

**In Honor of Earth Day**

**In the garden with “Let The Earth Breathe.”**



Hello:

I hope this finds you well.

There are 14 types of bees native to Kentucky. Honey bees were imported from Europe because sugar was so expensive! Many of the, so-called sweat bees are Syrphid flies, also called “Hover Bees,” pictured above. That's native Alleghany Monkey Flower (*Mimulus ringens*), and it doesn't mind the Spring floods or the dry Summers. Like most native plants, it comes back every year, bigger and stronger.

Thank you to Anne for recommending, “Native Alternatives to Invasive Plants,” by C. Colston Burrell. The pictures are fabulous and the native plants are more beautiful than what is commonly sold in big box stores and nurseries, while being easier to grow and better for the local pollinators.



Here are some pictures of what's currently blooming in our gardens.



Virginia Bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*) It's amazing how fast these spread. Anne planted this one in our planter box and now we have 8!



Hepatica (*Hepatica acutiloba*)

This is one of those rare plants that doesn't seem to have a common name. Hepatica has developed hairs to protect the buds as they push through snow. The hairs also protect the stems and leaves, and may help the plant retain heat. The blossoms are the size of a dime.



This is a wild plum, *Prunus americana*. The fruit is edible—just ask the squirrels, who have developed a taste for the tart, almost-ripe plums and always beat us to the fruit.

In honor of Earth Day, I will speaking about “Let The Earth Breathe” at the following locations. I hope to see you soon.

Saturday, April 8, 2023, 1 pm

I'll be talking about "Let The Earth Breathe" and giving a plant walk at the Jeffersontown Library.

10635 Watterson Trail

Louisville, KY 40299

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Thursday, April 20th, 6:30 pm

I'll be talking about "Let The Earth Breathe" and giving a plant walk at the Boone County Public Library. Main Library

1786 Burlington Pike, Burlington, KY 41005

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Friday, April 21st, 3:30 pm

I'll be talking about, "Let The Earth Breathe," and giving a plant walk at the Hardin County Library.

100 Jim Owen Drive

Elizabethtown, KY 42701

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Saturday, April 22, 3:00 pm

Anne and I will be celebrating Earth Day, Saturday, April 22 with a presentation of "Let The Earth Breathe."

Middletown Library, 12556 Shelbyville Road,

Louisville, KY 40243

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Saturday, April 29, 2:30 pm

I will be talking about "Let The Earth Breathe."

Boyle County Public Library

307 W. Broadway

Danville, KY 40422

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Friday, June 9<sup>th</sup>, 3:00 pm

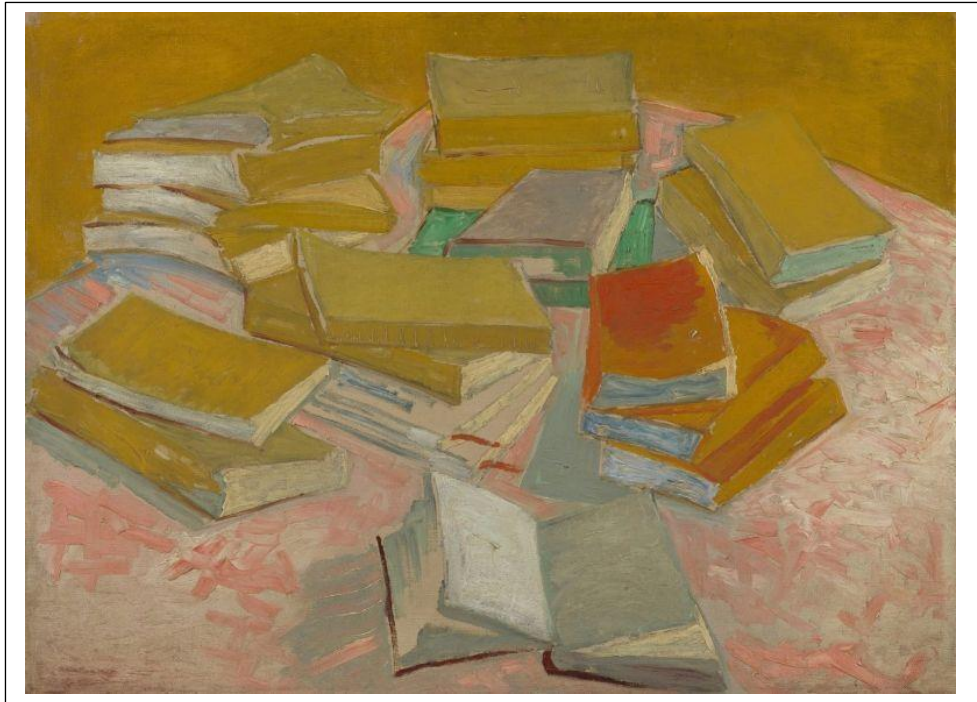
“Let The Earth Breathe”

LaRue County Library

215 Lincoln Dr.

Hodgenville, KY 42748

[Here's the link to my website for the most up-to-date schedule of talks.](#)



“Piles of French Novels,” by Vincent Van Gogh (Paris, October-November 1887)

I’m reading some of Van Gogh's 820 personal letters as I continue working on my current novel-in-progress: “Saving Van Gogh.” Van Gogh was a prolific letter writer and surprising well-read, as evidenced by the literary discussions he had with his acquaintances. He was a voracious reader—in four languages: Dutch, German, French, and English. Victor Hugo, Alexandre Dumas, Honoré de Balzac, Shakespeare, Émile Zola, and Molière were among his favorites. He liked to read the same book over and over, which I can certainly relate to. Let me know if you have a favorite book and I’ll mention it in the next newsletter.

If you haven’t already, please take a moment to leave a review on Amazon. It is really helpful with sales. [Here is the link.](#) Thank you.

If you know of anyone who is looking for a speaker, the Kentucky Humanities Speakers Bureau is great about helping to subsidize appearances. I’m available as a speaker to talk about “[Stealing Renoir](#),” and how World War II was the largest art theft in history.

Or, if Kentucky history is appropriate for audiences, the Speakers Bureau will subsidize my appearance to discuss the findings from my research grant that inspired "[A Promise Moon](#)" and how it relates to the Underground Railroad in Kentucky. I'm also available to talk about gardening with native plants and "[Let The Earth Breathe](#)." If you or anyone you know would like to schedule a talk, here's the [link](#).

Happy reading.

Stephen Allten Brown

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