from the other eight trillium by its single small stalkless flower in a dark red or maroon color. It also has a foul odor. You have to get down close to smell this. The leaves are usually mottled with shades light and dark green. It flowers in late March into April, and has a thick and fleshy rhizome for a root that slowly spreads and makes more plants if left undisturbed. This plant will die back to dormancy by mid-summer.

Sessile Trillium is most common in rich, moist woods. The flower's odor attracts flies and beetles. The seeds attract ants and beetles. These insects help disperse the seeds.

In native lore, the boiled root of the trillium was used by women as a love potion. A portion of the root

was dropped into food of the desired man, then you waited for the result. Although some accounts indicate that the cooked greens of this plant may be edible as an emergency food, other accounts say that the root may induce vomiting. The fruit is considered a suspected poison. Some Indian accounts indicated the plants being used to treat tumors, and as a poultice for boils.

This trillium is sometimes used in wildflower gardens, but like many trilliums, this plant does not transplant well.

For an excellent description of this trillium as well as the other trilliums found in Ohio, visit the web site <http://floraofohio.blogspot.com/2014/03/guide-to-trillium-of-ohio.html>



**In native lore, the boiled root
of the trillium was used by
women as a love potion.**



Membership Donations – Thank You!

Black Walnut Tree of Honor

Western Wildlife Corridor thanks the following individuals for their support of \$1,000 or more:

- Jeff and Michelle Ginter
- Millie P. Schafer
- Carl & Carol Huether

Red Oak Tree of Honor

Western Wildlife Corridor thanks the following individuals for their support of \$500 to \$999:
Jim Scott & Donna Hartman



Joyce Richter

White Trout Lily – Bender Mountain

Beech Tree Steward Recognition

Western Wildlife Corridor thanks the following individuals for their support of \$200 to \$499:

- Jim & DJ Dolle
- Don & Betty Horak
- Gary & Norma Rapien
- Larry & Jane Tepe
- Bob Temple
- Randy & Jan Johnson



Tim Sisson

Cut-leaved Toothwort – Buckeye Trace

Paw Paw Steward Recognition

Western Wildlife Corridor thanks the following individuals for their support of \$100 to \$199:

- Lawrence Brassie
- Mary Lee & Bob Busam
- Bill & Judy Chamberlain
- Fernbank Garden Club
- Bob & Mary Finn
- Diane Halpin
- Craig & Valerie Holocher
- Don & Betty Horak
- Roland & Clare Johnson
- David & Ally Nurre
- Thomas Richey
- William & Denise Zumvorde



Joyce Richter

Purple Violet – Bender Mountain

Special Thanks

Western Wildlife Corridor would like to give special thanks to Connie Heintz for the Memorials of Roger Windholtz and Peg Sisson; to Anne Montague for the Memorial of Ray and Peg Sisson; and to Liz Maxwell for the Memorial of Jeanette Bockhold.



Western Wildlife Corridor Membership

All donations \$100 or more will receive a special recognition in *The Steward* newsletter. \$500 or more will be prominently displayed on the Tree of Honor located in the Kirby House Great Room — A Lasting Memorial!

TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION

- \$25 Individual Hiker
- \$35 Family Pathfinders
- \$55 Organization Trailblazer
- \$75 Mountain Climber

WWC STEWARD RECOGNITION

- \$100 Paw Paw
- \$200 Beech
- \$300 Sycamore
- \$400 Sugar Maple

TREE OF HONOR

- \$500 Red Oak
- \$1,000 and up Black Walnut

Enclosed is my tax deductible donation: New Member Renewal

Add My Additional Donation for Land Acquisition: \$ _____

Total charges to be made to my account: \$ _____

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Check enclosed (*make payable to Western Wildlife Corridor*)

Visa/Mastercard Number: _____

Name on Card: _____

Expiration Date: ____ / ____ Zip ____ CSV ____ \$ ____

Volunteer! May we contact you with volunteer opportunities? YES

Donate online at www.westernwildlifecorridor.org

Mail to Western Wildlife Corridor, P.O. Box 389077, Cincinnati, OH 45238-9077

Thank you for supporting the Western Wildlife Corridor's mission to preserve the scenic beauty and natural resources of the Ohio River Valley!

WWC is an IRS certified 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

Hiking Permitted on Western Wildlife Corridor Trails!

Do enjoy the flowers!

Do take photos!

Do leave the flowers for others to enjoy!

Do leave the flowers to turn to seeds so they can return next year!

Do leave all vegetation alone!



Foraging and picking vegetation is PROHIBITED



Tim Sisson

Yellow Corydalis — Buckeye Trace

Memorial Tree Planting



Debbie Lutkenhoff planting the tree at Kirby Nature Center

On April 2, 2021, this red maple tree was planted in memory of David A. Myers. He joined Western Wildlife Corridor in hopes of preserving a nice green space for many generations to come. He was born in Delhi, in 1944, when many Delhi roads were still gravel and large farms were on every corner. After years of pouring back into the community through Sunset Players, as well as Price Hill Will and Western Wildlife Corridor, he passed on October 10, 2020 and is sorely missed by his wife Kim and 2 children, as well as many friends and family.

Meet Our New Administrative Coordinator

Marie Finn was born and raised in Ohio, graduating from Seton High School before beginning her career in publishing here in Cincinnati. Her career in publishing continued for many years in California, where she discovered a love of nature, especially native wildflowers.

Upon returning to Cincinnati, she began taking courses in art and graphic design at Mount St. Joseph University. It was through the Mount that she learned of Western Wildlife Corridor, and began volunteering in 2016, helping to remove invasive species and working on the newsletter. In her new role, she will continue with the newsletter, and will work closely with the President, Members of the Board of Trustees and Chairs of the WWC operating committees to implement the organization's initiatives.

"It is really exciting for me to be in this new role as Administrative Coordinator, and I am so grateful to be a part of Western Wildlife Corridor. Hope to see you on the trails!" — Marie Finn.





PO Box 389077
Cincinnati, Ohio 45238-9077

513 921 WILD (9453)

WesternWildlifeCorridor.org

Email: info@westernwildlifecorridor.org

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Rock Buttercup — Buckeye Trace

Tim Sisson

WWC Contributors

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