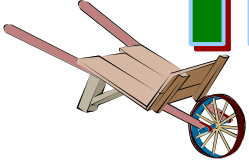


# The Wheelbarrow



[www.saps.us](http://www.saps.us)

Southern Appalachian Plant Society

March 2025

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423-817-5473

[SAPScntact2020@gmail.com](mailto:SAPScntact2020@gmail.com)

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## Pollination: The Hidden Language of Flowers and the Importance of Pollinators

**Gerardo Arceo-Gomez**

Associate Professor, Biological Sciences, ETSU

Thursday, March 20, at 7 pm.

BrightRidge Auditorium

2600 Boones Creek Rd (Hwy 354), Johnson City

Pollinators have played a key role in the diversification and organization of the plant life that exists today. Pollination also provides a key ecosystem service that is responsible for approximately one third of all food production needed for human consumption. However, the full diversity and underlying complexity of plant-pollinator interactions remains unappreciated. In this presentation Dr. Arceo-Gomez will talk about the intricate complexity of the interactions between plants and pollinators - how diverse they are, how plants and insects communicate, and how these interactions have evolved and specialized. He will also emphasize the importance of these interactions for our own well-being, all while discussing fun natural history facts about pollination in natural and crop systems.

Gerardo Arceo-Gomez received his Ph.D. at the University of Pittsburgh and he is now an Associate Professor in the Department of Biology at East Tennessee State University. He has authored over 60 peer-reviewed scientific publications and has obtained competitive grants to fund his work, including from NSF. Gerardo's work is focused in understanding the ecological and the evolutionary consequences of plant-pollinator interactions. Current research in his lab focuses on 1) evaluating causes and consequences of plant-pollinator interactions and 2) evaluating the effects of human disturbances on plant-pollinator interactions. His research covers broad topics in plant ecology, plant-animal interactions, conservation biology, community ecology, and pollination biology.

## Vernonia for the Mid-Atlantic Region

Mt. Cuba recently released its latest Trial Garden research report, Vernonia for the Mid-Atlantic Region, highlighting the beauty and ecological value of ironweeds. These adaptable native plants can be used to add stunning purple blooms to almost any garden and support pollinators like the denticulate longhorn bee. Over 4 years, Mt. Cuba evaluated 45 species, cultivars, and ecotypes, and identified the top performers for a garden setting. Check out the report here: <https://mtcubacenter.org/trials/vernonia/>



## Upcoming Events

### March 1

Weed Wrangle at Warriors' Path State Park: Garlic Mustard Pull. 1-4-pm Help the park control this nasty pest by spending a few hours uprooting these invasives along a scenic park trail. [https://tnstateparks.com/parks/event\\_details/warriors-path/#/?event=weed-wrangle-at-warriors-path-garlic-mustard-pull-wpsp-2025](https://tnstateparks.com/parks/event_details/warriors-path/#/?event=weed-wrangle-at-warriors-path-garlic-mustard-pull-wpsp-2025)

### March 1

Weed Wrangle. Sycamore Shoals State Historic Park. 10 am – 12 pm. Help remove invasive English ivy throughout the park grounds and along the walking trail. Participants must register. [https://tnstateparks.com/parks/event\\_details/sycamore-shoals/#/?event=weed-wrangle2025](https://tnstateparks.com/parks/event_details/sycamore-shoals/#/?event=weed-wrangle2025)

### March 1

Weed Wrangle. Roan Mountain State Park. 2 – 5 pm. Help remove Chinese Privet along the shores of the Doe River and prepare the area for planting native plants to out-compete the privet. Register: [https://tnstateparks.com/parks/event\\_details/roan-mountain/#/?event=2025-roan-mountain-weed-wrangle](https://tnstateparks.com/parks/event_details/roan-mountain/#/?event=2025-roan-mountain-weed-wrangle)

### March 1

From Garden to Sacred Smoke: The Art of Botanical Incense. 10 am-1 pm. Knoxville Botanical Garden. \$50. <https://www.knoxgarden.org/events/botincense>

### March 1, 15, 29

Walk with a Botanist. 9:30 – 11:30 am. Persimmon Ridge Park, Jonesborough, TN. Take a 1-2 miles stroll with botanist Dr. Steven Price and learn how to identify trees species in winter and winter/early spring plants. Also touch on the history, geology, and ecology of the area. Free. Register at <https://www.nolilearn.org/availability>.

### March 4

Battle Plans Against Exotic Invasive Plants. 6 - 7:30 pm. Asheville Botanical Garden. \$25. Meet at Visitor Center (indoor class). <https://ashevillebotanicalgardens.square.site/classes>

### March 6

Herb Saplings meeting. 7 pm at Exchange Place. Welcoming Pollinators to Your Herb Garden with Joy Moore and Liz Blakely. Learn how to make your herb garden inviting to pollinators - including how to make a bug snug. Bring a herb snack to share if you have time.

### March 8

Planning Your Multi-Use Native Garden. NC Arboretum. On-site. 10 am – 12 pm. Learn how to plan a native garden to serve multiple purposes, including choosing species that are beneficial pollinator sources, important larval host plants, species for cut flowers, ornamental display, and edible gardens. \$53.44. <https://www.ncarboretum.org/event/multi-use-native/>

### March 9

Invasive Species Removal Day. Rocky Fork State Park. 2 – 4 pm. Help remove exotic-invasive plants. Please register so we may contact you in case of bad weather cancellation. [https://tnstateparks.com/parks/event\\_details/rocky-fork/#/?event=Invasive-removal-day-MAR-25](https://tnstateparks.com/parks/event_details/rocky-fork/#/?event=Invasive-removal-day-MAR-25)

### March 13

Eating Like a Bird - Native Fruits We Can Enjoy at Our Tables with Mary Jac Brennan, Heartplace Farm Consulting and Scott Carter, Master Naturalist, Durham County. 12-1 pm. Virtual and In-person. NC Botanical Garden, Chapel Hill. Free; preregistration required. [https://reg.learningstream.com/reg/event\\_page.aspx?ek=0005-0014-707fb6206d8c490aace96c444012c092](https://reg.learningstream.com/reg/event_page.aspx?ek=0005-0014-707fb6206d8c490aace96c444012c092)

### March 13

Building a Wildlife Pond. 7 - 8:30 pm. Zoom workshop featuring information on creating a wildlife pond to enhance your native

habitat. Wildlife ponds are especially attractive to amphibians and insects, both of which are essential parts of the diversity puzzle. Presented by Melanie Smith, WOA member, Holston Rivers Master Naturalist and FrogWatch Coordinator. Free. No registration is required. Join Zoom meeting at:

<https://wildones-org.zoom.us/j/83795791828?pwd=uarJBiHAlosaKsERHYxfkbbqFz6JLv.1>

### March 14 - 16

Organic Growers School Annual Spring Conference. Mars Hill University, Mars Hill, NC. Supports, inspires and educates people to farm, garden and live organically by providing affordable, practical hands-on education. <https://www.organicgrowersschool.org/spring-conference>

### March 14

East Tennessee Daffodil Society presents 2024 ADS Southeast Regional Show, Daffodils on Parade. 9 am – 5 pm. UT South Greenhouse, Room 124, 2514 Jacob Drive, Knoxville, TN. Contact: Stacey Wilson, [brystawil@aol.com](mailto:brystawil@aol.com), Diane Cockerham, [dianecockerham@gmail.com](mailto:dianecockerham@gmail.com)

### March 20

SAPS Meeting. Pollination: The Hidden Language of Flowers and the Importance of Pollinators. Gerardo Arceo-Gomez, Associate Professor, Biological Sciences, ETSU. 7 pm. BrightRidge Auditorium.

### March 27

Urban Forestry & Birds with Hannah Pursley, Program Manager, Forests, Audubon North Carolina. 12-1 pm. Hybrid - Virtual and in-person. NC Botanical Garden Chapel Hill. Free; preregistration required. [https://reg.learningstream.com/reg/event\\_page.aspx?ek=0005-0014-b264ba37d6b24ee28e2f0a2393fde6b5](https://reg.learningstream.com/reg/event_page.aspx?ek=0005-0014-b264ba37d6b24ee28e2f0a2393fde6b5)

### March 29

African American Legacy in Gardening and Horticulture Symposium. 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Free; preregistration required. Hayti Heritage Center in Durham, NC. This event will also be live-streamed. [https://reg.learningstream.com/reg/event\\_page.aspx?ek=0005-0014-3adb9d9d4dc04cf4a47dab1d96a90768](https://reg.learningstream.com/reg/event_page.aspx?ek=0005-0014-3adb9d9d4dc04cf4a47dab1d96a90768)

### March 31

Monday Musings: Spring Ephemerals. Presented by Big Spring Master Gardeners. Free. Zoom. <https://sites.google.com/utk.edu/mondaymusings/registration?authuser=0>

### April 3

Herb Saplings meeting. 7 pm at Exchange Place. Camomile matricaria, International Herb Association's 2025 Herb of the Year with Reeda Tate and Sue Cadwallader.

### April 5

SAPS Spring Plant and Seed Swap. Doors open 9:30 am. Memorial Park Community Center Johnson City.

### April 11-12

Mid Atlantic Garden Faire. Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center, Abingdon. Friday 9:30 am - 6pm, Saturday 9:30 am – 4pm. \$6. Under 12 Free. <http://www.gardenfaire.net/>

### April 24

SAPS meeting. 7 pm. Breaking the Rules: Ecological Landscape Design and Traditional Landscape Methods by Larry Weaner, Founder of New Directions in the American Landscape. Kingsport Higher Education Center.

### April 26-27

39th Annual Spring Garden Fair. Exchange Place Living History Farm, 4812 Orebank Road, Kingsport. Saturday 10 am. - 5 pm, Sunday, 12 - 5 pm. \$5. Under 12 free. <https://exchangeplacetn.org/>

## Green and Growing Gardening Seminars

The 2025 Green and Growing Gardening Seminars will be held on Thursdays in March at noon in the board room of the Kingsport Chamber, 400 Clinchfield Street. Sponsored by Keep Kingsport Beautiful and the Kingsport Public Library, these seminars are free and open to the public. Registration is not required.

The topics for the seminars are:

**March 6** – Herbs to Elevate the Landscape and Menu. Presented by Christy Shivell of Shy Valley Farm.

**March 13** – Growing Vegetables Wherever You Can Put a Container. Presented by Earl Hockin, Master Gardener.

**March 20** – Plant This, Not That: How to Make Smarter Plant Choices. Presented by Joy Moore, Master Gardener.

**March 27** – Beneficial Insects. Presented by local organic farmer John Woodworth, owner of Ziegenwald Dairy.

For more information, contact Sharon Hayes at shayes@KingsportChamber.org or call 423- 392-8814.

## Gardening Seminars

March - August

Big Spring Master Gardeners are offering Zoom seminars March through August this year on their Get Growing! program on growing vegetables. Sign up through <http://sites.google.com/utk.edu/back-to-basics/home>

## SAPS Spring Plant Swap: A Members Only Event

Mark your calendars for the April 5, 2025 Plant Swap and Plant Give Away. This is a members only event. Dues can be paid as you check in.

The Spring SAPS Plant Swap and Potluck will be on Saturday, April 5 at the Johnson City Memorial Park Community Center, 510 Bert Street, Johnson City, TN 37601.

To make things easier for you this year, we are asking for two volunteers with collapsible wagons to be there at 9:30 am to help members unload plants and food and then move their cars to the parking lot.

If you can help, please let us know at 423-737-7915.

Doors will open at 9:30 a.m. Please bring a serving utensil with your potluck dish. Potluck will start around 10:20. Plant Swap begins after the meal as directed by our President.

Because of limited space, this is a Plant Swap and Potluck only. No silent auction, garden art or garden pots, magazine, books, etc.

SAPS is providing a limited number of plants to give away. The choices this year are Bradbury's monarda and false blue indigo.





## Our Native Red Buckeye Tree

Contributed by Hugh Conlon

Red buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*), aka Firecracker Plant, is a large understory shrub or small tree native to the southeastern U.S. A member of the Sapindaceae (maple) family, this lovely spring flowering beauty grows 15 to 20 feet tall (sometimes to 30 feet in 30 years) and fits into many small yards. It is native from the South-Central U.S. east through the Southeastern U.S. (USDA hardiness zones 4-8).

Many 5 to 8 inch-long red to orange-red tubular floral panicles stand erect on branch tips in mid-spring. The vibrant colored flowers are stunningly beautiful. The glossy foliage is composed usually of five elliptical serrated leaflets palmately arranged and emerges about the same time. Within a large wild population of red buckeyes, flower color often varies from dark pink to deep red.

Red buckeye grows in average, moist, well-drained soil and will grow in a variety of soil types. It grows well in full morning/afternoon shade or in all-day partial sunlight. The tree holds up to loads of shade although flower numbers are fewer. Spring feed with granular 10-10-10 or equivalent fertilizer. Soil moisture is of key importance as summer foliage tends to scorch during hot dry summers. Irrigate during dry summer months.

From late April into May, for about a month, blooms attract hummingbirds and other pollinators. Flowers are followed by three-parted smooth husks containing the seeds. Husk numbers vary from one year to the next.

Smooth orange-brown seed husks contain 1-3 shiny seeds (1-2- inch long nutlets). Seeds are called "buckeyes" and ripen by early fall. When husks start to split open, collect and plant ripened seeds immediately; do not allow seed to dry out. Seedling trees often start flowering in 3-4 years. Seeds are poisonous to humans and wildlife, but squirrels often collect and "plant" the seeds.

Although disease and pest issues are rare, scorched and fungal-spotted leaves tend to drop beginning in late August and branches are mostly bare by the first day of autumn.

Landscape use: good in the woodland or in a wildlife garden. It can also be a small specimen tree.

Insects, Diseases, or Other Plant Problems: Leaf blotch can be a problem for this plant. Leaf, stem, and fruit drop in fall can be messy.

Cultivars: 'Atrosanguinea' – with deeper red flowers  
var. *flavescens* - rare yellow form

Special Note: Often confused with red horse chestnut (*Aesculus x carnea*) which is a hybrid cross between red buckeye (*A. pavia*) and common horse chestnut (*A. hippocastanum*).



## Across the President's Desk

*By Earl Hockin*

Those cool season vegetables that were started indoors in February can be transplanted into the garden in March. Some of our healthiest vegetables are in this category. Research has shown that the healthiest of all is watercress which is great in salads. It can be grown in containers filled with a wet growing medium. Instead of potting soil put a mixture of coconut coir, vermiculite and perlite in a shallow container. Place the container in a saucer that you keep filled with water. This will mimic the conditions in which watercress naturally thrives. It is best to germinate the seeds in seed starting soil and then transplant them into the container. Watercress prefers cooler conditions with temperatures of 50-60°F. You can also grow it as a micro green. Watercress is a good source of vitamins A, K and C as well as the minerals calcium, zinc and iron.

Other leafy greens among the most nutrient rich vegetables are Chinese cabbage, chard, beet greens, spinach, chicory, leaf lettuce, parsley, Romaine lettuce and collard greens. To compare the nutritional value of different vegetables check out [https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2014/13\\_0390.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2014/13_0390.htm).

When sowing seeds and transplanting seedlings it is important to know the suitable soil temperatures. To measure soil temperature, sink a thermometer probe about four inches into the ground and leave it there for three minutes. Most seed packages will detail the temperatures advised for sowing seeds and transplanting seedlings.

At a soil temperature of 40°F, plant arugula, kale, lettuces, parsnips, peas, radicchio, radishes, and spinach. You can transplant cool season vegetables like broccoli and cabbage

At a soil temperature of 50°F, direct seed Chinese cabbage, leeks, onions, Swiss chard, and turnips.

At a soil temperature of 60°F, direct seed beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, and cauli-

flower.

Early March is when we start seeds indoors for the warm season plants that will be transplanted into the garden from mid-April to early May. This includes vegetables like tomatoes, eggplant and peppers. During the last two weeks of March we start seeds for vegetables such as summer and winter squash, melons, and cucumber.

When starting tomatoes, I am increasingly choosing varieties that can be successfully grown in containers. Using containers in addition to my raised beds has enabled me to grow more vegetables. One advantage of containers is that they can be placed in areas most suitable for the plants in them. For example, in the summer months, containers with varieties of lettuce and herbs like arugula are placed in shaded areas. For sun loving vegetables like peppers and tomatoes, the containers are placed in the areas that get the most sunshine. An advantage of fabric containers is that they are easier to move to different locations in the garden when needed. In the winter months the soil in containers can be refreshed by emptying the containers and adding fresh potting soil and compost. The new mixture is then used to refill the containers. Fabric containers will need more frequent watering because they will leak water from the sides and bottom if overwatered. In metal, porcelain and plastic containers the roots will grow excessively becoming root bound. Roots stop growing when exposed to air. Fabric containers not only let water out, they also let air in. The roots stop growing when they hit the air at the edges of the container which prevents root binding. To grow tomatoes in containers, choose dwarf determinate varieties such as Sun Gold, Uluru Ochre, Bush Early Girl, Best Boy Hybrid, Dwarf Artic Rose, Sweet Scarlet Dwarf, New Big Dwarf, Dwarf Purple Heart, and Tennessee Suited. Your plants will be healthy and happy and so will you.

### Want Summer Flowering Bulbs?

Now is the time to order summer flowering bulbs and perennials. Are you looking for dahlias, lilies, elephant ears (colocasias), gladioli, caladiums, crocosmia, lycoris (those lovely spider lilies and naked ladies), alstroemeria, or other summer blooming beauties? Brent and Becky's has a large selection of fine quality summer flowering bulbs and perennials and you can support SAPS at the same time. This is also the BEST time to order fall planted bulbs for the greatest selection. They will be delivered at planting time.

Go to <https://brentandbeckysbulbs.com/bloomin-bucks/> and choose Southern Appalachian Plant Society (SAPS) from the pull down menu, agree to the terms, then off you go buying bulbs to beautify your garden. SAPS will receive 25% of the bulb total to help us continue to bring in great speakers. Thanks.