



Gaillardia

Oklahoma Native Plant Society

The purpose of the Oklahoma Native Plant Society is to encourage the study, protection, propagation, appreciation and use of Oklahoma's native plants.

Volume 41, Number 2
Summer 2026

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Wild columbine, *Aquilegia canadensis* at Lost City Canyon, Candler Park. Photo by Kim Wolfenbarger

Upcoming Events/Activities

(check the ONPS website or Facebook for more details)

- Jun 6 - "Meadow and Glade" Plant Walk.** Start time 9 am. Pawnee City Lake. For infor: curloutandabout@yahoo.com
- Jun 6 - Deep Fork River Plant Walk** Meet at 9:00 am in front of Shoe Carnival, 1701 Belle Isle Blvd, OKC, OK at 9:15 am, to caravan to the Deep Fork River.
- Jun 13 - Rogers State University Education Reserve.** Approx address, 2000 University Drive, Claremore, OK Meet at main entrance parking lot at 9:00 am (across the street from the Stratton Taylor Library).
- Jun 19 - Fabulous Wildflower Fridays** (details below).
- Jul 11 - Oklahoma River Plant Walk.** Meet at 9:00 am at Culture Coffee, 1029 NE 6th St, Oklahoma City, OK Leave at 9:15 am to caravan to the Oklahoma River.
- Jul 17 - Fabulous Wildflower Fridays** (details below).
- Aug 3 - Fall Board meeting ZOOM**
- Aug 6 - Central Chapter meeting, 6:30 socializing and 7 pm program at OCU Dawson-Loeffler Building.**
- Aug 21 - Fabulous Wildflower Fridays** (details below).
- Sep 3 - Central Chapter meeting, 6:30 socializing and 7 pm program at OCU Dawson-Loeffler Building.**
- Sep 14 - NE Chapter meeting, Tulsa Garden Center**
- Sep 18 - Fabulous Wildflower Fridays canceled.**
- Sep 18-19 - SAVE THE DATE - ONPS Annual Meeting Lake Arcadia Education Center, Edmond, OK**

Central Chapter, 6:30 pm socializing and 7:00 pm meeting at Oklahoma City University in the Dawson-Loeffler Science Center, Room 208.

NE Chapter, 6:30 pm socializing and 7:00 pm meeting at Tulsa Garden Center, 2435 S Peoria Ave, Tulsa

Fabulous Wildflower Fridays, 3rd Friday monthly, 5:30 pm, casual, at Panera Bread, 5601 E 41st Street, Tulsa

Preview Chapter meeting topics inside. All members are invited to all meetings, including board meetings, and are encouraged to bring guests.

Gaillardia

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Micah Friedman	Central

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President's Message

By Shalini Chitturi, ONPS President

"Nature Therapy"

A step into our backyards, a step that leads us away from the mundane stress. How vital it is for our health, for both the physical and mental health! Every morning, the rhythmic birdsongs gently wake everyone up, right from their nests to ours. As I sip my steaming coffee, I notice how the tiny dew on the gamma blade captures the beaming sun, through the sleepy clouds. Sunrise alerts my mind and prepares calmly for the critical decisions of the upcoming day.

The humming bird, so punctual to his cardio, at the red honeysuckle gym, never fails to greet me before I leave for work. I hustle through the day in the clinic and come home quite preoccupied. Some work days do cause a stress headache and an aggravated tender spine.

As soon as I step into my backyard, a melodious symphony of bird songs welcome me from the hackberry canopies. A chatter of robins, cardinals and mockingbirds from the branches of Osage oranges and dogwoods lifts my spirits. As I snack on some nuts, fruit and a cookie, I can see the cool mohawks of the Cedar waxwings and the goldfinches silently devouring the Chickasaw plums and the native mulberries.

As I walk under the dappled shade, the sweet scented Echinacea, the bee balm and the whiff of perfume from the Mexican plum surges my serotonin. The bright red patch of the dancing *Gaillardias* along with the gorgeous smiles of the blackeyed Susans hushes my cortisol. The majestic monarchs and the swallowtails, are carefully scouting their unique and vital hosts. My dopamines flood me in awe! The saintly robed cabbage whites and the checkered spots, the red admirals dangling on the low key fleabane and frogfruit calm my epinephrines.

I am smiling again unknowingly, lost in the beauty of the garden. There is a sudden urge to bend down to look at the bright patch in the grass, forgetting all about my stiff neck. My heart is elated to see the rosettes of hibiscus and *Oenothera*, and the hidden mischievous wine cups running down the slope. The distant shrieks from a nest as the bluejay bullies and the mama bird begins chasing him away. I pull a few unnecessary non native volunteers and tuck in some

(President's Message continued on Page 3)

(President's Message cont. from Pg 2)

native saplings, irrespective of my hurting joints. All these remind us to nurture ourselves, conserve our energies and keep away from toxicity. The wild grape and the trumpet vine are dangling all over the willows, while the trained red honeysuckle behaves, nearer to a fence. They are telling me that different personalities can coexist in harmony and understanding.

I complete my 3 mile brisk walk in a nearby park that also happens to be a native habitat as well. My pheromones soar as the cardio soaks me in sweat, my skin glows and my heart palpates in joy! The rabbits and squirrels chasing each other, being silly at times, remind me to have fun and take a break.

Northeast Chapter Update

May 2026

This has been a very busy Spring for the NE chapter, we've participated in three small, two large one day events, and two large two-day events. We also hosted the WOW event at Chandler Park, in Tulsa.

I am excited to report that our first five monthly meetings have been very well attended, with several new members. We'll start again on Sept 14th, with John Barthell and Juniper Tapia, from the University of Central Oklahoma, who will be sharing about their study of native bees in urban environments.

Our Oct 5th, meeting will be Kara Jay McKee, with the Sierra Club, sharing about getting kids involved. On Nov 2nd, Karen Watkins, will be talking on the interconnectedness of our native plants, insects, and birds. More information to come as we get closer.

There are several special events scheduled, here in Northeast OK, in the coming months. The meadow and glade plant walk at Pawnee City Lake, in Pawnee on June 6th. A nice walk at Rogers State University Education Reserve, on June 13th. The Sierra Club is having a costume garden party celebrating pollinators on June 25th. Please go to the ONPS website for more information.

Respectfully submitted

Tiane Christy, Northeast Chapter Chair

CENTRAL CHAPTER EVENTS

Micah Friedman, Chapter Chair

We've been off to a busy 2026! Marisa Szubryt, Sarah Short, Jennifer A. Bryant, and Megan Adler all gave amazing presentations at our monthly meetings. We did education and outreach at various festivals and events, including: Cultivate Art Exhibit at Norman Firehouse Art Center, Choctaw Cultural Center, ONPN Stash Plant Sale, Edgemere Park plant walk, OKC Beautiful Earth Fest, the Pratt and Whitney Earth Day (photo below), Seeds and Sweets at Flora Bodega, the Cultivate Art Exhibit, the Native Plant Market at the OKC Farmers Market, and the Myriad Botanical Gardens Garden School 2026.

July 11th

Oklahoma River Plant Walk. Meeting at 9:00 am at Culture Coffee, 1029 NE 6th St, Oklahoma City, OK 73117. At 9:15 am, we will caravan to the Oklahoma River.

August 6th

OU PhD student, Jasmine Cates, will provide an overview of how roadsides function as habitat and dispersal corridors for native pollinators. She will speak about her research, in collaboration with ODOT, which focuses on the influence of roadside management on native bee biodiversity and genetic connectivity.

September 3rd

Artist Sarah Hearn will present her work and discuss some inspirational and essential partners of the plant world. This will include a visual tour of the microbial worlds that inhabit our bodies, our food, and ecosystems.

Mark your calendars for September 18th-20th

for the Annual Statewide ONPS Meeting at the Arcadia Lake Outdoor Education Building, 7401 E 33rd St, Edmond, OK 73013



WOW HIGHLIGHTS 2026

Chandler Park hosted our annual Wonders of Wildflowers event on May 1-3 this year. This limestone ridge offered plants like smoke tree, columbine and trilliums that are a rare treat. Pizza, scones, and BBQ fed our bodies, and friends and the park nurtured our souls. Friday evening, Ashley Clouse gave us a marvelous talk on the uses and history of some native plants and brought some for us to nibble on. Patrick Hayes, Chandler Park’s Naturalist gave us a fascinating history of Tulsa and the park and how the good and bad aspects of history blend together to produce a wonderful city park.



Top left: Patrick led this morning group along the ADA lower trail before taking those brave souls willing on into the Lost City canyon. Photo by Lynn Michael.

Top right: The wild columbine was stunning cascading down the rock wall of the Lost City canyon at Chandler Park. Photo by Shalini Chitturi.

Above: Joe Roberts and Debbie Drinko use the Forest Trees of Oklahoma book to help identify a tree at Keystone Ancient Forest. Photo by Kim Wolfenbarger.

At right: Lynn Michael led this afternoon group on the trail at Keystone Ancient Forest. Photo was taken by a good Samaritan along the trail. Photo supplied by Lynn Michael.



Below: Kim Wolfinbarger submitted this picture of beardtongue, *Penstemon digitalis* from Keystone Ancient Forest.



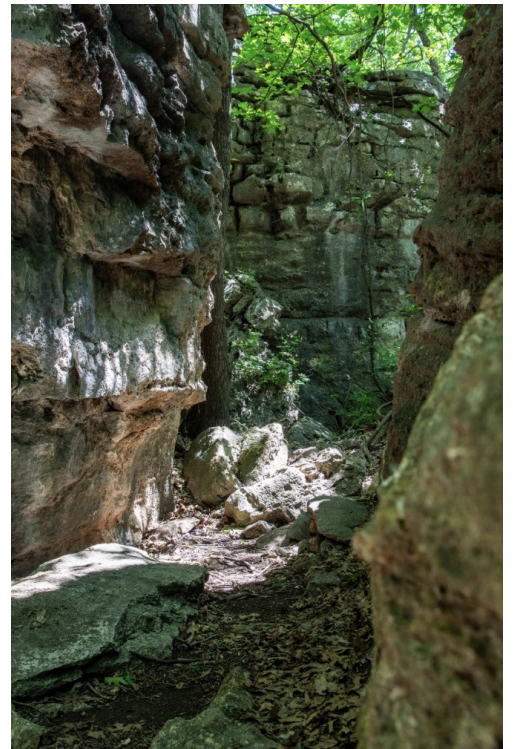
At left: Patrick Hayes, Naturalist for Chandler Park leads tours along the ADA trail and into the Lost City canyon. All agreed that he did a fantastic job alerting us to the history of the place and its plants.

Below: Entering Lost city canyon at Chandler Park.

Bottom left: Nancy Truelove sits on a blackjack oak that has been manipulated as an Indian Trail Tree, also known as Signal trees. As saplings the young trees growth is directed to point to a trail or item of significance. Photo by Kim Wolfinbarger.

Bottom right: Donna and Robert Horton led this morning group along the trail at Keystone Ancient Forest.

Photo by Nancy Truelove.



Oklahoma Native Plant Network

by Katie Huskerson

The Welcoming Garden Speaker Series Recap

Early March brought two free opportunities to gather our community and new friends to learn from authors Nancy Lawson and Heather Holm.

On both Friday evening (in OKC) and Saturday afternoon (in Tulsa), hundreds of native plant and nature focused enthusiasts from across the state were invited to learn from the research and observations of these well respected authors to understand the creatures that inhabit the native gardens we care for.

We were inspired to plant for soft landings, consider all of the senses when wildscaping, and continue to do good work and find community. We are grateful to Gloria Caddell, The University of Central Oklahoma and the Tulsa Garden Center at Woodward Park for hosting. Thank you also to Tulsa Audubon, Oklahoma Native Plant Society, Okies for Monarchs, OKC Beautiful, CLS & Associates, OSU at OKC, Blue Thumb, and the Yard by Yard Program. American sign language translation at our Edmond event was made possible by a grant from the Oklahoma City Community Foundation. We hope to make future events more accessible.

We are pleased to announce that the series will be back in 2027 as we continue our partnership with the Oklahoma Native Plant Society (ONPS)! If you are interested in getting involved with next year's series, please email Marilyn Stewart - marilynstewart4313@gmail.com . Thanks to everyone that was able to attend!



Thank you Wild Things Nursery!

During The Welcoming Garden event, we honored our friends Ken and Marilyn Stewart of Wild Things Nursery for their commitment to the native plant community. For decades their dedication, passion, and influence have touched countless people and pollinators. They have prepared the soil for future growers, empowered and educated professionals and homeowners alike and preserved and expanded habitat for pollinators. They have greeted us at festivals with joy and enthusiasm and have always been willing to generously share their wisdom and experiences.

They were presented with a gorgeous stained-glass piece from artists Tim and Rebecca Brown, with Artistic Glass Studio. This gift was made possible with donations from friends in the Oklahoma Native Plant Network, Oklahoma Native Plant Society, Okies for Monarchs and Tulsa Audubon Society.

Ken and Marilyn, thank you for being keystone species of our Oklahoma native plant ecosystem. We are all better humans to have the honor to know and learn from you!

Keystone Plants

by Katie Huskerson

What is a keystone plant? Keystone plants are plant genera that support a disproportionately large amount of life in our ecosystem. In particular, these native plants provide food for hungry caterpillars, which then in-turn are food for hungry birds. They also support specialist-bees, as well as other native insects and pollinators.

The name “Keystone” refers to the wedge-shaped stone at the top of an arch. Without this vital piece, the arch would crumble; much like our ecosystem if these vital plants were eliminated from the landscape.

Trees often support the largest number of insects, especially oak trees, but herbivorous plants are also important. Try including some of the following keystone plants in your landscape:

Dalea – Prairie Clover; *Gaillardia* – Blanketflower; *Helianthus* – Sunflowers; *Oenothera* – Primrose; *Rudbeckia* – Black-eyed Susans; *Symphotrichum* – Asters; *Verbesina* – Wingstem/Frostweed; *Coreopsis* – Tickseed (photo at right: *Coreopsis lanceolata*)

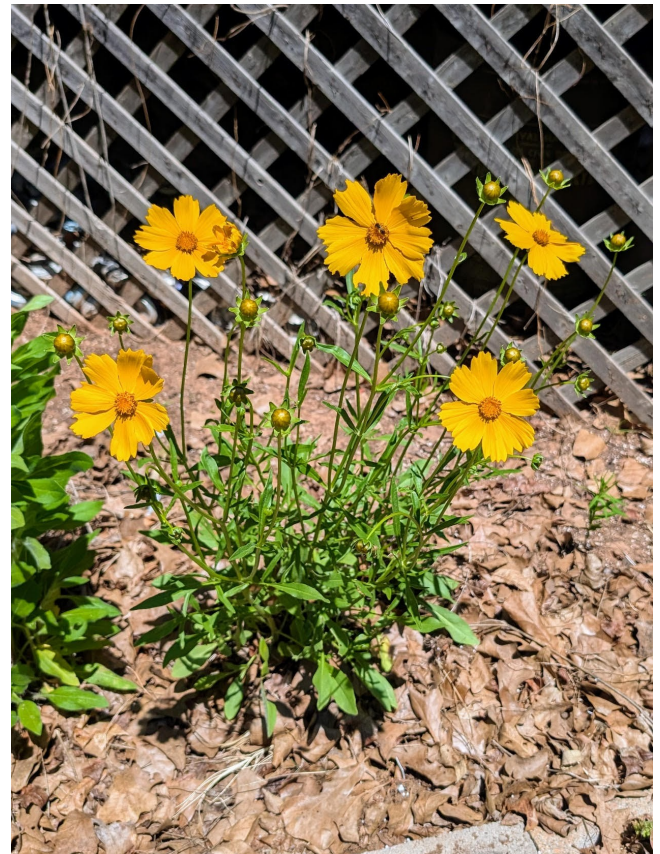
Keystone plants, provide the most bang-for-your-buck when it comes to your local food web. Although they only represent 14 percent of plants, they provide 90 percent of the caterpillars needed by birds, especially hungry baby birds, for food. Even in a small space, adding a few keystone plants can help support the greatest amount of wildlife.

According to the Xerces Society, in the central United States about 30 percent of the approximately 1,800 native bee species are pollen specialists. This means they will only be able to complete their life cycle using pollen from a very narrow range of native plants. Keystone plants support the largest number of these pollen specialists.

In addition to specialist bees, caterpillars can also be quite picky eaters. The vast majority of plant-feeding insects, including caterpillars, are specialists. This means they can only digest plant material from a limited number of plants usually corresponding with a specific family or genus. The good news is, if you support the specialists, you also supply food for generalist insects.

Keystone plants are organized by eco-region, and for Oklahoma that means the Great Plains and Eastern Temperate Forests. (Find which region you’re in here: https://www.nwf.org/-/media/Documents/PDFs/Garden-for-Wildlife/Eco-Regions/Ecological-Regions-North-America_CEC.pdf) For a full list of keystone plants in your eco region visit:

<https://www.nwf.org/Native-Plant-Habitats/Plant-Native/Why-Native/Keystone-Plants-by-Eco>



Welcome New Members Added 2/7/2026 thru 5/9/2026

Alli Victoria, Catharine Chernausek,
Rhonda Fair & James Randall Soto,
Sandra Moore-Furneaux,
Kathy Buckley, Kathy Elliott,
Sherry Duval-Coday & Rob Coday,
Dan & Bri Bibb, Bob Young,
Wendy Wells-O’Rear,
Holly & Clint Robison,
Jamie Lopp, Annabel Acosta,
Denise Duong & Gabriel Friedman,
Richard Cochran, Kristy Wicker,
Candise Wendland, Brian & Carson Rogers,
Stacy Bablewski, Alison Buxton,
Madelynn & Tyler Selves,
Rebecca McNeely,
Dirk & Katheryn Neitzel,
Trisha Rick, Jesse Forrest,
Tom & Laura Young,
Stephanie & Ken Kilbourn,
Anthony & Beverly Susan Bright,
Francesca Pappin, Ray & Eva Cromer,
Mya, Giovanni, & Lara Falk

Renewal with Life Membership
Christine & Daniel Parker



CELEBRATE AMERICA 250 WITH WILDFLOWERS

ONPS is highlighting different projects that are blooming now. Go to oknativeplants.org for continuing information and updated photos of the project sites.

Search Celebrate America 250 on the ONPS FB group or the Color Oklahoma FB group and see many of the projects.



At left: This wall at St. Bede’s Episcopal Church was brighter because of the array of blooms in May from the Celebrate 250 wildflower mix planted last fall. Photo courtesy of Donna Horton. She wrote: “The first wave of flowers is *Gaillardias*. Everyone at church this morning asked me if I had looked at the pollinator planting lately. Our newest altar guild member sprinkled the little bit of leftover communion wine on that garden, with a blessing. It’s a 50’x2’ space on the south-facing side of the church..”



May 7th the Veteran’s Hospital in Claremore, Oklahoma was sporting a display of pink Showy Evening Primrose (*Oenothera speciosa*) in its Celebrate America 250 wildflower patch. Photo by Lynn Michael

Green Thumb of Bartlesville garden club member, Karen Baker provided these photos at right and center left of this dazzling collection featuring *Gaillardia pulchella* and *Oenothera speciosa* blooming near 9046 N 121st E. Avenue in Bartlesville.



Center right: Claremore Master Gardeners roped off their area at the Rogers County Building at 416 S Brady, to insure it wasn't mowed! The area had a lot of wash so members added some milkweed plants to add depth and also to apply for a Monarch Waystation certificate. 100 additional mixed species plants were donated and planted by Peyton's Potting Shed. Photo by Lynn Michael

At right: Sulphur Cemetery was vibrant with color as *Gaillardia pulchella*, *Monarda citriodora*, and some Black-eyed susans, *Rudbeckia hirta*, planted by the Sulphur Sorosis Club, took center stage.

MEET THE MEMBERS: Luann Sewell Waters*By Fran Stallings*

Luann Sewell Waters lsw045@aol.com was the founding editor of *Gaillardia* in the fall of 1986. She worked on it with the late Ann Redelfs (who died in April 2020).

A native Oklahoman, Luann grew up in Pawhuska and Hugo where her father A. A. Sewell was an Oklahoma county extension agent. At Oklahoma State University, Luann got a Bachelor of Science in Zoology/Wildlife and a Master of Science in Science Education. She has one son. He and his wife have four children---so much fun to be with them!

She has worked for US Army Corps of Engineers, OSU Zoology Dept., Oklahoma Dept. of Wildlife Conservation (for 12 years), National Wild Turkey Federation (Women in the Outdoors), and OSU Education Department doing college credit weekend classes for students.

While at the Wildlife Department, Luann learned Dutch oven cookery from Women in the Outdoors classes, opening up a new career as a Conservation & History Educator. She has done workshops and programs in 21 states! She has taught for Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI: for seniors 50 years and older) at OSU and University of Oklahoma.

Luann is a member of the Association for Gravestone Studies, Lewis and Clark Trail Alliance, and is a volunteer at the Oklahoma History Center in Oklahoma City. She and her husband have lived at Wynnewood, OK for 43 years.

Luann learned native plants during her wildlife major at OSU. Now she enjoys walking in their Wynnewood pasture every day with her dog. "I don't remember all the names these days," she says, but she enjoys watching the plants develop. And the newsletter she started has developed for 40 years!

**CONTRIBUTIONS 2/16/2026 through 4/30/2026**

<u>Color Oklahoma Donations</u>	\$500.00		
4/28/2026 Redlinger, Barry & Melanie	Planting Wildflowers along Oklahoma Highways		
<u>Constance Murray Fund</u>	\$5,000		
4/1/2026 Anonymous	Rural School		
<u>Contributions to General Fund</u>	\$361.00		
4/28/2026 Fidelity Charitable	4/28/2026 Givinga Foundation		
4/28/2026 Paypal Giving Fund	3/19/2026 Pearson, Sandra		
4/3/2026 Barton, Andrew	in Honor of Darah Aldridge		
4/6/2026 Miers, Lauren	in Honor of Donna Stuber		
4/26/2026 Graue, Sandy			
OVERALL TOTAL	\$5,861.00		

For joining or renewing use this form

Fill out this form or supply the same information. Make checks payable to Oklahoma Native Plant Society and mail to: Oklahoma Native Plant Society, PO Box 14274, Tulsa, OK 74159.

Membership is for Jan. 1 – Dec. 31 of current year and dues include subscription to *Gaillardia*.

(Please Print Clearly) **RENEWAL** **NEW MEMBER** (All dues are tax deductible)

Name: _____

Affiliation: (School, Business, or Avocation) _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ - _____

Phone: Home: (____) _____ Cell: (____) _____

Work: (____) _____ (Please don't list my phone in the directory:)

E-mail: _____

E-mail 2: _____

<p>Membership Levels:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Individual (\$20)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Family (\$25)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Life Individual (\$300)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Family Individual (\$350)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Student (\$10) (free with faculty sponsor)</p>	<p>Chapter affiliation:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Central (OKC area)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Northeast (Tulsa area)</p> <p>You may sign up for both chapters if you like, to receive field trip and meeting notices from each chapter.</p>
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Need more details email: ONPSinfo@gmail.com

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Summer 2026 Issue

Check mailing label. If highlighted, this is
your last issue until dues are renewed.
Don't miss an issue!

COPY AND ART
DEADLINE
FOR THE NEXT
ISSUE IS Aug 5, 2026



Clockwise starting top left: Robert, Sam, David, and Debbie at Keystone Ancient Forest (KAF); Ebony spleenwort, *Asplenium platyneuron*; *Trilliums* sp.
Photos by Kim Wolfinbarger.

It has been proposed, and will be voted on at the annual meeting, that dues be increased. Proposed dues would be Student \$10 (free with Faculty sponsor); Individual \$30; Family \$35; Lifetime Individual \$350; and Lifetime Family \$400.