

Field trips will depart from the Bergamo Center on Sunday at 9:00 a.m. Printed driving directions will be available on Saturday evening and Sunday morning. Participants may elect to depart from Bergamo or meet at the destination. Approximate drive time and the general compass direction from Bergamo are included in each description below. Participants will NOT return to Bergamo and should consider how best to drive home from the field trip site.

PLEASE do not cancel or change field trips without consulting the field trip team!
Please bring a refillable water bottle & fill before departing for your field trip destination!

Ratings:

- **Rating 1** – easy walking on mostly even surface or boardwalk
- **Rating 2** – uneven ground, can be muddy or slippery
- **Rating 3** – rough terrain and/or hills, uneven walking surfaces

Trip #1 Cincinnati Zoo Bowyer Farm

Bowyer Farm, part of the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden since 1995, is a 630-acre conservation property featuring restored wetlands, grasslands, and prairie habitats that support a wide variety of wildlife—more than 208 bird species have been recorded, including bald eagles. A major component of the farm is the Native Plant Program, which grows thousands of native plants each year. These plants are then used for landscaping at the zoo's main campus, planted out into the restoration projects, or sold at native plant sales. This trip includes a guided walk to view native plants in both natural and cultivated settings, plus a tour of the propagation houses and demonstration gardens. After the tour, attendees may shop for plants – credit card sales only. There is a paved parking area, shaded shelter, gravel paths, and a restroom on the premises.

Rating 2 – due to unpaved trails, slopes, hiking poles recommended

Limit 15 participants

Drive time: ≈45 minutes to SSW

Trip #2 Gallagher Fen State Nature Preserve

This 213-acre area is located east of Springfield and is managed by the ODNR Division of Natural Areas and Preserves. It is one of the best prairie fens in Ohio, overlooked by an oak savanna. It has a variety of habitats including stream, savanna, marlstone meadow, oak-hickory woodland. There are a wide variety of species such as side-oats grama, cut-leaf prairie dock, round-leaved sundew, nodding wild onion, and Kalm's lobelia. At least 26 state-listed species have been reported from this site.

Rating 3 – unpaved trail through the woods, steep steps down to the fen boardwalk

Limit 15 participants

Drive time: ≈40 minutes to NE

Trip #3 Yellow Springs Native Garden Tour – NEW GARDEN added in 2025!

This tour visits three native plant gardens in Yellow Springs. The first garden is filled with native plants specifically chosen to attract Ohio's butterflies. Flowers, shrubs and trees create a layered habitat with water sources to accommodate the larva and mature butterflies. New to this tour, the homeowners of the second garden removed invasive species and restored the soil of their half-acre lot. Now the property includes a shade ephemeral garden, sun-loving natives, and a 70 sq. ft. cedar enclosure with eleven raised beds for herbs and vegetables. Rain barrels provide water, and four honeybee hives complement the many native bees on the property. The final stop features a property that nineteen years ago was an acre and a half of mostly grass. It now is home to over fifty different native trees and shrubs, as well as native plant gardens and a bee-friendly lawn. The trees will be labeled so that visitors can see their shapes and growing habits. Tree snags and other habitats on the lot provide food and shelter to many birds, insects, and animals.

Rating 1 – lawns & pavement

Limit 15 participants

Drive time: ≈30 minutes to ENE

Trip #4 Siebenthaler Fen

Siebenthaler Fen is an ODNR Division of Wildlife property and is considered the crown jewel of the Beaver Creek Wetlands. Its 130 acres were among the first conserved in the Beaver Creek Wetlands corridor, facilitated by the Beaver Creek Wetlands Association and The Nature Conservancy in 1995. The recently replaced boardwalk takes visitors through wet woods and along the Beaver Creek, then loops through the fen and its sedge meadows, passing an information kiosk and an observation tower. Plant diversity is high – more than 470 species! At the time of your visit, you may find these in bloom: turtlehead, queen-of-the-prairie, swamp milkweed, cardinal flower, swamp thistle, Canadian burnet, sweet Indian plantain, blue vervain, fringed loosestrife, marsh skullcap, Joe Pye weed, and many more! Spotted turtle, eastern massasauga rattlesnake, Baltimore checkerspot butterfly, least bittern, yellow-breasted chat, red-headed woodpecker, willow flycatcher, beaver, and river otter have been observed here. Butterflies, dragonflies, damselflies, and phantom crane flies abound.

Rating 1 – recently replaced accessible boardwalk, short section of level gravel trail, about 1 mile round trip

Limit 15 participants

Drive time: ≈15 minutes to NE

Trip #5 Cedar Bog State Nature Preserve

Cedar Bog is a National Natural Landmark, one of only twenty-three in the state of Ohio. Located south of the city of Urbana, this diverse 446-acre site is actually a calcareous fen with prairie, woodland and wetland species. It ranks the highest of any site in the state on the Ohio Floristic Diversity Index for its great diversity of plants. One can take an easy stroll along the boardwalk and view many rare plants, including round-leaved sundew, grass pink orchid, Kalm's lobelia and horned bladderwort. Cedar Bog is also home to a few of Ohio's endangered animals such as the spotted turtle, eastern massasauga rattlesnake, and elfin skimmer dragonflies. Restrooms available in the Nature Center.

Rating 1 – This site has a boardwalk

Limit 15 participants

Drive time: ≈40 minutes to NNE

Trip #6 Clifton Gorge State Nature Preserve

This 268-acre preserve protects one of the most spectacular dolomite and limestone gorges in the state. Registered as a National Natural Landmark in 1968, Clifton Gorge encompasses a 2-mile stretch of the Little Miami State and National Scenic River, just east of John Bryan State Park. Geologically, it is an outstanding example of interglacial and post-glacial canyon cutting. At one point, the river funnels through a deep, narrow channel, which was apparently formed by the enlarging and connecting of a series of potholes in the resistant Silurian dolomite bedrock. In other sections of the gorge, cliff overhangs have broken off forming massive slump blocks scattered along the valley floor. The shaded, north-facing slopes provide a cool, moist environment for northern species including hemlock, red baneberry, Canada yew, Arbor-Vitae and Mountain Maple. This is one of the most spectacular sites in the state for viewing spring wildflowers including the rare snow trillium. Restrooms are available in the Nature Center.

Rating 3 – Uneven ground and steep, rocky trails

Limit 15 participants

Drive time: ≈30 minutes to E

Trip #7 Huffman Prairie State Natural Landmark

Huffman Prairie is a 109-acre remnant of a much larger prairie and fen complex that once covered much of what is now Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. The prairie contains outstanding grassland bird and insect populations, including a moth species found nowhere else. Summer displays of prairie wildflowers and tall grasses are impressive. Because of damage done to the site from previous land uses, restoration activities have been a focus of the base and Five Rivers MetroParks since 1988. The site is adjacent to the world's first airport, the Huffman Prairie Flying Field, a component of the Dayton Aviation Heritage National Park.

Rating 2 – level but unpaved trail

Limit 15 participants

Drive time: ≈25 minutes to N

Trip #8 Washington Township Native Garden Tour – NEW in 2025!

This trip visits native gardens and a natural area. The first stop will be to view your trip leader's native gravel garden. From there, you will travel to the nearby Centerville/Washington Park District's Donnybrook Park to view a nice restored fen in the middle of a residential neighborhood, accessible via boardwalk. The last suburban property showcases prairie plantings in a more formal arrangement in the front yard, while the back yard transitions from lawn to prairie to saplings to the woods of the adjacent Grant Park. Note: Another garden may be added to this tour – please check again before registration!

Rating 1 – relatively level lawns, boardwalk

Limit 15 participants

Drive time: ≈15 minutes to SW

Trip #9 Oakwood/Kettering Native Garden Tour – NEW GARDEN added in 2026!

The first stop will be the Oakwood Wright Memorial Public Library to view the native sun and shade gardens. This project was inspired by the library's ecology educational programming and the gardens were created by residents and civic groups. Most plants are labeled. Just a one block walk from the library gardens, you will visit a suburban native garden with a small footprint, but high diversity – demonstrating “start where you are.” The next property is a masterclass in residential biodiversity and ecological design, from the formal front yard to the more relaxed backyard, which features spring ephemerals, a pocket prairie, and native shrub border. Butterflies and bees abound – more than 100 species of birds and insects have been documented in iNaturalist since the transition to natives began in 2021! Two Kettering suburban properties in the same neighborhood are next, both with a mix of sun and shade gardens. One homeowner is working to convert non-native ground cover to native understory and has added pollinator gardens, plus native trees and shrubs. The other has multiple border gardens with the largest spanning the entire length of the front yard right along the street! All of these gardeners share the goal of planting to support pollinators, birds, and other wildlife within a suburban setting.

Rating 1 – sidewalks, relatively level lawns

Limit 15 participants

Drive time: ≈15 minutes to W

Trip #10 Deeply Rooted Landscapes Nursery Tour – NEW!

Explore Deeply Rooted Landscapes HQ and see firsthand how the nursery team grows plants for native plant sales and garden installations. During the walk, you'll tour a 2.5-acre prairie planted in 2020, learn about native plant propagation, and see how different plantings support local wildlife. This behind-the-scenes experience is perfect for anyone interested in sustainable landscaping, prairie management, or the practical side of creating native habitats. Additionally, this 5.5 acre property is the home of the DRL founder and her family. Together they have planted more than 600 native trees and shrubs, removed hundreds of feet of honeysuckle, and pulled dozens of bags of garlic mustard. They have created trails in their woods that connect with neighbors who are similarly working to remove honeysuckle and improve their property habitats. The family also has a 20 KW solar array that they would be happy to talk about with anyone interested. At the end of the tour the nursery will be open for plant shopping!

Rating 2 Unpaved trail

Limit 15 participants

Drive time: ≈35 minutes to NNW

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Trip #11 Janet Lasley Legacy Memorial Garden and Education Area at Caesar Creek State Park – NEW!

Janet Lasley was one of the founders of the Dayton Area Wild Ones and its first President. She was also a valued education volunteer at the Caesar Creek Nature Center. To honor her memory after her sudden passing in 2023, a major renovation of the gardens and pond near the Nature Center was undertaken through community support and volunteer effort. More than 3000 native plants of 60 species have been installed in the first three years of the project with three major additions planned for 2026. The pond area is a microcosm of the park, starting with a dock leading to a beach and fossil area, followed by the picturesque boardwalk, and culminating in a serene prairie zone, then returning to the dock along a woodland edge planting. The Janet Lasley Memorial Project also began a comprehensive restoration of all the woodland areas surrounding the Nature Center, involving invasive species removal and trail enhancements. An ongoing botanical survey has identified more than 240 species of Ohio native plants to date.

Rating 1 – area surrounding the Nature Center

Rating 2 – for optional hike in surrounding woodland

Limit 30 participants

Drive time: ~40 minutes to SSE

Field trip questions? Please contact conferencefieldtrips@midwestnativeplants.org