

What's in Your Gardening Library?

by Cheryl Gross, AEMG

The first two books we put in our gardening library were *Landscaping with Native Plants of Michigan* by Lynn M. Steiner and *All New Square Foot Gardening* by Mel Bartholmew. Since then, we have collected various books based upon the topic at hand. One year it was wildflower identification as we were learning new things in the woods and meadows. Another year we built our insect book collection. If you are interested in ecological gardening, some of the following books may be of interest to you.

Why gardening with native species matters:

Bringing Nature Home, Douglas Tallamy, c. 2007 Tallamy's ground-breaking book on the relationships between plants, insects and birds. Accessible for the reader. Provides the science of the ecological web. A must read.

A New Garden Ethic: Cultivating Defiant Compassion for an Uncertain Future, Benjamin Vogt, c. 2017 Vogt expands the idea of gardening for the web of life to the importance of native landscapes to humans as well. Humans desperately need a balance with nature which is only available through wildflower gardens. We urgently need wildness in our daily lives.

Flower identification and culture:

A Field Identification Guide to Invasive Plants in Michigan's Natural Communities, Kim Borland, Suzan Campbell, Rebecca Schillo, Phylis Higman, MSU Extension, c. 2009 Just because the land 'looks' wild, does NOT mean it is natural. Our woods, fields, and even landscapes are filled with non-native, invasive plants. To support natural habitats and natural ecosystems, we must first know all of these nasties by name and remove them.

Wildflowers of Michigan, Stan Tekiela, c. 2000. The best way to learn to love Michigan native plants is to see them in a natural setting. Tekiela's Field Guide is a handy reference. Organized by blossom color, he includes information on plant native/non native status.

Wild Flowers of the Dunes, Diane K. Chaddock, c. 1998. Visiting the exceptional Dunes communities along the Lake Michigan exposes us to rare plant communities. These dunes plants, some are threatened and protected, all survive and thrive in harsh sand and winds.

Wildflowers in the Field and Forest, Steven Clemants and Carol Gracie c. 2006. A Field Guide to the Northeastern United States. A good comprehensive guide with related plants grouped together and location maps. Good photos and descriptions for identifying a plant. No information on native/invasive status.

Michigan Wildflowers in Color, Harry C. Lund, c. 1985. A field guide with beautiful photos. Good section on nomenclature. Indicates plant status as to protected or endangered. Grouped by blossom color. No mention of native/non-native status

What's Doin' the Bloomin'?, Clayton R. Osland, 2011 A Guide to Wildflowers of the Upper Great Lakes Regions, Eastern Canada and Northeastern USA. Organized by habitat and season makes this easy to use when in the field. Origin is specified when not native.

Newcomb's Wildflower Guide, Lawrence Newcomb, c. 1977. A true field guide using a key to identify the plants. By answering 5 questions about the plant before you, and using a numbering system based upon the Flower, Plant, and Leaf, the reader is guided through an ever narrowing group of plants to the identification of the one.

Trees of Michigan and the Upper Great Lakes, Norman F. Smith, c. 1995. Two full pages of information on each tree species with photographs of leaves, bark, seeds, etc. Focus is on the tree, habitat, and behavior.

Insects:

Attracting Native Pollinators, The Xerces Society, c. 2011 A comprehensive guide to pollinators and their habitat needs. Included are gardening and seeding guides, insect identification, habitat construction, and the like. Helpful step-by-step instructions.

Pollinators of Native Plants, Heather Holm c. 2014 Heather Holm introduces us to the native pollinators (bees, wasps, butterflies, beetles, and flies) in our region and the plants they require for food and larval hosting. Clearly identifies the insects and the way they interact with plants.

Garden Insects of North America, Whitney Crenshaw c. 2004 Entomologist recommended for identifying and understanding the insects in the garden. Which are good and which are bad? Photography is especially helpful.

Michigan Butterflies and Skippers, Mogens C. Neilson, MSU Extension c. 1999 Helpful in identifying the butterfly stage but nothing on the larval host stage. Good photos of the butterflies and information on location, habitat and larval host plants.

Caterpillars of Eastern North America, David Wagner, c. 2005. FINALLY, a caterpillar book. A go-to on our shelves. Helpful pictures of caterpillars AND pictures of their butterflies. Full of useful information.

Spiders of the North Woods, Larry Webber c. 2003. Who doesn't need a spider ID book? They are everywhere in our garden and landscape, if you haven't poisoned them. They are beneficial in every way as they are carnivores and feast on annoying insects. Celebrate these unsung heroes.

Butterflies of Michigan, Jaret C. Daniels c. 2005. There are over 150 butterflies in Michigan and this field guide will help you identify who you see in your yard and as you trek in natural areas throughout the state.

Bees of the Great Lakes Region and Wildflowers to Support Them, Jason Gibbs, Ashley Bennett, Rufus Isaacs, Joy Landis, MSU Extension c. 2015 As we pay more attention to the bees in our flower gardens, our curiosity expands past the Bumble Bee or the Honey Bee. Some bees are specialists, some generalists, all need nectar and pollen support across the season. Learn to recognize and understand these hard workers. Garden to enhance and protect their habitat.

Growing a bird feeder:

How To Attract Birds, Ortho Books, c. 1983. This one is an 'oldie-but-a-goodie. It was written well before the recognition of the importance of native plants in the landscape, so plant choices should be double checked. However, it provides very good information on hosting birds.

Birdscaping in the Midwest, Mariette Nowak, c 2007. Subtitled: A Guide to Gardening with Native Plants to Attract Birds, Nowak's book does just that. This guide is packed full of information on habitats for birds created by gardens including plant selection and design.

Landscaping with native plants:

Landscaping with Native Plants of Michigan, Lynn M. Steiner, c. 2006. A very handy reference book on plants. Steiner includes information on plant habitat, behavior, size, features, and companion plants. The Book includes flowers and ground covers, grasses and sedges, ferns, conifers, shrubs, trees and vines. She does include cultivars which are not native plants.

The Living Landscape, Rick Darke & Doug Tallamy, C. 2104. Designing for biodiversity in the home garden. Darke and Tallamy take observations of plant layers and communities in the wild and apply those principles to landscaping at home. Using native plants, their specialized relationships, biodiversity, ecological benefits, and more they offer a guide to beautiful and beneficial landscape design.

Planting in a Post-Wild World, Thomas Ranier & Claudia West, c. 2015 Humans need nature and wild things. Our current landscaping principles remove us from nature. Rainer and West studied the behavior of plants in nature and using masses of fewer plant species in layers and communities found in nature are designing landscapes that recreate the wild in beautiful, beneficial, and acceptable ways.

Rain Gardens, Lynn M. Steiner & Robert W. Domm, c. 2012. Sustainable landscaping for a beautiful yard and healthy world. Rain gardens are important if we are to process and clean rainfall and run off on-site. When we do this, we protect surface water. Steiner and Domm offer a clear guide to rain garden placement, excavation, planting,

and more. While utilitarian, rain gardens can be beautiful and beneficial habitat for insects and critters as well.