Native Plants Pack ‘em In!

Over 500 people attended the Partners for Native Landscaping events held at Meramec Community College on March 3 and 4, the largest response yet to the six–year collaboration which has now engaged over 1,500 people in workshops on native plant landscaping. The events were co–headlined by Neil Diboll, President of Prairie Nursery, and Heather Holm, author of Pollinators of Native Plants and Bees: An Identification and Native Plant Forage Guide.

Participants learned that over 90% of the 3,500 native bee species in the U.S. are solitary and rarely, if ever, aggressive and 70% nest in the ground. Next time you see what looks like an ant hill, with no ants around it, you just might have found the home of a native bee!
Board Meetings
Open to All. 2nd Tuesday of Even Month at 7 pm at the Sunset Hills Community Center at 3915 S. Lindbergh Boulevard.

Board recruitment is an ongoing process and combines your interest and our need. If you have considered serving in such a way, stop by or call one of us.

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stlauaudubonpresident@gmail.com

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Newsletter
TaleFeathers is published monthly. For submissions, comments or corrections, contact Mitch Leachman as noted above.

Event sponsors included Greenscape Gardens and Magnificent Missouri at the Platinum level and Forrest Keeling Nursery, Great Rivers Greenway, Ritter Perennials, St. Louis Composting, Sugar Creek Gardens and Wallflower Design at the Gold level. The Missouri Wildflowers Nursery was on–hand with their plants for sale and donated 15% of sales back to the event. Robert Weaver of the Gateway Gardener generously offered his services as event photographer.

The Partners include Grow Native!, Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District, Missouri Dept. of Conservation, Shaw Nature Reserve, St. Louis Audubon, St. Louis Community College and Wild Ones—St. Louis Chapter. We hope you can join us next year and bring a friend along to help spread the “good news.” Until then, pick and spot and go plant some native flowers or trees. The bees and birds will thank you! ➢
From the Director

By Mitch Leachman

Last year, over 500 individuals assisted with chapter activities, from teaching children to planting trees to counting birds to serving on the Board of Directors. Every charity is only as strong as the people who serve it, and St. Louis Audubon is no exception. We have been very fortunate to have so many willing to support our needs, some of whom have quite literally "worked" for us as a full time volunteer!

This issue of TaleFeathers highlights a number of opportunities to lend us a hand, including some rather specialized tasks. Most obvious is the list of habitat restoration projects on page 5 which continue to be focused largely at Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park, an Important Bird Area in northwest St. Louis County. On April 29th, we will be planting the third pollinator demonstration garden at the Park and will need a small "maintenance corps" to support the upkeep of all three gardens. Some of you may enjoy digging in the dirt and would hopefully be willing to give us a couple days a month as a member of that group.

On March 25th, we will be holding our annual training workshop for Bring Conservation Home Habitat Advisors (page 7). The workshop will teach you the program, not native plant ecology or landscaping; we need volunteers that have already acquired that knowledge. Simply having experience with your own native habitat garden may be more than enough, as was the case for a number of our current Advisors. If you’re unsure, there are many native plant classes and short-courses around St. Louis to help you.

Finally, we are always looking for volunteer leaders to serve on the Board of Directors, which presently meets just six times a year. Anyone interested in the governance of the organization is welcome, and those with particular skills most especially. Finance/accounting, social media, marketing, public relations, human resources and organization development would be most welcome.

You can contact me about any of these opportunities. For board service, you can also reach out to Katy Fechter, Board President. You can find contact information for both of us on page 2.

Marian Wright Edelman said, “Service (to others) is the rent we pay for living,” and I happen to agree.

Field Trips

**March 11th at Busch Memorial Conservation Area:**
Meet at 5 p.m. (note the time) for this evening Woodcock and Owl Prowl. Take Hwy 94 south from Hwy 40. At 1.3 miles, turn right at light for Hwy D. Go 2 miles to entrance on right. Turn left at T to Hampton Lake and meet in lot.

**Mar 18th Beginner Walk at Mallard Lake:** This easy walk starts at 8:00 am from the south parking lot at the Creve Coeur Lakehouse, 2160 Creve Coeur Mill Rd. Bring your binoculars, if you have them; loaners are available. We should finish about 10. Check our Facebook page for any last-minute updates.

**March 18th to Horseshoe Lake State Park:** This all day trip starts at 8 am and is good for beginners with some light walking. From St. Louis, take I–70 east to Hwy 111 (exit 6) and turn left. Go ~2 miles to Park entrance and meet in first parking lot on right inside Park.

**March 29th at Forest 44:** This half day trip starts at 8 am. From I–44 & Hwy 141, take Meramec Station Rd west to left on Hillsboro Rd. Meet at lot about ½ mile on the right.

**April 8th at Castlewood State Park:** This half day trip starts at 730 am. From 270 or 141, take Big Bend west to Ries Rd south to left on Kiefer Creek Rd. Meet at lot on right, just after park office.

All field trips are FREE. Reservations not required. If questions, contact Mike Grant mikecurlew@att.net.
Purple Martin Passion  
March 23rd at 7:00 p.m. at the Sierra Club Office, Maplewood

Native Americans were hanging empty gourds to support the nesting of Purple Martins when Europeans arrived in North America. Settlers co-opted the practice by installing artificial houses at taverns. The houses became so prolific and varied that John James Audubon considered the quality of the Martin house when choosing his lodging for the night. Today, Purple Martins in eastern North American, including those in the St. Louis region, nest almost exclusively in bird houses.

John Miller, a long-time member of the Purple Martin Conservation Association, will discuss the natural history of these birds. He will outline the steps necessary to foster a colony of these birds, which are declining in parts of their range. While most private yards in the metro area do not have the required open space to attract Purple Martins, the program is an opportunity to learn about them and perhaps be inspired to help establish a new colony in an open public space.

John Miller manages a thriving colony of purple martins at Forest Park and the Missouri Botanical Garden and has consulted with dozens of groups and landowners around the region to help them establish Martin colonies. He assisted St. Louis Audubon’s Karen Meyer in establishing a colony at Creve Coeur Park in 2012. Karen will also be on hand to help answer any questions.

This is our annual joint program with the Eastern Missouri Group of the Sierra Club. Their office is at 2818 Sutton Blvd in Maplewood, 63143. Park on the street or in the lot at Hazel & Sutton. For questions, contact Mitch at (314) 599–7390 or mitch@stlouisaudubon.org.

A Tale of Bumpy Roads  
Birding in Colombia and Panama  
Tuesday April 25th at 7 p.m.

In February of this year, Susan Eaton and Mike Grant (along with Dick Palmer) had the opportunity to explore northwestern Colombia with a group of birders. They visited areas near the Guajira Peninsula and the Caribbean coast, and the Santa Marta Mountains, part of the Sierra Nevada range. This mountain range is completely cut off from the Andes, but has the tallest mountain peaks in the country. The Santa Marta area holds one of the highest densities of endemics of any spot in the World. In 7 days, they saw over 280 species. Susan and Mike also spent one exciting day birding in Panama before traveling to Colombia.

Susan has become a world traveler since her retirement as a physical therapist, pursuing fun, food, culture and birds. Her life list is now over 2,500 birds. Mike recently retired as a technology manager for the U.S. Government and now spends his days planning his next birding adventure. He also coordinates the chapter’s field trips.

A short business meeting, our Annual Meeting, will precede the program and will include the election of the board of directors. All are welcome to attend, but only members may vote. The event begins at 7 pm at the Mid County Branch of the St. Louis County Library at 7821 Maryland Ave, St. Louis, MO 63105. For questions, call (314) 599–7390.
Volunteer Opportunities – Habitat Restoration Workdays

**Wednesday March 15th at Creve Coeur Park. Honeysuckle removal.**
Bring your favorite lopper or saw. We will meet in the south lot at the Creve Coeur Lakehouse, 2160 Creve Coeur Mill Road, St. Louis, MO 63146.

**Saturday, March 18th Confluence Trash Bash. Watershed Cleanup.**
All ages welcome. For all the details, and to register:

**April 8th at Creve Coeur Park. Planting project.**
We will be planting the Mallard Lake shoreline with a variety of native shrubs and small trees. Bring a shovel if you have one, and waterproof boots or waders might be helpful. We will meet in the south lot at the Creve Coeur Lakehouse, 2160 Creve Coeur Mill Road, St. Louis, MO 63146. RAIN DATE APRIL 15TH.

**April 29th at Creve Coeur Park. Pollinator garden planting.**
Help us continue our multi-year project partnership to create prairie, woodland and pollinator gardens! Bring a shovel if you have one. We will meet in the south lot at the Lakehouse, 2160 Creve Coeur Mill Road, St. Louis, MO 63146. RAIN DATE MAY 6TH.

**Honeysuckle Sweep for Healthy Habitat—March 4th thru March 19th**
For additional opportunities around the St. Louis region to remove invasive bush honeysuckle and help restore our natural areas see the BiodiverseCity St. Louis website for all the details.

All projects begin at 9:00 am with registration starting at 8:30 am. All are half-day, ending by noon. Gloves and other supplies/materials are provided. All ages welcome, but those under 18 must have parental/adult supervision at all times.

Volunteers are requested to register for all projects by providing their name, contact information and number attending to mitch@stlouisaudubon.org or (314) 599–7390.
mingle
with
native plant professionals
and author Alan Branhagen

Thursday, March 16, 2017
Schlafly Tap Room | 2100 Locust St. | St. Louis, MO
Suggested donation $10 to benefit:

5 p.m. - 8 p.m.
Presentations at 6 p.m.
Cash bar

St. Louis Audubon’s Bring Conservation Home program and the Missouri Prairie Foundation’s Grow Native! program are excited to present a talk by Alan Branhagen, author of Native Plants of the Midwest. Alan is Director of Horticulture at Powell Gardens near Kansas City. Grow Native! professional members will be present to answer questions and discuss native plants, landscapes, and ideas.

Come to mingle, meet, and hear about the Bring Conservation Home program from St. Louis Audubon members and connect with local landscape designers, landscape architects, land care service providers, retailers and other professionals with a passion for native plants.

Event generously sponsored by:

GARDEN HEIGHTS NURSERY
YOUR SOURCE FOR A GREENER LIFE

BOWOOD
Garden Home
Our Bring Conservation Home (BCH) Program uses volunteer Habitat Advisors to provide consultations to urban landowners in the greater St. Louis area for the restoration of native plant and animal habitat on their grounds. The Habitat Advisors deliver on-site advice in landscaping with environmentally healthy and sustainable native plant species, the removal of invasive plant species, water conservation on the urban landscape, and other stewardship practices that promote healthy habitat for birds, native wildlife and people. For complete program details, please visit www.stlouisaudubon.org/BCH.

Habitat Advisors perform BCH landscape consultations and certification assessments and compile their written notes and findings. Advisors will be asked to commit to 6–12 site visits per year that average 2 hours each.

This workshop covers the BCH program, our procedures, and key native landscaping concepts. Prior experience with the program areas (highlighted above) and a long-term commitment will be essential for your success. BCH is a great way to creatively use your training and knowledge to improve our community one landscape at a time. For a description of the position, the required qualifications and an application, see http://www.stlouisaudubon.org/BCH/ha_position_description.pdf.

You will be contacted after your application is received and reviewed. Those meeting the qualifications will receive additional details about the workshop, including the day’s schedule.

Certified Habitat Advisors also receive a complete survey of their own landscape at no charge, including discounts at a variety of area retailers.

ST. LOUIS AUDUBON SOCIETY

Bring Conservation Home is a St. Louis Audubon Society community partnership with essential support from the Missouri Dept of Conservation. Partners include the Missouri Master Naturalists, St. Charles and St. Louis Master Gardeners. The workshop is advanced training. As a Habitat Advisor you will earn service hours.

Please contact Mitch at (314) 599–7390 or mitch@stlouisaudubon.org with any questions.
St. Louis Audubon Society
P.O. Box 220227
St. Louis, MO 63122–0227

St. Louis Audubon Society
Chapter–Supporting Membership Form

Mission: to create a community connection to nature through education and conservation.

Your Chapter-Supporting membership runs concurrently with your National Audubon membership, if you choose to maintain the latter. To continue to receive the Audubon magazine, you must maintain your National membership.

☐ $20  ☐ $30  ☐ $50**  ☐ $100  ☐ Other_______

** Memberships of $50 or more may choose from three gifts:

- Bringing Nature Home by Douglas W. Tallamy
- Peterson Field Guide to Birds of Eastern & Central North America

Please indicate your choice.

100% of your dues stay in St. Louis supporting our local efforts. Thank you very much!

Memberships are Tax Deductible
Less the $15 Cost of the Gift

If already a Chapter-Supporting member, you need do nothing but accept our thanks!