

Ripples

A Publication for Members and Friends
Killbuck Watershed Land Trust

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Heard them yet? Cicadas are coming soon

This is the year that Brood V of the periodical 17-year cicadas will return to our area in Ohio as well as some nearby states. Periodic cicadas are native to North America and don't exist anywhere else. They have either a 17-year or a 13-year life cycle. In this area we will see cicadas of the 17-year cycle.



Brood V cicadas are expected to emerge in late May or June when the soil temperature reaches 64 degrees F. That should be any day now. Some people may call periodical cicadas "17-year locusts," but they're not locusts which are grasshoppers. Cicadas are related to leaf hoppers and spittle bugs.

Periodical cicadas emerge from underground as adults. Once they emerge, they live for only

two to four weeks. During that time, both males and females will feed a little on young, tender twigs. Then males will "sing" to females.

About 10 days after the female cicadas molt, they will mate and lay eggs, usually in twigs that are 1/4 to 1/2 inch in

diameter. Female cicadas lay between 20 and 28 eggs in each of the pickets they create, and each can lay as many as 400 to 600 eggs in her brief lifetime.

They lay these eggs in about 270 different species of trees and woody shrubs ranging from hickory and maple to Rose of Sharon and even black-eyed Susans. They don't lay eggs in coniferous trees. "Flagging" may occur in twigs where eggs have been laid,

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If gardening bugs you, congratulations!

Dear Friends,

Last week I went greenhouse hopping with Sharon Taylor, an annual expedition that makes us tingle with excitement about the profusion of beautiful plants to add to the flowerbeds around the house.

Real gardeners are able to plan just what and where the right plant will make the most sense and have the right conditions for ultimate growth and beauty. I confess to being much too impulsive when I

wander around a nursery – everything looks so healthy, smells so good – and it's so easy to forget exactly where in the space I have this new plant might fit.

This year, however, I made up my mind to add only plants to the gardens that will attract the bees and butterflies. Also, I am making amends for destroying half a dozen swallowtail caterpillars that were lounging on dill plants in the herb bed last summer. So we are doubling

the dill and the same with parsley (curly and Italian), lovage, sage and bee balm.

If you're not familiar with bee balm, it has a minty citrus smell and striking (red family) flowers that swallowtails can't resist. And while swallowtails love it, deer typically stay away.

Dill, parsley and fennel all have those wonderful flat, umbel landing pads that butterflies love, as well as plenty of nectar.

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Promoting, protecting and preserving our natural heritage

Meet the godmother of butterflies (Really!)

“This has become the butterfly place,” Stefani Koorhan Hinden says of Deborah’s Garden Market in Wooster. Owner Deborah Singer (right) goes far beyond recommending the best plants to attract monarchs, long-tail swallowtails (Hinden’s passion) and others.

Last summer Singer “babysat” milkweed-clinging caterpillars at her Smithville Western Road greenhouse so friends could vacation during the important summer life cycle of their future backyard butterflies.

Singer, who teaches garden-related courses both at her shop and through Wayne County Schools Career Center,

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Use color and fragrance to attract winged guests

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A flowering garden plant that we grow every year and don’t see very often is called tithonia, or Mexican sunflower. It grows to a height of five or six feet (stake it) and in late summer is covered with brilliant orange flowers. It is an annual but is easy to grow from seed. Since the plants are huge, you must make plenty of space once the seedlings begin to sprout. Hummingbirds, bees and butterflies love it.

Attracting butterflies, bees and birds to your herb garden is an added benefit to having fresh herbs for the kitchen. Because butterflies and bees cannot tolerate toxins, they are also a good indicator that you have a fresh, healthy garden. To attract butterflies, focus on brightly colored blooms and a safe environment for them to enjoy the nectar, rest, and have a drink. Remember that laying eggs is a sign that a butterfly is at home in your herb garden.

After finding the right combination of plants, the basic elements that you are providing butterflies are sunlight, water and enough protection that they can rest and lay eggs. Offer as many plants as possible. A large planting will offer the most food per area and give off the best scent to attract the butterflies.

Another plant we want to mention is the garden variety of milkweed (pictured in inset above). Nothing really can take the place of the native milkweed plants that line the country roadsides, or at least used to. (The loss of the roadside milkweed as a result of mowing and spraying is one of the reasons we are seeing a diminishing population of the monarch butterfly.) This garden plant is called *Asclepias speciosa*, commonly known as garden milkweed. It grows to

2½ to 3 feet tall and has bright orange or yellow flowers. It is a perennial.

Here’s a funny thing about that plant in our garden: it gets a strange beetle-type bug that is gross but fascinating. It starts out as a little bright orange dot (the youngster) and in a few days it is much larger and changed into an orange and black beetle. There are many of them, and they cluster all around each other (I figured it out – they are making more babies!). They do not travel to any other plants nearby and they do not destroy the *Asclepias*.

Do not spray these beetles because you would also likely destroy the butterflies that adore this plant. We have sometimes made a bucket of soapy water, cut off the leaf where the beetles are clustered and dropped them in the bucket. Ugh.

Plant nursery staff members are an excellent source of knowledge and will point you in the right direction to help you choose the items you are looking for. They can advise you on how to select the right location in your garden, choose the right plant and identify nectar plants as well as suggest host plants where butterflies will lay eggs (milkweed for monarchs, parsley for swallowtails).

Another suggestion is to provide more than plants. Add a few flat rocks for sunning and cool, shady spots for resting a birdbath or other water feature that allows butterflies to “puddle” and obtain hydration and mineral nutrients.

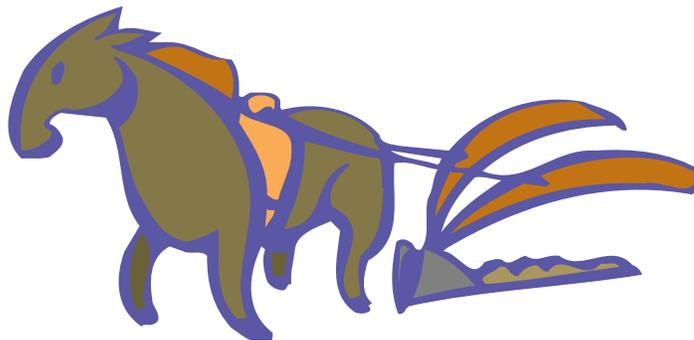
As far as maintenance, not much is required. As far as enjoyment – unbeatable!

**Maryanna Biggio, President
KWLTL Board of Trustees**



On grass and related matters

One day in the spring of 1883 as a Scandinavian farmer, John Christiansen, was plowing his fields in North Dakota, he looked up to find that he was being watched by an old and solemn Lakota Sioux. Silently the old native watched as the dark soil furled up and the prairie grass was turned under.



Christiansen stopped, leaned against the handle of the plow, pushed his Stetson back on his head and rolled a cigarette. He watched amusedly as the old man knelt, thrust his fingers into the mat of root-bound soil, measured the depth of the furrow and fingered the sod and buried grass.

Then the old Sioux straightened up and looked at the farmer.

“Wrong side up,” he said and walked away.

For many years this story was regarded as funny as it supposedly revealed the ignorance of the old Indian. But time has a way of flipping the tables – the old Lakota was onto something. Grass has its virtues, especially in dairy.

In 1949 Louis Bromfield wrote that grass farming was spreading like a wildfire in the great midland of our country, at the very heart of the Corn

Belt. Unfortunately, in the following quarter century the wildfire was extinguished as the nation’s dairy farmers became more mechanized, cheap fossil fuel dependent, and evolved into corn/alfalfa confinement dairies. The grasslands again became wrong side up.

Now grass is back, and growing. We began systematic grass farming in the 1990s when we started to make some grass seedings more directed toward grazing than for hay. Although we had been rotational grazing for many years, it was in bluegrass/white clover and in hayfields of red clover/alfalfa/timothy.

Because we were organic, more emphasis was put on orchard grass than on the ryegrasses, since the ryegrasses require higher levels of nitrogen. It has worked well.

I am not a scientist. Nor do I pretend

to be one. I am merely an observer and what I see happening on our farm with organic grazing pleases me.

When we switched to organic dairying I had a short list of concerns in the catacombs of my mind. Besides nitrogen, of course, I worried about Canada thistles and quack grass in

the 20 acres of corn and 12 acres of oats we grow. To my surprise, both have practically disappeared on our farm. I’m not sure why, but I note that rotationally intensive grazing helped a great deal in eliminating the pest plants.

Likewise with nitrogen; it was not the problem I feared. We do have access to a quantity of composted broiler manure from a neighboring poultry house, which supplies some nitrogen for the grass fields. The rest is furnished by the legumes and the manure from the dairy herd.

Once the organic matter and calcium, potassium, phosphorus and nitrogen have the right balance in the soil, it results in growth and health of plants, animals, and people. It has been said that grass is the Great Healer, and I believe it – both for animals and for the soil.

David Kline, KWLTT Trustee

17-year cicadas are due to emerge here any day

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causing the twigs to split, wither and then die. Therefore, the experts recommend that we wait to plant new trees until after cicadas are gone.

Six to 10 weeks after eggs are laid, cicada nymphs emerge and drop to the ground. The nymphs are white and resemble ants. They burrow six to 18 inches below the soil’s surface and feed on plant and tree roots, which doesn’t cause much damage to trees. The nymphs then feed for 17 years, usually residing one to eight feet underground. And the cycle begins again. Seventeen years later they have become adults. They emerge at night as they climb out of the soil and onto trees and plants. They shed their exoskeletons which we find attached to tree trunks.

Adult cicadas are about 1 1/2 inches long. They have clear wings with orange veins. It is the adult male cicadas that

“sing,” squawk and buzz with vibrating membranes on the underside of their first abdominal segment. Females are silent.

Cicadas do not bite or sting humans. They have piercing, sucking mouth parts that are used for feeding, but that’s it. Dogs and cats may eat cicadas, causing the animals no harm. Moles and other underground critters may eat cicadas and once the insects emerge, birds, fish and small mammals may eat them.

This information is provided by the Ohio State University Extension, our precious resource. The last Brood V of the 17-year cicadas occurred in 1999. It will be 2033 before the next round after this one. I just wonder if I’ll still have my hearing by then.

*Maryanna Biggio, President
KWLTT Board of Trustees*

Singer has become a resource for butterfly enthusiasts

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loves to help plan critter-friendly gardens. Coneflowers, Mexican sunflowers, lemon mint, asters and black-eyed Susans are butterfly favorites, Deborah says, along with cosmos, parsley, yarrow and dill.

If your garden has adequate space, commercial butterfly seed mixes are easy to sow over the soil. Container plants, a specialty of Deborah's, bring color into even small areas.

Commercial orange milkweed grows to two feet high and is friendly for small spaces. And basil varieties can be mixed in an aromatic garden patch to attract butterflies while providing fresh herbs for your kitchen. If you clip your basil plants, they will branch into two stems, which butterflies love.

A water source is important to attract butterflies. It can be as simple as a shallow saucer of fresh water changed regularly. Deborah says rainwater is best, but hose or tap water is fine, too, as long as it is changed often.

While garden toads don't get the

good press coverage drawn by butterflies, they are fun and useful in your garden, too. Toads eat small insects that many of us would describe as pesky, along with earthworms (a sign of healthy soil). A whimsical feature of Deborah's Garden Market is a trio of healthy toads that eschew common bugs in favor of pet store mealworms served on a plastic spoon.

Customer and friend Stefani Koorhan Hinden says of Deborah's support of butterfly nurturers, "She has the resources to obtain the supplies, plants, and information and pass on that info to anyone who may be interested. All of us who have connected to her work towards the common goal of having a readily accessible place to share information (about nurturing butterflies) and stories, obtain supplies, and support each other's efforts."

*Melody L. Snure
Ripples Editor*



GARDEN TOADS eat small, pesky insects. At Deborah's Garden Market, resident toad "Miss Grumpy" also enjoys mealworms served on a plastic spoon.



COLORFUL MIXES like this Profusion mix zinnia are sure to draw butterflies to your garden.

DEBORAH'S MONARCH POEM

- May your days be sunny and milkweed plentiful.
- May your numbers increase beyond the year before.
- Wherever you venture, may you find a welcome garden.
- We are here to help you along your journey!

Your membership in KWLT helps to conserve area lands

Your membership in the Killbuck Watershed Land Trust helps to maintain the rural atmosphere that has made our area a desirable and unique place to live. Your 2016 membership dues will be used for:

- Conservation education
- Public outreach
- Land acquisition and management
- Legal action to monitor and maintain conservation easements

Annual membership levels are:

- Friend, \$50
- Steward, \$100
- Conservator, \$250
- Protector, \$500

To become a new member or to renew your membership for 2016, write a check payable to Killbuck Watershed Land Trust. Mail it to Killbuck Watershed Land Trust, 133 S. Market St., Wooster, OH 44691.

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