



MT. LEBANON
NATURE
CONSERVANCY

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

FALL 2021

**SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:**

- Facts and Fiction about the MLNC
- The Why Behind Our Stewardship Work
- 2021 Programming
- Want to Learn More About Native Plants?
- How to join us!

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From the President... How much do you know about MLNC?

The Mt. Lebanon Nature Conservancy: Fact or Fiction?

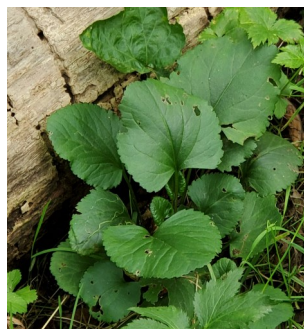
The Mount Lebanon Nature Conservancy is part of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) organization.

Fiction. The Mount Lebanon Nature Conservancy (MLNC) is not related to TNC and receives no funding from them. MLNC was formed in 1984 during the controversy over adding sports fields in Bird Park. MLNC's School in the Park program was developed to help educate children on the importance of our green spaces.

Donations and Memberships fund our budget.

Fact. Aside from an occasional small grant, public

donations and MLNC memberships are the SOLE funding source for all MLNC activities and materials. MLNC is the only organization working on the ground to steward Mt. Lebanon's important green spaces.



**A healthy Golden Ragwort planted this spring.
Photo: 8/30/21**

The municipality provides material and service support in the way of mulch and garbage removal. Do you value our passive green spaces and the work we do? Please become a member today!

School in the Park is run by paid educators.

Fiction. School in the Park is run by MLNC as an all-volunteer program in coordination with the school district. The district provides buses and reimburses MLNC for half the cost of the owl pellets used in the program. MLNC recruits and trains all instructors and high school volunteers and provides all materials.

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Why We Need Our Volunteer Heroes

The trails and natural spaces of Mount Lebanon's natural areas are a rare community gem, but today what is growing there is mostly a mix of introduced species that don't belong in a south-western Pennsylvania woodland. Historically, the

forests of Allegheny County included many native tree and shrub species such as American Beech, Red and White Oaks, Sugar Maple, Common Witchhazel, and Spicebush.

Today most of those spe-

cies are not present due to introduced species from Europe and Asia taking over the woods. MLNC - and the volunteers that help our efforts - work in the natural areas of Bird, Twin Hills and Rob Hollow Parks to clear

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Fascination at the Bird Station

“Time in nature is not leisure time; its an essential investment in our children’s health. “

Richard Louv

[Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder](#)

Introduced species invade our natural areas and don’t provide good habitat to our birds.



School In The Park 2021

MLNC rose to the challenge this year to get School in the Park back outside! Our creative volunteer educators planned an engaging hands-on experience for 3 of 5 educational stations in the program.

Instead of bussing students to Bird Park as done historically, five dedicated MLNC volunteers traveled to our seven elementary schools to lead hands-on learning for the Bird, Invertebrates, and Field Edge Stations. Videos of the Stream and Forest Stations created for the 2020 virtual School

in the Park program were used in the classrooms.

MLNC board members Lex Smith, Sarada Sangeswaran, Bernadette Hartman, Sarah Levinthal, and Angie Phares stepped up to this new teaching challenge, and twenty stellar high school volunteers from AP Environmental Geoscience classes helped with the teaching. Thank you to all!

From the front lawn of Markham Elementary to the baseball fields of Lincoln Elementary and all the various outdoor locations at the other five

schools, four hundred third graders across the district dissected owl pellets, observed live invertebrate specimens, and played lively games to experience concepts like predator and prey.

We hope we will be back in Bird Park in 2022. Be on the lookout next spring for volunteer instructor opportunities for this fun program. As always, we appreciate your support so MLNC can continue this important educational programming!

Why We Need Our Volunteer Heroes cont'd

these invasive shrubs and trees and replant native species that belong.

Why? Well, native plants are the best food source for the pollinators and other insects that co-evolved with them over thousands of years.

For those of you who are old enough, remember the swarms of “bugs” that would fly into the grill and windshield of your car as you took a drive? Have you noticed that they are gone today?

Since 1970 [the US has lost 3 billion birds](#). A major factor is the loss of insects, the major food source for young birds. This is mostly caused by

habitat loss and the declining quality of our natural areas.

We need to continue our work to restore the ecological quality of these valuable spaces. We send our grateful thanks to those who have helped this past year. [Will you pitch in?](#)

2021 Educational Year in Review



Learning more about nature through School in the Park

demonstration braving an icy day as we tapped a maple tree. Imagine the thrill of hearing the first sap of the season hit

the sugaring bucket with its rhythmic thump!

March Young children and their adults enjoyed a “Signs of Spring” hike that engaged their senses by listening for bird songs, looking for early spring flowers and taking in the smell of moist soil underfoot. Children made seed balls with native seeds and clay, and tossed them into the woods.

Late spring Children from the

Markham Extended Day program helped with an invasive species clean up project at Bird Park where they learned all about garlic mustard and cleared large swathes of this invasive plant around trails. Cub Scout Pack 22 had fun on themed hikes through the parks.

May We coordinated our iconic School in the Park program, open to every third grade student in the Mt Lebanon School District. See our separate article in this newsletter.

Educating adults is important to us too. In celebration of Earth Day, native plant expert Trish Beckjord delivered an online presentation filled with

The Mt Lebanon Nature Conservancy (MLNC) educates the public on the appreciation and conservation of nature through engaging hands-on programs, colorful presentations, and pertinent written materials. MLNC’s volunteer Board members have led a full year of programs in 2021 and there was something for everyone!

February Hardy visitors enjoyed a maple sugaring

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Mt Lebanon Nature Conservancy: Fact or Fiction? Cont'd.

MLNC ensures instructors and coordinators have passed all state-mandated clearances.

All our programs are free to the public

Fact. In addition to conducting School in the Park for every 3rd grader in the school district, MLNC provides almost monthly educational or experiential opportunities at no cost to the public. We have also

expanded our website resources this year.

MLNC is running out of money

Fact. In 2020 contributions to MLNC totaled \$2,900. Expenses for the same period were \$4,800; the biggest being School in the Park at \$1,400. Planting done in the parks has been funded by a small grant from the Pennsylvania Native Plant Society

and a private donation. This trend is not sustainable.

We hope you value Mt. Lebanon’s green spaces and our work in them. Our goal is to have our work be a community sponsored and run organization. **But we need your help and your interest to do this. Please join!**



“This [financial] trend is not sustainable.”

2021 Educational Year in Review cont'd



Hmmm, what did this owl eat?

colorful photographs, just in time for the spring gardening season.

We also coordinated a native tree ID program with the Parks Advisory Board at Williamsburg Park in September. This was instrumental in maintaining the municipality's status as a Level 1 Arboretum. Volunteers from both MLNC and the Parks Board led interactive tours on native trees and tree

care, and distributed information on various topics such as native plants for the garden and invasive species to avoid while children enjoyed hands-on activities and artwork.

While countless people visit the various parks for programs or for a quiet walk, our goal is to take our message to a broader audience through written articles. Look for our monthly articles on native

plants and lists of resources on gardening with nature on our website. In addition, check out our periodic articles in the Mt Lebanon Magazine.

In total, we have reached 150 adults and 80 children through direct programs (separate from our School in the Park program), and countless more through indirect ways in 2021.

“Each of us carries an inherent responsibility for good earth stewardship.”

Doug Tallamy

[Nature's Best](#)

[Hope](#)

A Native Plant for Your Garden

Many folks these days are interested in supporting pollinators and we applaud this trend! Often however, some the elements of a garden that are needed to do this properly may not be well understood.

In keeping with our work to foster an appreciation

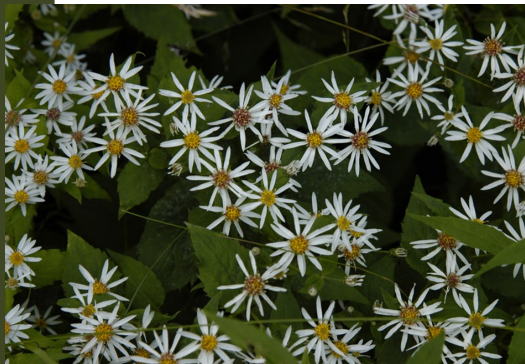
for the environment within our Mt. Lebanon community, MLNC began offering a new monthly post this year called [A Native Plant for Your Garden](#).

Written by Trish Beckjord, a landscape architect and new member of MLNC, we hope this information helps you include more native plants in

your yard to support more pollinators and the birds that depend on them.

Let us know if these posts and our expanded Resources page are helpful!

Fall blooming White Wood Aster was featured in September!



Coming Soon!

The Dirty Dozen: Invasive Plants From Your Yard to Our Natural Areas

Learn more about this connection!

Saturday, November 6th

2:00—4:00 p.m.

Look for the location announcement on our website, <https://www.lebonature.org/>

Join Us!

Please fill out this form and mail into us. Use this [link](#) to use a credit card.

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Phone: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Membership Level:.

_____ Family: \$50 _____ Individual: \$40

_____ Student: \$15 _____ Senior: \$25

Additional Donation: \$ _____ Total: _____

I am interested in becoming an MLNC volunteer (yes/no) _____



***Jewelweed,
a native
annual of
moist soils,
attracts
humming-
birds.***

(Your e-mail address will only be used to contact you about MLNC news and events
it will never be traded or sold to other entities)

Your membership is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.



MT. LEBANON NATURE CONSERVANCY

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<https://www.lebonature.org/>

Follow us on Facebook!

The Mt. Lebanon Nature Conservancy is a 501 c 3 non-profit organization.
All donations are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law

MLNC Mission

- ◆ To promote the enhancement and careful use of passive green space in Mt. Lebanon parks
- ◆ To foster an appreciation and respect for the environment in our community and our youth
- ◆ To guard and steward these green spaces for all life by helping to restore their ecological health



A couple of our volunteer heroes and their awesome Garlic Mustard pile!

MLNC Board

Angie Phares	President
Sarada Sangameswaran	VP Programs
Ron Block	VP Projects
Alexis Smith	Secretary
Bethany McGee	Treasurer
Moira Aulbach	
Jennifer Rick	
Allison McGee	
Sarah Levinthal	
Volker Schmid	
Steve Posti	
John Rombold	
Rich Salvante	
Sandy Moorhead	
Tom Schevtchuk	
Bernadette Hurst	
Josie Dougherty	Student Rep*
Noelle O'Brien	Student Rep*

* Mt. Lebanon High School