



Prickly Ed's Cactus Patch

Native Plants &
So Much More!

Wildly Botanical - Ruggedly Resilient

**Welcome! Tonight's
program is hosted by
Prickly Ed's Cactus Patch
Native Plant Emporium,
your local source for the
plants that vibrant, living
landscapes are made of.**



**Visit us on the web
www.PricklyEds.com
for garden planning
tools and inspiration!**

“Wild by Design”

Tonight we are going to talk about creating landscapes that:

- Connect people and places to nature
- Have high ecological value
- Are uniquely individual
- Are rooted with abundance and purpose
- Are on-trend and future-focused




Download tonight's handout on the **“Workshop Resources”** Page of our Website www.PricklyEds.com/workshop-resources

HOME ABOUT US CONTACT INFO, HOURS, ETC. PLANT SHOPPING DETAILS MORE ^


Wild by Design Resource Handout

[Download PDF >](#)



YARDS ALIVE
Living Landscape Learning Series
Resource Handout

Visit www.PricklyEds.com to download a digital version of this handout and to explore resources including articles, videos, plant lists, planting guides, upcoming events and background on ways to connect with others. While there, be sure to read our blog & explore past editions of our newsletter.



Prickly Ed's
Cactus Patch
Native Plant Emporium

Organizations and Initiatives to Know:

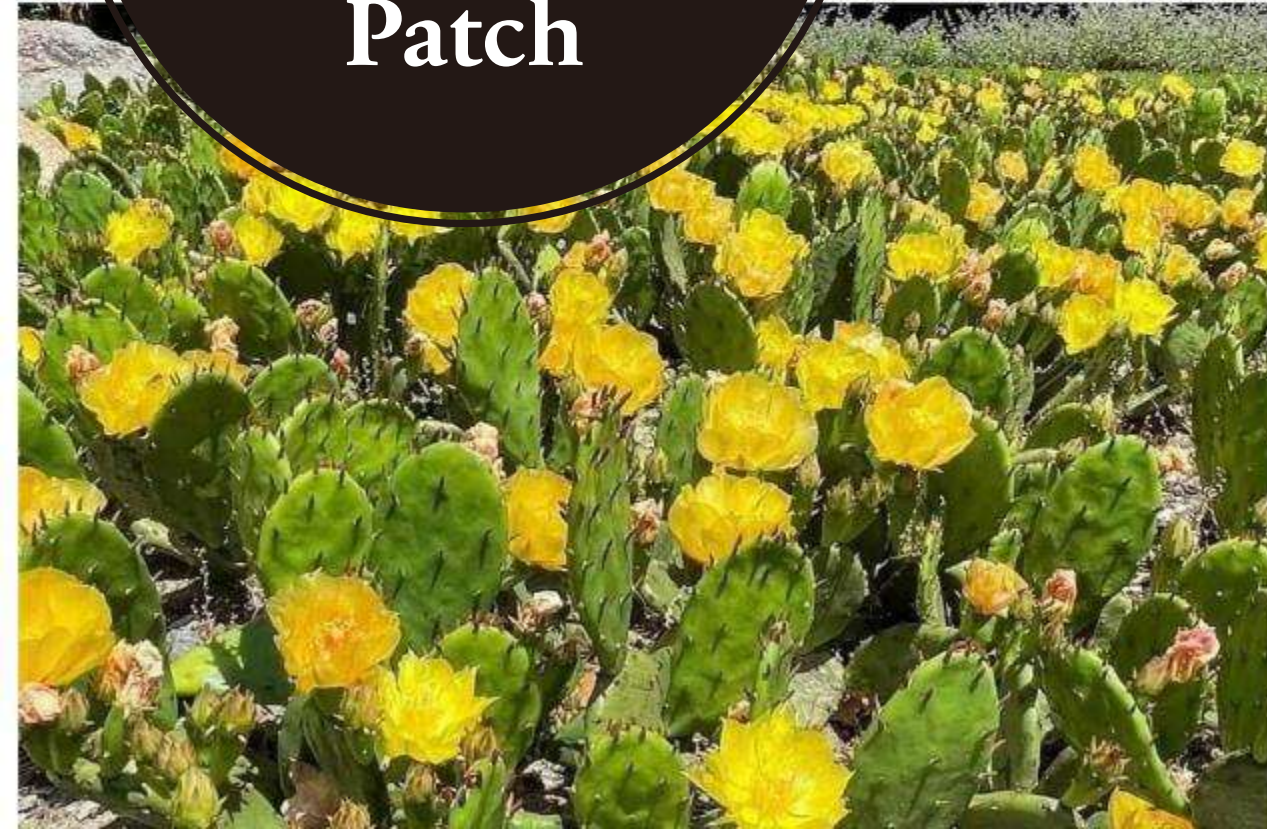
- Pollinator Pathways www.pollinator-pathway.org
- Pollinator Pathways (Barrington)
<https://www.bct.org/more-about-us/pollinator-pathways/>
- Homegrown National Park www.homegrownnationalpark.org
- Certified Wildlife Habitats www.certifiedwildlifehabitat.nwf.org
- Perfect Earth Project www.PerfectEarthProject.org
- The Native Plant Trust <https://www.nativeplanttrust.org>
- Rhode Island Wild Plant Society www.RIWPS.org
- Bee Lab at URI <https://web.uri.edu/bee/bee/bee/>
- Grow Native Massachusetts www.grownativemass.org
- Rhode Island Plant Insect Community Network <https://picn.rinhs.org/>
- The Pollinator Alliance at the Audubon Society of RI
<https://asri.org/pollinators/alliance.html>

Research & Learn More About Native Plants

- PLANNING YOUR GARDEN
- PLANTS FOR TOUGH SPOTS
- POLLINATOR GARDENING
- BIRD FRIENDLY LANDSCAPES
- WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE
- BUILD A HEALTHY LANDSCAPE
- LANDSCAPING FOR KIDS!
- PLANTING AND CARE FAQS
- NEWS FOR YOU!
- WORKSHOP RESOURCES

Please note that a PDF of the presentation shared this evening will also be posted to this page tomorrow so that you can go back and review the information.

Meet
"Prickly
Ed's"
Cactus
Patch





Prickly Pear is one of 250+ native plant varieties growing in our own residential yard in Barirngton



Imagery used throughout tonight's presentation is courtesy of the following - is used with permission and with their wishes that the material help inspire us towards more vibrant and ecologically rich landscapes.

Edwina vonGal – Perfect Earth Project www.perfectearth.org

“Plantsman” Kelly D. Norris – New Naturalism – www.kellydnorris.com

Larry Weaner – New Directions for the American Landscape – www.ndal.org

Benjamin Vogt – Prairie Up – www.prairieup.org

Headquarters at Prickly Ed's – www.pricklyeds.com

With a few random stock photos and computer drawings mixed in...

TRANSLATE
– DON'T
IMITATE!



No More Generica America Yards



WHY?



There is a Shifting Understanding of How What We Do In Our Own Yard Impacts the Broader Ecosystem

Rapid Loss and Fragmentation of Habitat



Devastating Decline in Birds – Even Common Songbirds



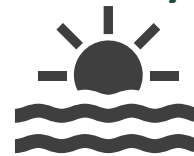
Green Solutions Help Mitigate Flooding Issues



Dramatic Decline in Pollinator & Beneficial Insects



Stormwater Run-Off Causing Harm to Local Waterways



Pollutants & Toxins from Conventional Landscaping are Harming Health Of The Planet, Wildlife, our Pets and Us!



What kind
of
gardeners
are here
with us
tonight?

Never gardened

New - amateur - but - enthusiastic gardener

Long-time gardener

Pro gardener

Master gardener

Garden clubber

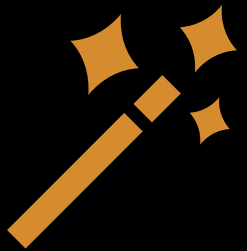
Nature forward gardener

Habitat builder

A photograph of a garden with several tall, red, tubular flowers (likely Salvia) in the foreground. The background is filled with dense green foliage and trees. The text is overlaid on the image, with 'TOP TWO' in red and the rest in white.

WHAT ARE YOUR **TOP**
TWO LANDSCAPE GOALS
FOR THE 2026 SEASON?

Before we really begin – an essential clarification. Creating beautiful – and beneficial - “wild” spaces doesn’t happen by just letting things go – by doing nothing – by sprinkling some seeds around – or by waving a magic wand.



Photo/Kelly D. Norris
Kellydnorris.com

These spaces are built with Vision – Research – Planning – Lots of Work & Lots of Plants – and they are often built over years or even decades...

The idea is not to just make spaces LOOK more natural or “naturalistic” but to create spaces that are truly better for nature. Which in turn yields healthier and more resilient landscapes and communities. The focus is on:

- Adding Native Plants
- Eliminating Pesticides
- Leaving Shelter & Winter Habitat
- Creating spaces that reconnect you to nature right at home

Photo: Larry Weaner
Design Associates





Top Garden Trends of 2026 (and beyond)

Native Plants / Sustainable Practices

Building Health & Resilience into Landscapes

“Corridor” Gardening

More-is-More Abundance – Maximalist Design

Curated Wildscapes / Connection to Nature

Sensory Experiences

Softer More Sustainable Hardscapes

Edible Features



A space can look a bit wild and natural (“naturalistic”) without being very resilient or supporting much nature at all.

The background features a series of concentric circles in shades of green and brown, creating a ripple effect. A dark silhouette of a tree is visible on the right side of the image.

Ecologically Valuable Spaces are Rooted in Native Plants

Native Plants are fundamental to good ecological design. We opened our **NATIVE PLANT Emporium because it was too hard for people to plant native plants when they couldn't easily find (or recognize) them.**

- **According to multiple industry studies native plants still only account for less than 20% of all horticultural industry sales (which is double what it was a few years ago)**

On average:

- **79% of plants in suburban yards are not native**
- **30% of plants in wild areas are (non-native) invasive plants**

Why does this matter? The plants we are used to seeing and using are mostly not native plants!





American Groundnut



American Cranberry

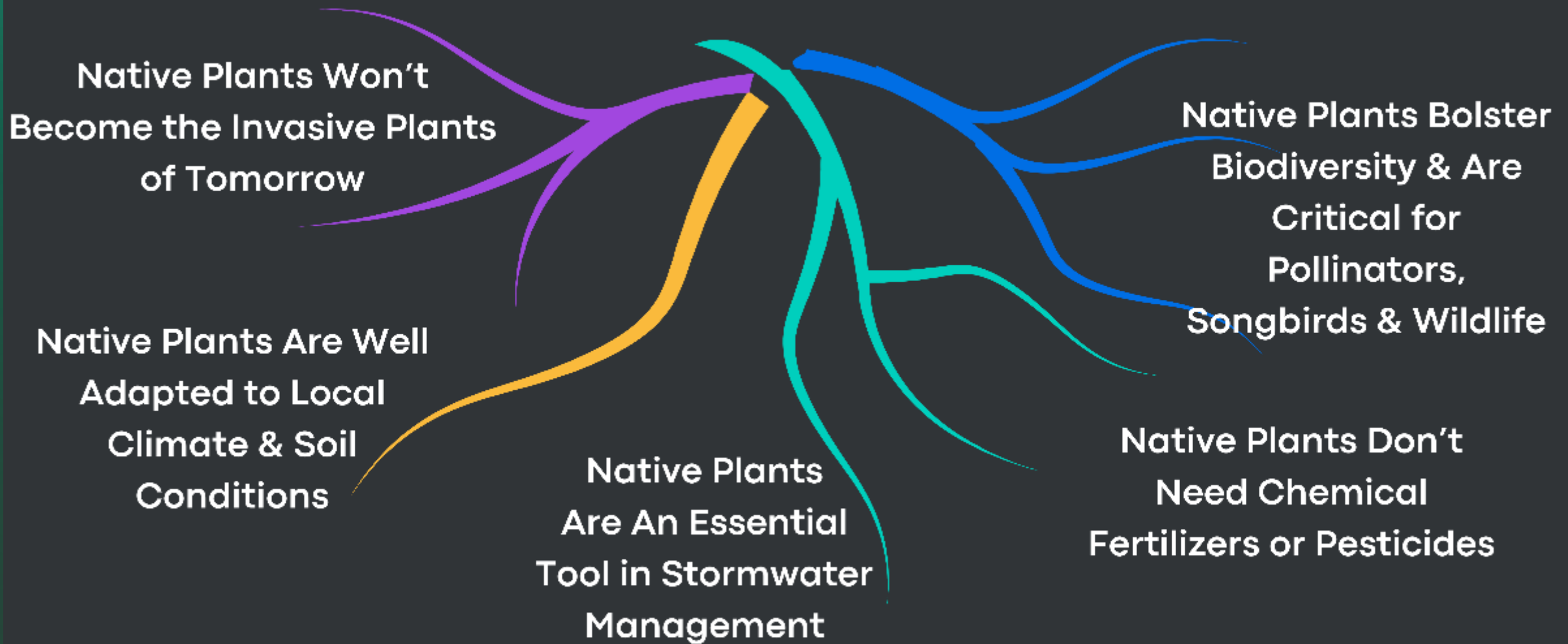


American Holly

SO, WHAT EXACTLY ARE “NATIVE PLANTS”?

Simply Put – a native plant is one that originally occurred within a region as the result of *natural processes rather than human intervention*. These are plants that have evolved in a given place over a period of time sufficient to develop complex and essential relationships with the physical environment and other organisms in a given ecological community.

Native Plants Are At The Root Of Resilient Gardening



Native Plants Restore a Missing Sense of Place

Native plants have built complex evolutionary relationships with native wildlife over millions, not hundreds of years! For example...

Native Oak Trees Support OVER 500 species of insects, birds and mammals. They are considered a "Keystone Plant" in our area.



Ginkgo Trees, imported from Asia 250+ years ago and widely naturalized still only support 1 species in the United States



Which of these are New England Native Plants?

Forsythia



Mountain Mint



Weeping Cherry



Butterfly Bush



Beach Plum



Hosta



Daffodil



Mad Dog Skullcap



Sweetfern



Spotted Bee Balm



Which of these are New England Native Plants?

Forsythia



Mountain Mint



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Beach Plum



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Daffodil



Mad Dog Skullcap

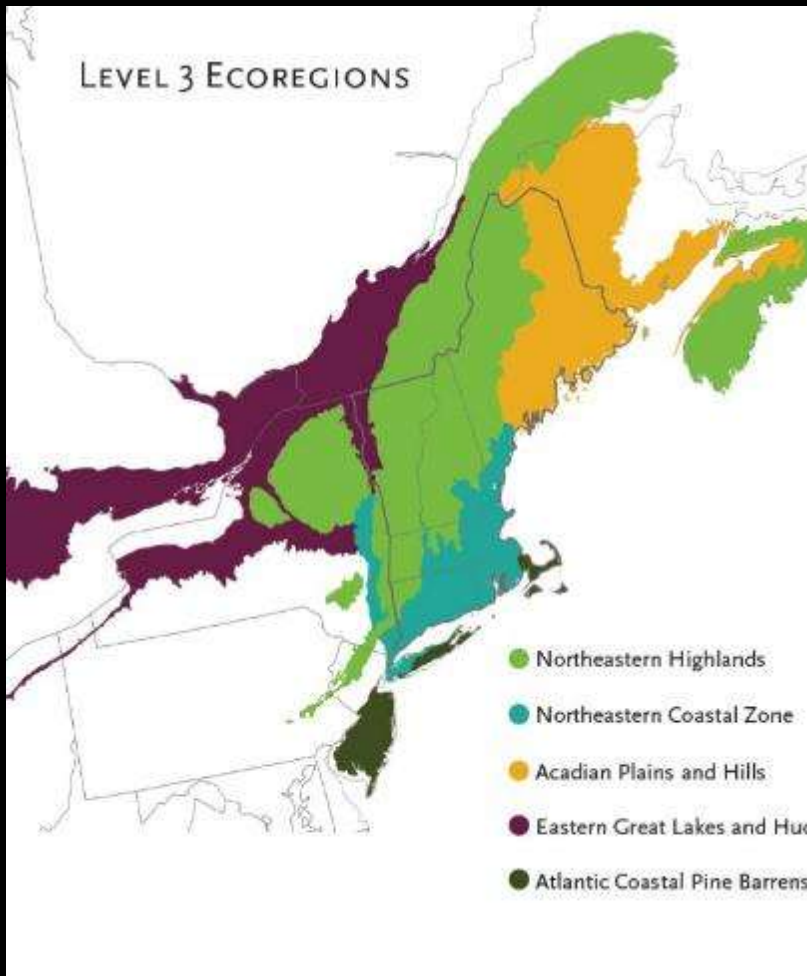


Sweetfern



Spotted Bee Balm

Great Places to Research Native Plants – Our website! www.PricklyEds.com



UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND
<https://web.uri.edu/rinativeplants/>



NATIVE PLANT TRUST

[https://plantfinder.nativeplanttrust.org/
Plant-Search](https://plantfinder.nativeplanttrust.org/Plant-Search)



The Biota of North America Program

www.Bonap.org



National Audubon Society

<https://www.audubon.org/native-plants>



National Wildlife Federation

<https://nativeplantfinder.nwf.org>

A monarch butterfly with orange and black wings is perched on a cluster of bright orange flowers. The background is dark and out of focus, highlighting the butterfly and the flowers.

Have you heard the buzz about the decline in Pollinators?

Our native insects need native plants!

Approximately 90% of native insects are specialists and require specific native plants to survive.

To learn more about our native pollinators – how you can help them – and why you should want to – join us March 31st!

WHAT'S ALL THE BUZZ ABOUT GARDENING FOR POLLINATORS?

TUES. MAR. 31 @ 6:30 PM



PRICKLY ED'S
CACTUS PATCH



Barrington
PUBLIC LIBRARY



Yards Alive 2.0!

2026 Living Landscapes
Learning Series



Designed to Educate -
Connect - Inspire - Empower



Creating healthy, vibrant, life-filled, landscapes means skipping the pesticides – letting the landscape detox - and bringing things back into balance.

Be sure to consider if you could be unintentionally introducing pesticides? Americans use 10x more pesticides in yards than in commercial agriculture!

- Lawn treatments (like “weed & feed” and four step are highly toxic to pollinators and birds.
- Many nursery plants are treated with pesticides
- Pesticides are not just insecticides they include herbicides (like “pre-emergents” and fungicides
- Remember “all natural” does not mean not harmful!





Studies showed a 2/3 reduction in winged insects in landscapes where leaves were removed.



Day 158 of leaving the leaves and only good things have happened!



Goldenrod Gall Fly in our front yard – a favorite snack of Downy Woodpeckers and Chickadees

For nature to thrive you have to both plant AND maintain the space in nature centered ways!

In practice winter habitat looks like:

THIS



NOT THIS!



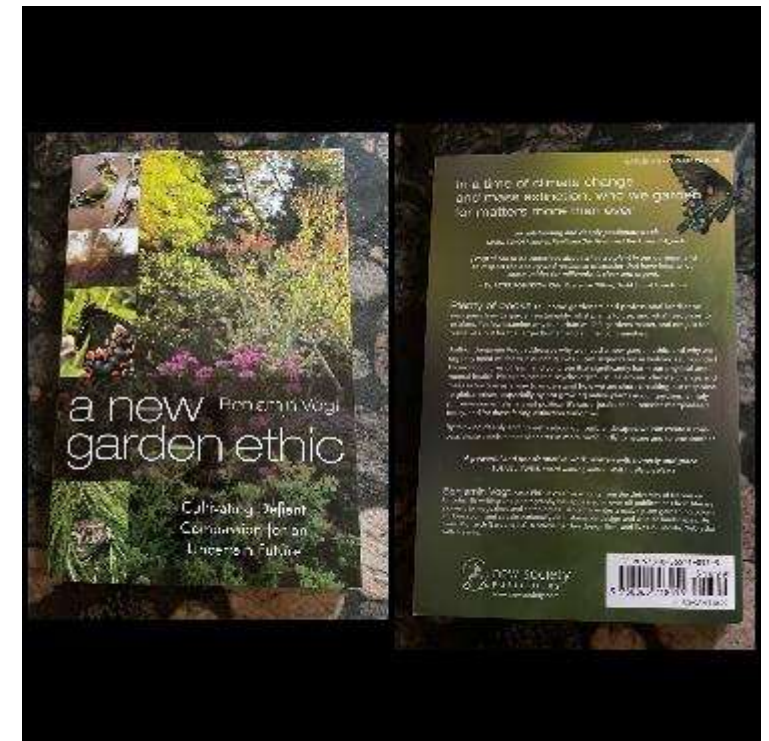
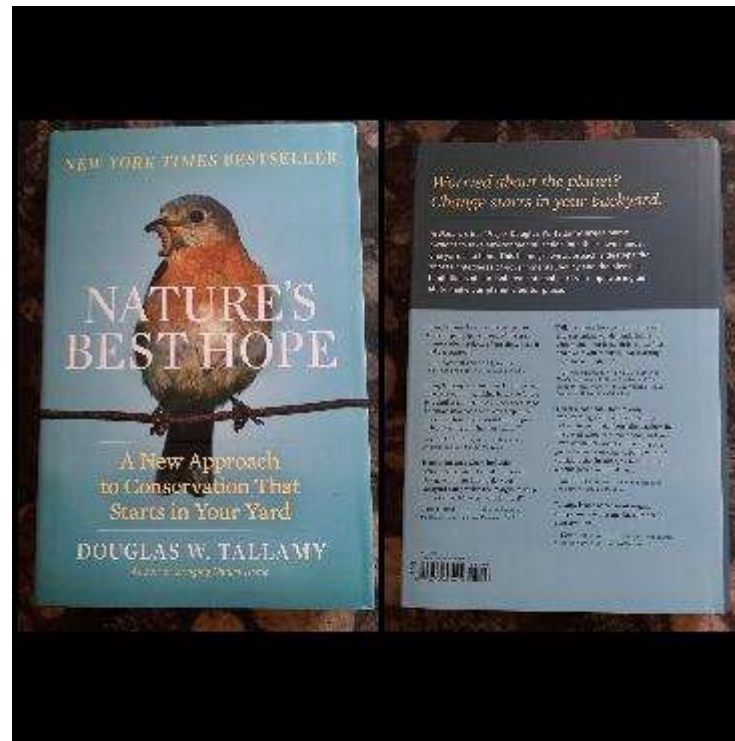
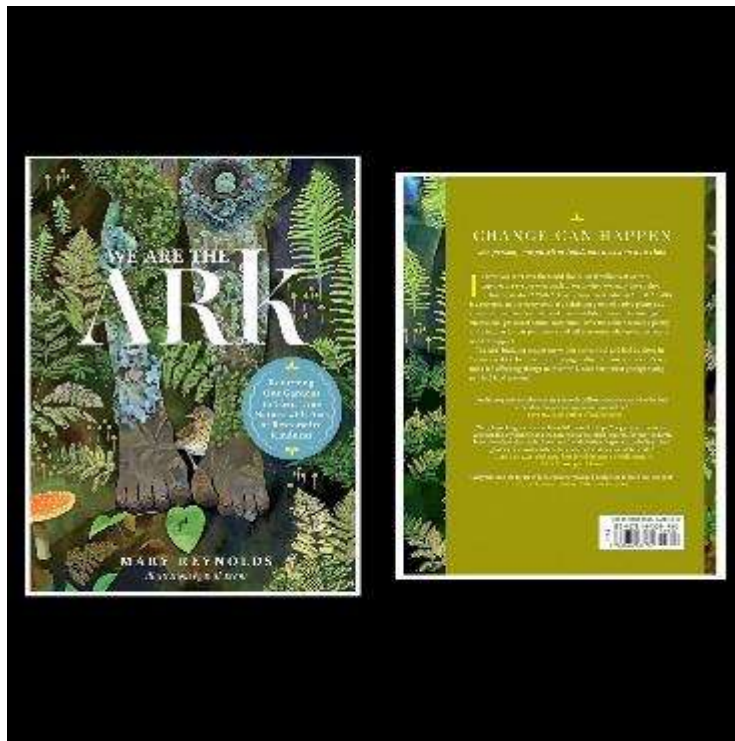
With a bit of creativity that winter habitat we are often quick to toss away can be transformed into uniquely artistic features!



“Corridor Gardening”



Our suburban and urban landscapes are built on the idea of nature over there somewhere else. But now, people are inviting nature back home and want their landscapes to support that!



The Pollinator Buzz

- Estimated **45% decline in all invertebrates** (75% for flying insects) worldwide over the last 40 years
- Nearly **1/3 of all insects are endangered**, even iconic pollinators like the Monarch Butterfly and American Bumblebee
- As much as **\$577 billion** of global food production requires pollinators
- **85% of all flowering plants** on earth need help with pollination

Pollinators are an indicator species. Their presence or absence is linked to broader ecosystem health.



The pollinators who need help are our **NATIVE** Pollinators!

New England's Super Seven Native Pollinators

Native Bees



Wasps



Butterflies



Moths



Beetles



Flies



Hummingbirds

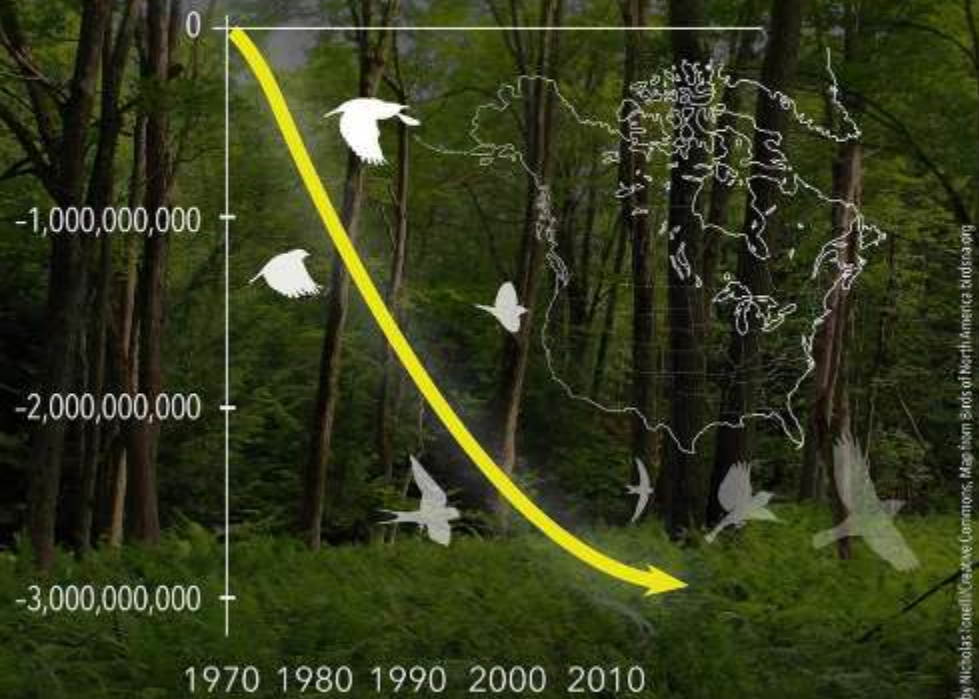


New England has approximately 1,200 butterflies & moths and 380 native bees

There are 20,000 bees worldwide - 4,000 are native to North America

The Rusty Patched Bumblebee was the first bumblebee given protection under the Endangered Species Act

2.9 billion
birds gone since 1970



Courtesy of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Source: Science, 2019

Forest by Nicholas Stoneall, Creative Commons, Map from Birds of North America and Oregon

North America has lost nearly 3 billion birds since 1970. More than 1/3 of birds are in serious decline. A recent study conducted by the Audubon Society of Rhode Island found similar declines here at home.



Birds Visit Bird Feeders - but they Need Native Plants to Survive!



A single pair of breeding chickadees must find 6,000-9000 caterpillars to raise one clutch of young!

Research showed landscapes with:

>94% Native plants are outstanding habitat for birds to successfully raise their young

>70% Native plants demonstrate high fledgling success

<70% Native plants - food limited with high levels of nest failure

The berries of native fruits offer essential nutrition especially in fall.



Like pollinators, birds can make very good use of suburban and even urban environments. But not in their current form!

Download our bird friendly yards checklist at <https://pricklyeds.com/bird-friendly-landscapes> and use it this season to guide decisions in your yard!



IS YOUR YARD BIRD FRIENDLY?

Visit www.PricklyEds.com for tips and resources to turn your landscape into a birdscape!

Native plants are for the birds! Do your plantings include:

- Keystone Native Plants that produce the caterpillars birds need like Oak, Cherry, Plum, Birch, Willow, Blueberry, Goldenrod, Wild Strawberry, and Shrubby St. John's?
- Nutritious berry producers like Dogwood, Viburnum, Winterberry, Elderberry, Black Gum, and Chokeberry?
- Plants with plentiful seed heads like, Clethra,, Monarda, Aster, Joe Pye, Coneflower, Nodding Onion, and Native Grasses?
- Plants that offer nesting materials like Ferns and Milkweed.

Does your design nurture nature? Do you:

- Have lots of native plants? Studies show that landscapes made up of at least 70% native plants best support birds? (Think about it as "2/3 for the birds"!)
- Plant abundantly to mimic nature?
- Include shrubs and trees with varied heights for perching and plant in groupings to offer cover and safe places for nesting?
- Minimize light pollution by using amber bulbs, focusing light downward (never shine up into trees) and using timers & motion sensors?

Is your yard maintained with nature in mind? Do you:

- Minimize areas of turf-grass lawn to make way for beneficial bird-friendly plantings?
- Keep fallen leaves on the property?
- Leave spent plant stems standing?
- Forgo pesticides (including herbicides, fungicides & lawn "weed & feed" products)?
- Safely leave dead trees (snags) & fallen logs?
- Use branches to create brush piles and dead hedges?
- Minimize noise pollution (like from oversized gas powered mowers and leaf blowers!)?
- Avoid tree trimming during nesting season?

Is your space "bird-centric"? Do you:

- Offer water sources that are changed and cleaned frequently?
- Provide high quality bird seed at times of year when resources are limited and clean feeders frequently?
- Protect birds from pets by keeping cats safely indoors and monitoring dogs very closely when outside?
- Use window decals to prevent bird strikes?
- Avoid the use of any outdoor decorations that could cause entanglement?
- Leave some wild corners to offer natural nesting and foraging opportunities?

The Concept
Behind
Habitat
Corridors





Neighborhoods can unintentionally fragment habitat with roads, buildings, lawns, fences and non-native plants.

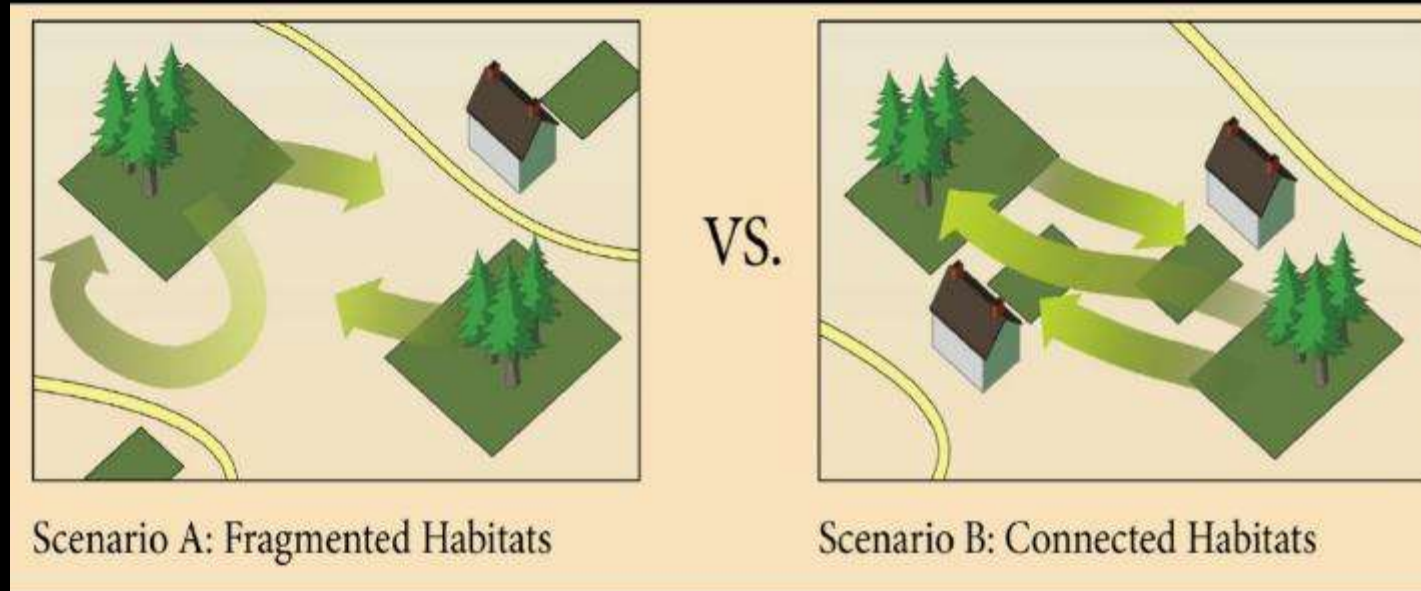
FUN FACT... If this was Swansea in England instead of Swansea in MA, a new development would be required to deliver a 10% biodiversity net GAIN in order to be built!



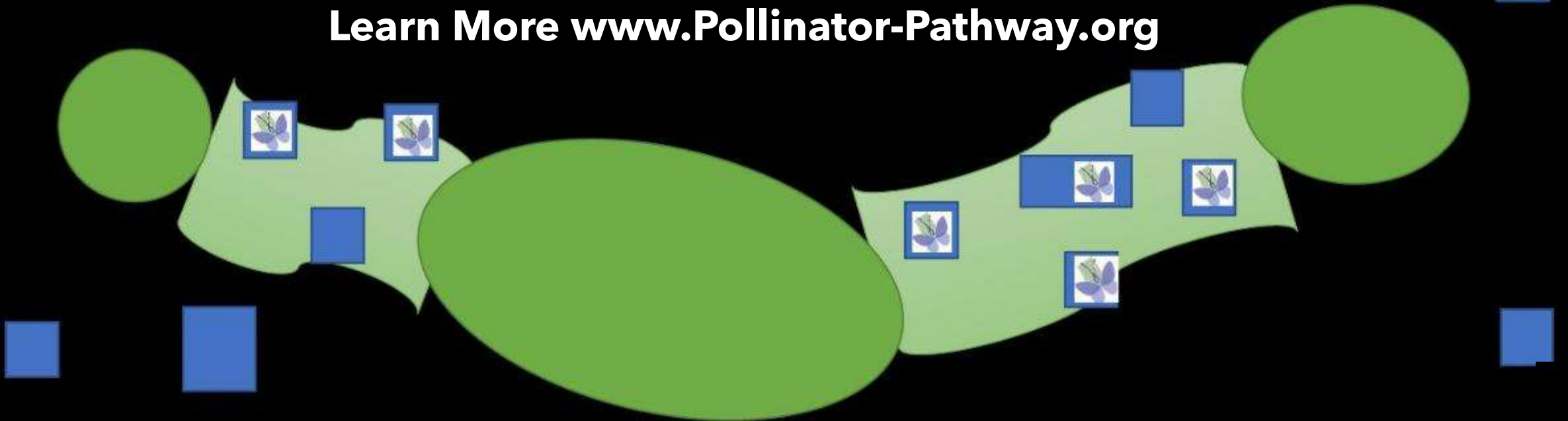
If planted and maintained with nature in mind, yards and community spaces can amplify conservation efforts by serving as connectors or steppingstones between larger habitat areas.

Pollinator Pathways Weave Habitat Back Together with:

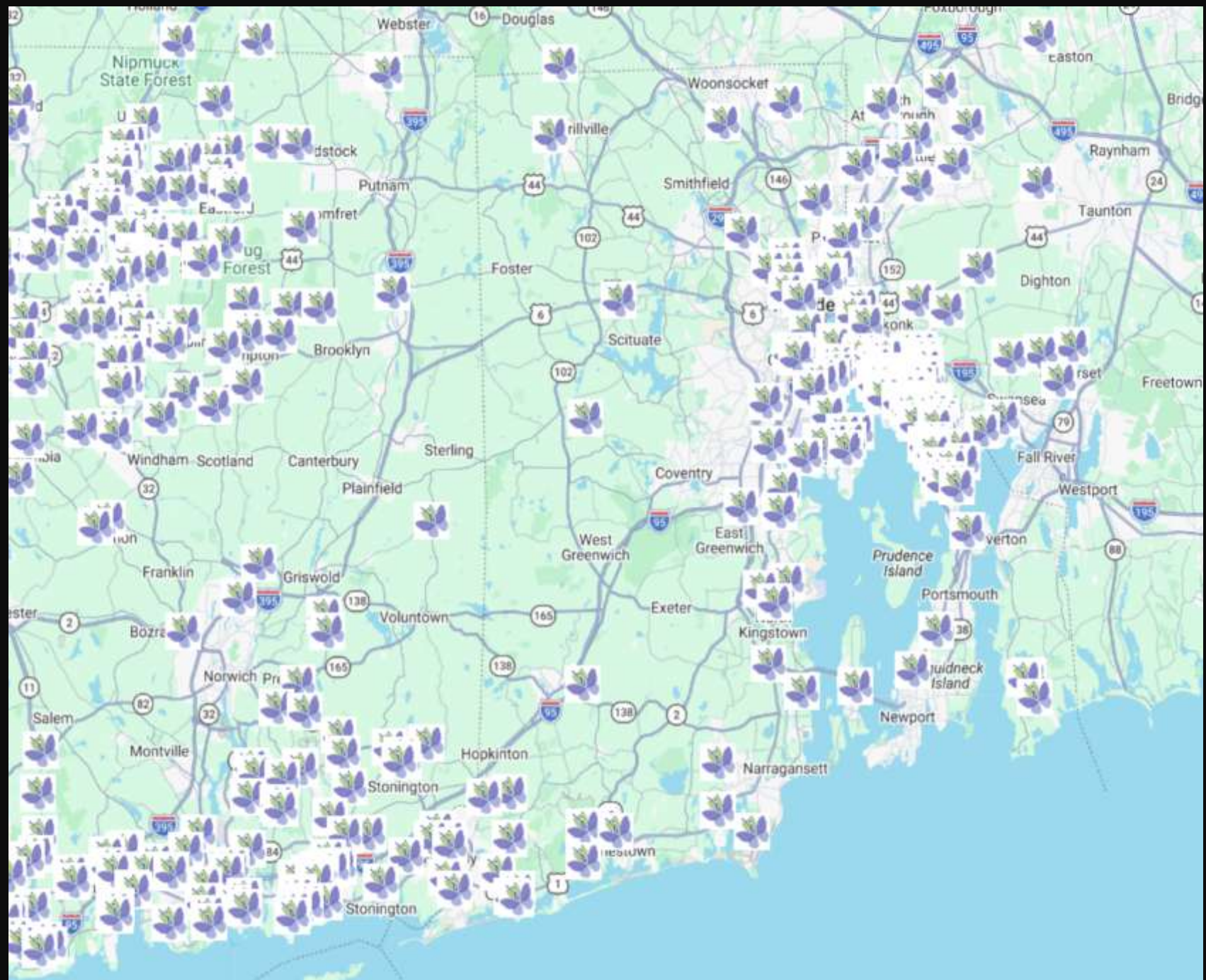
- Native Plants
- Pesticide Free Places
- Pollinator Friendly Practices



Learn More www.Pollinator-Pathway.org

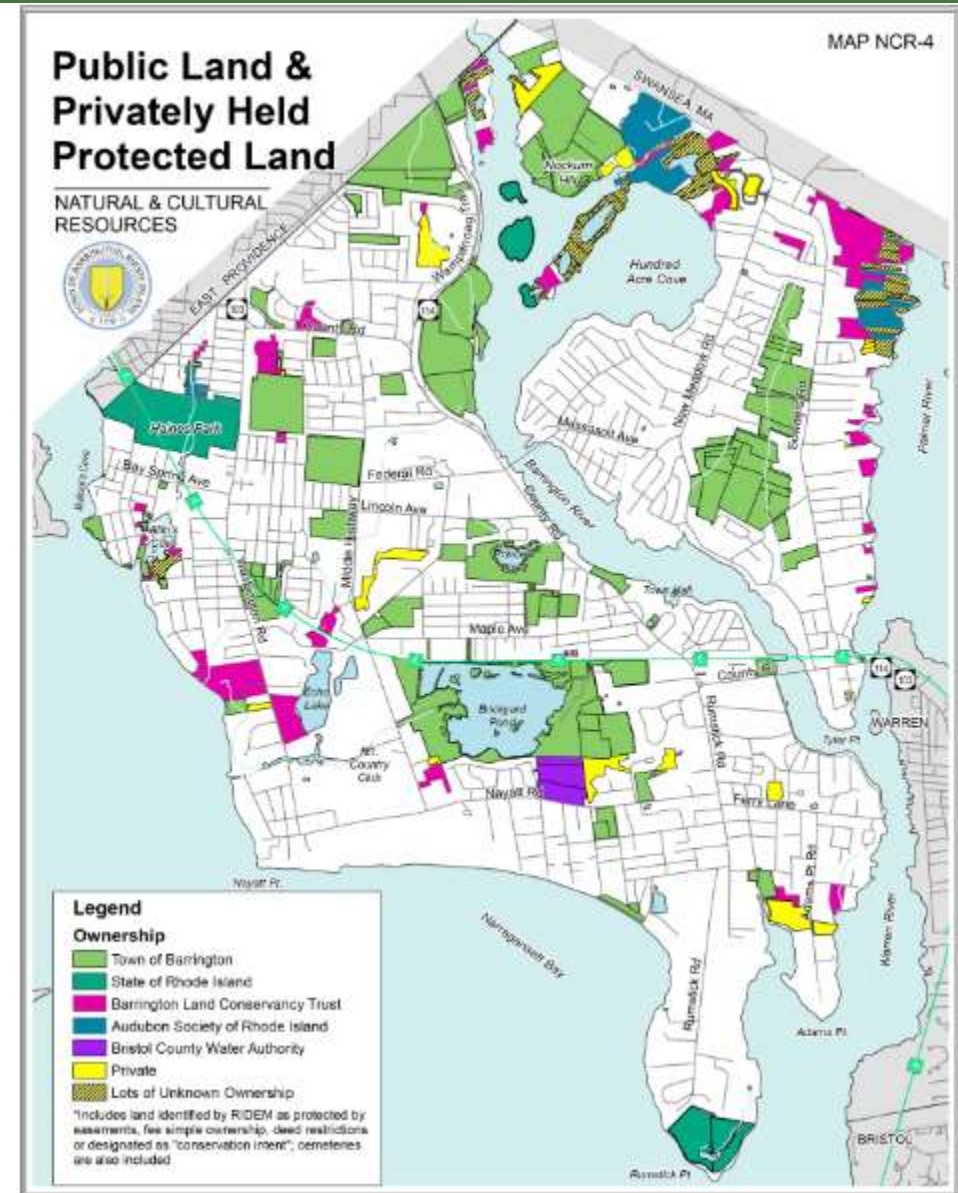


Rhode Island's
first Pollinator
Pathway
launched in
Barrington in
2020
connecting
places - and
people - in a
growing impact!





Map spaces in color represent conserved – open space. White space is buildings, roads, private yards and public land. The GOAL of Corridor Gardening – build stepping-stones of habitat in those white spaces. This significantly amplifies the benefits of conservation land and allows nature to thrive.





Photograph by: Dr. Nohela Denton



This concept is so fundamental to community health that some municipalities are now including this idea of building intentional “Habitat Corridors” within overall community plans!

In fact, there is such a growing recognition of the importance of private yards to overall community wellbeing that some places incentivize homeowners to replace lawn with native plantings!

Get off your lazy grass.

and we'll pay you \$2 per sq ft



Apply at wcwcd.gov



Apply for up to **\$500*** to upgrade your yard!



We'll reimburse you for these water-friendly projects:



Rain Garden

Collects & filters rainwater



Native Plants

Promotes healthy ecosystems



Rain Barrels

Collects & conserves rainwater

**Reimbursements are provided on a first come, first served basis*

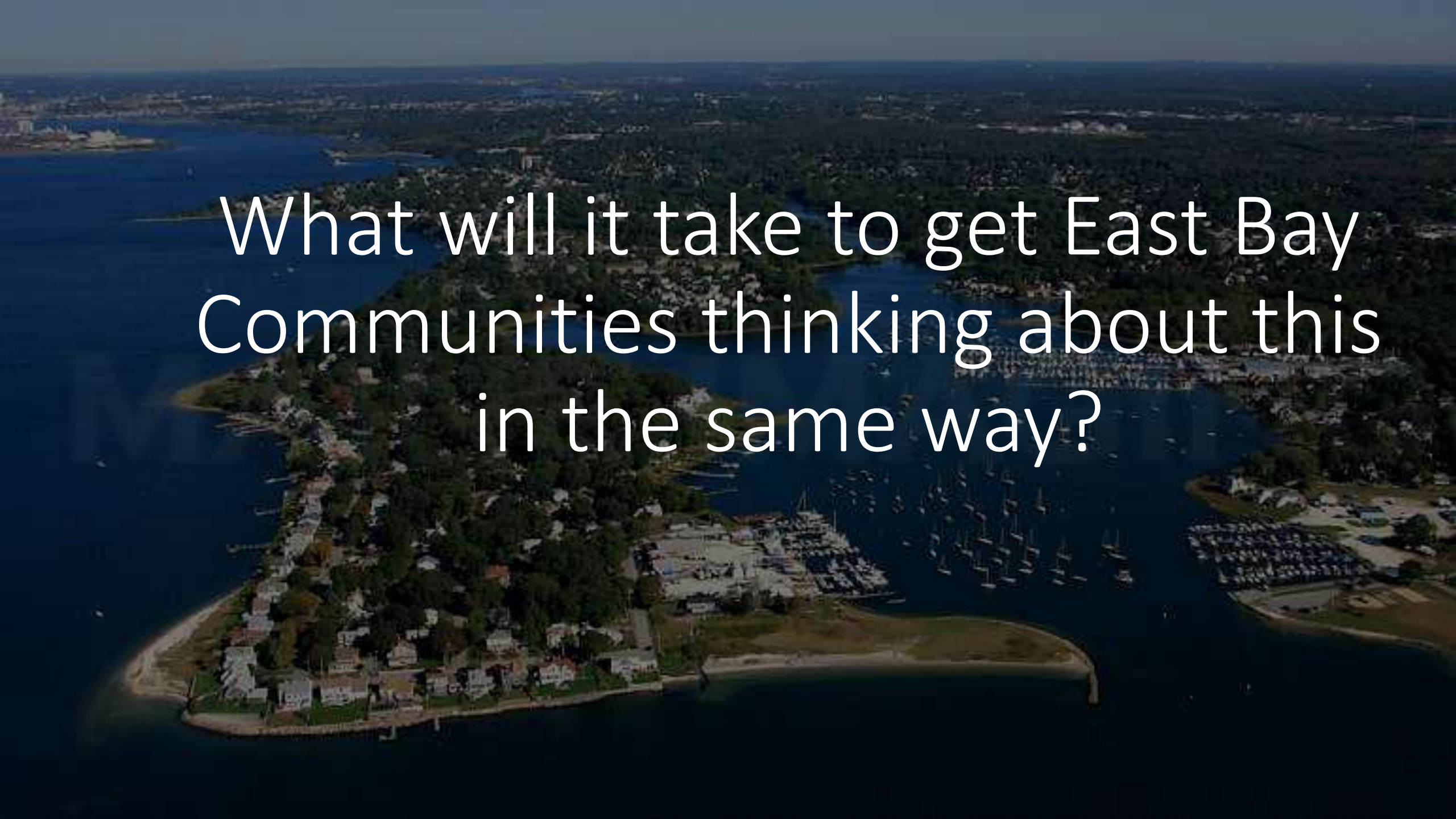
Use the QR Code to learn more about program requirements and eligibility, or visit: <https://neiwpc.org/long-island-garden-rewards-program/>.



Department of Environmental Conservation

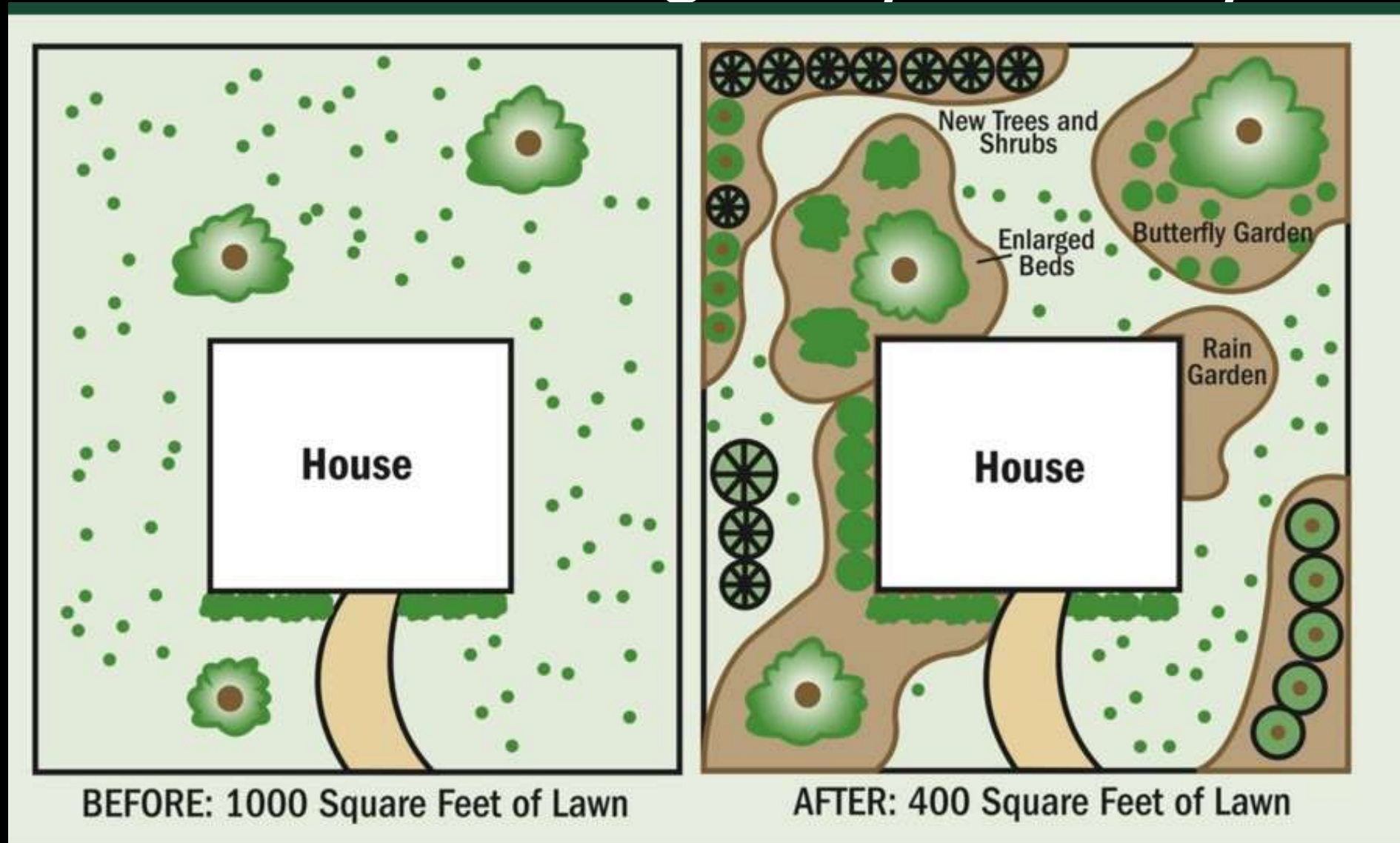


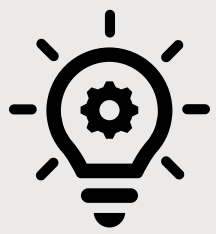
NEIWPC

An aerial photograph of a coastal area, likely East Bay Communities, showing a large body of water, a marina filled with sailboats, and a residential area with houses and trees. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

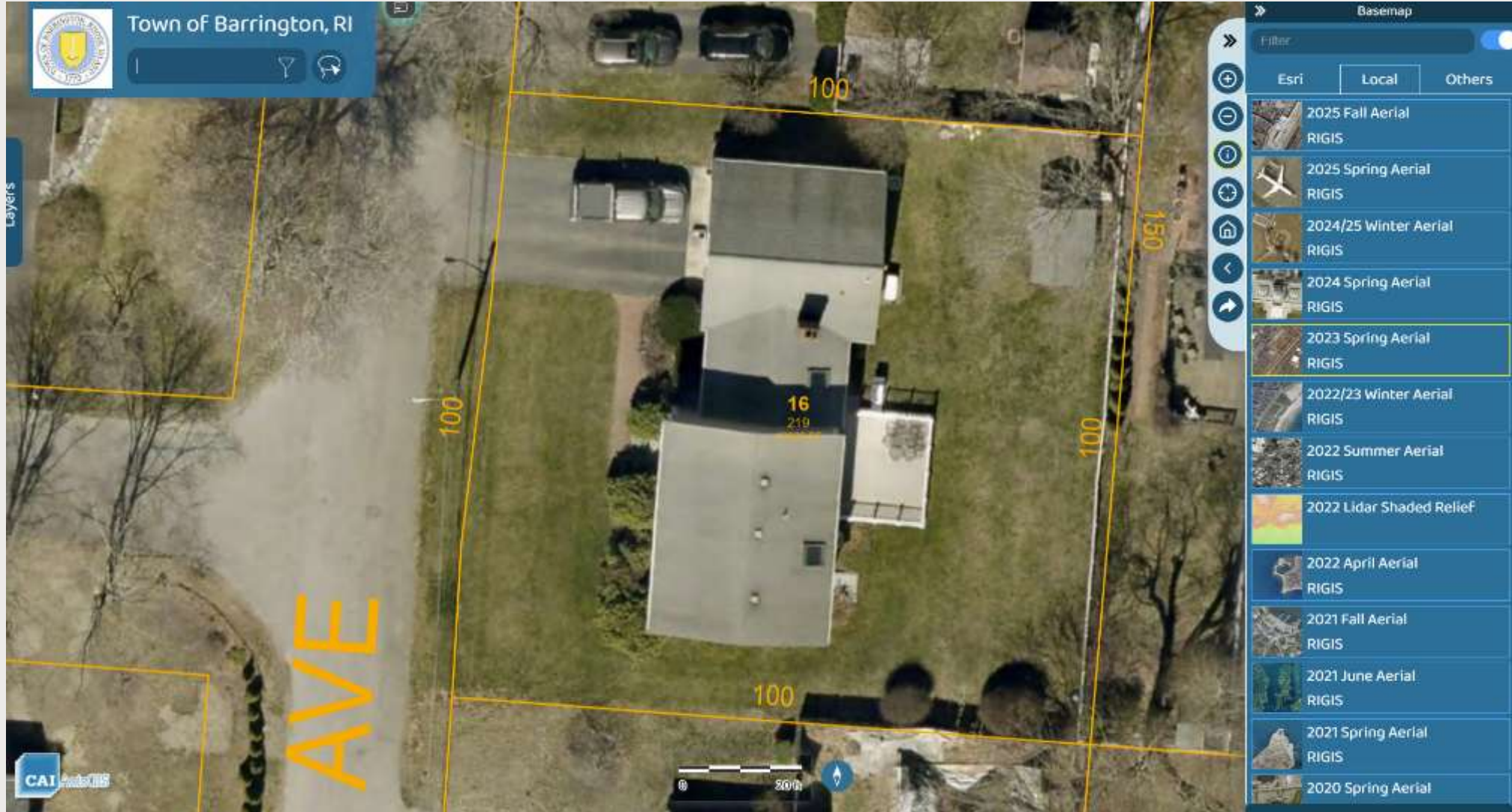
What will it take to get East Bay
Communities thinking about this
in the same way?

“Corridor Gardening” also emphasizes building natural corridors right in your own yard!



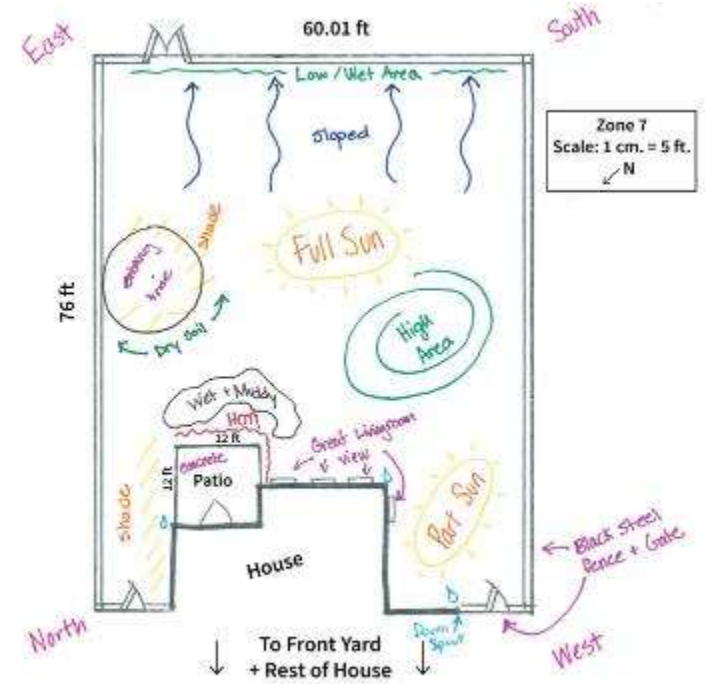
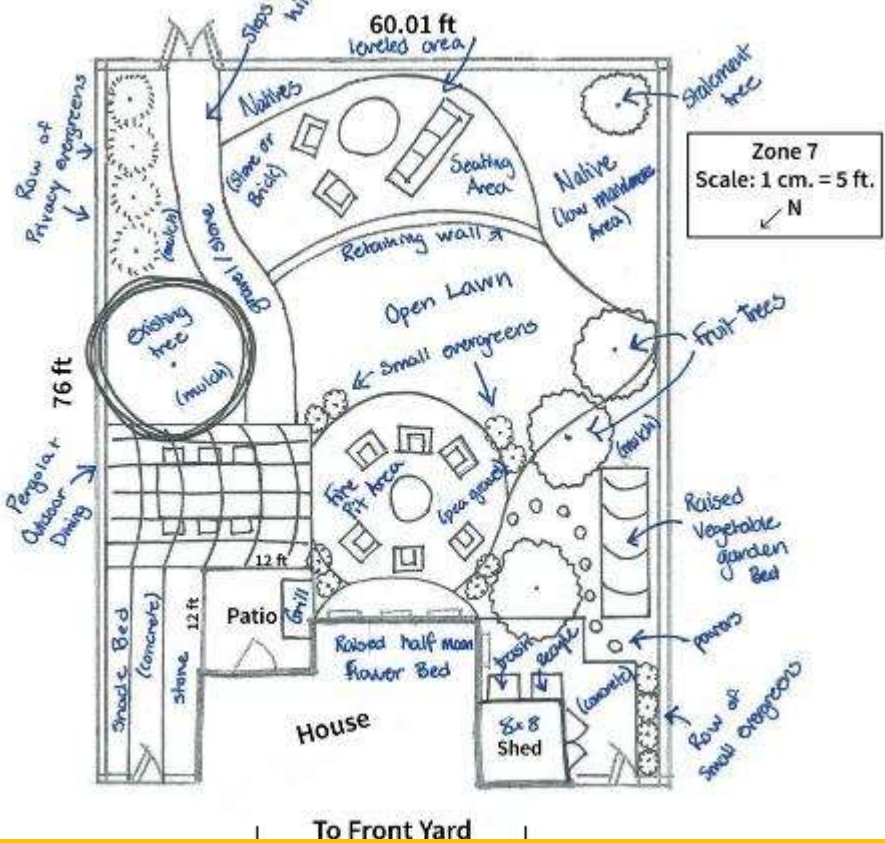
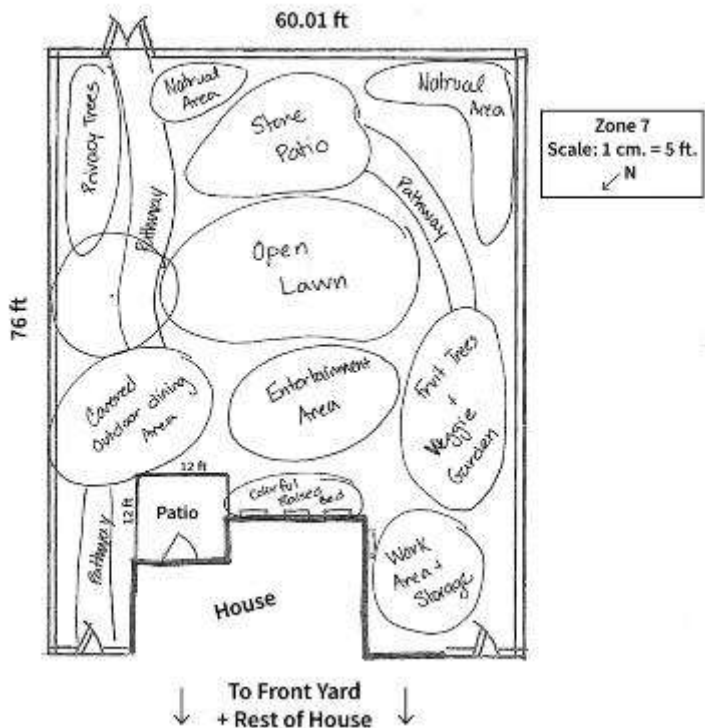


Town Mapping Tools Are a Simple Way to Assess and Plan! <https://www.axisgis.com/barringtonri/>





Bubble Diagrams



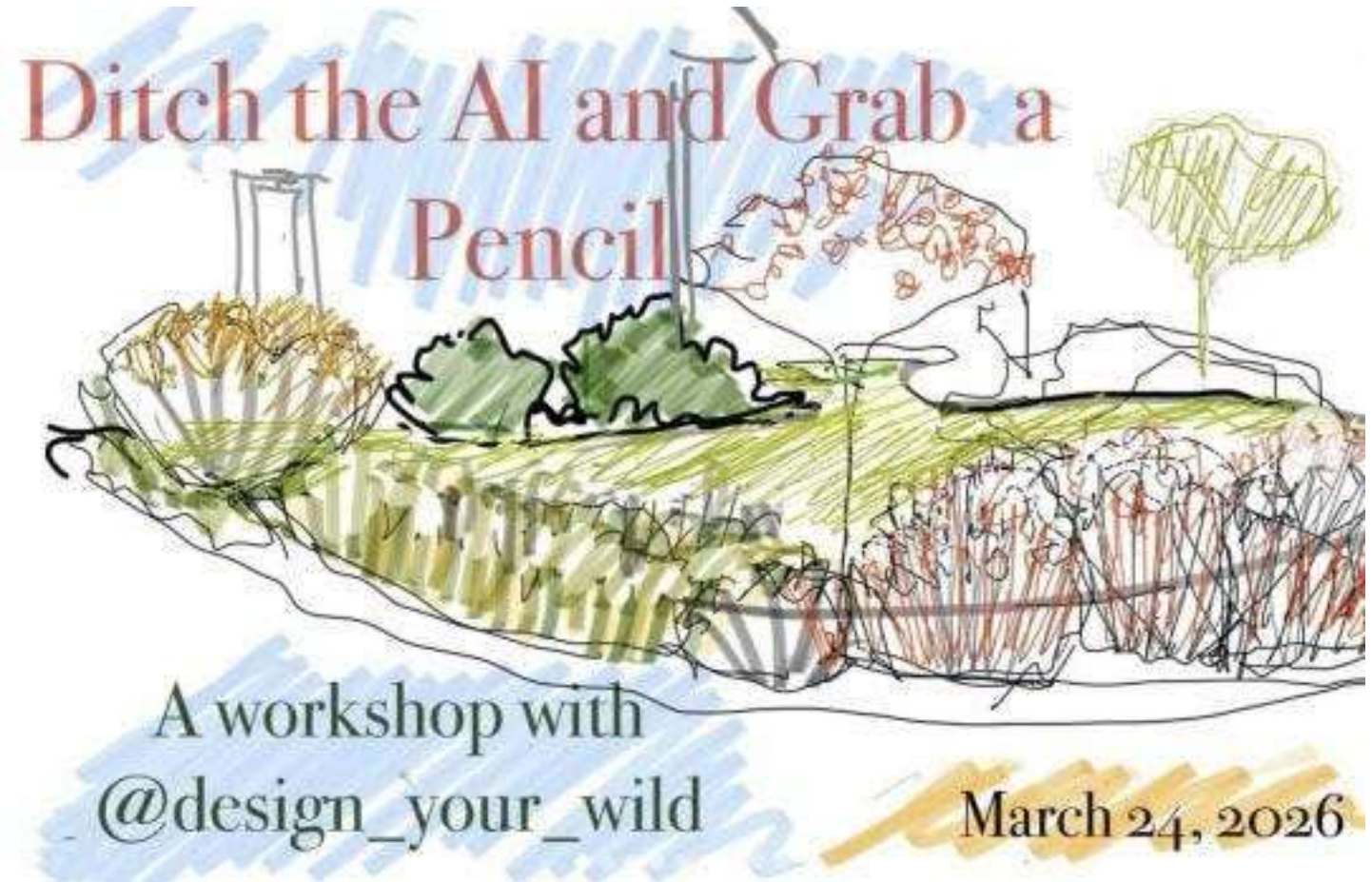
Before you jump to plants – start by mapping out your overall vision with a focus on structure, bones, corridors, and functional spaces. Be sure to identify existing fixed objects across the landscape. Identify wet spots, dry spots, slope changes, travel zones.

As you lay out your space for the first time – or update a space you have been building for decades – consider:

- How you currently use the space – how you want to use the space
- How you will move around the space
- How you will view the space (think about sightlines from inside the house as well as outside)
- How you can work with existing features and site conditions



Want to dig deeper on mapping out a master plan? Our friends at “Design Your Wild” have an online workshop coming up on March 24th at 6pm. www.DesignYourWild.com



Ditch the AI and Grab a Pencil

A workshop with
@design_your_wild

March 24, 2026

MORE IS MORE!
The new “gold
standard” in gardening
is about abundance
and biodiversity.



Photos Larry Weaner Associates



THIS



NOT THAT!



THIS



NOT THAT!



I am going to show you a series of photos of landscapes that:

- Make good use of Native Plants
- Were planted and are maintained with ecological principles
- Show abundance in the landscape
- Were designed by award-winning designers

As you look at them – consider:

- What things do you see that you like?
- What don't you like?
- What surprises you?
- How often do you see abundant landscapes like this nearby?
- What could you / would you replicate in your own landscape?



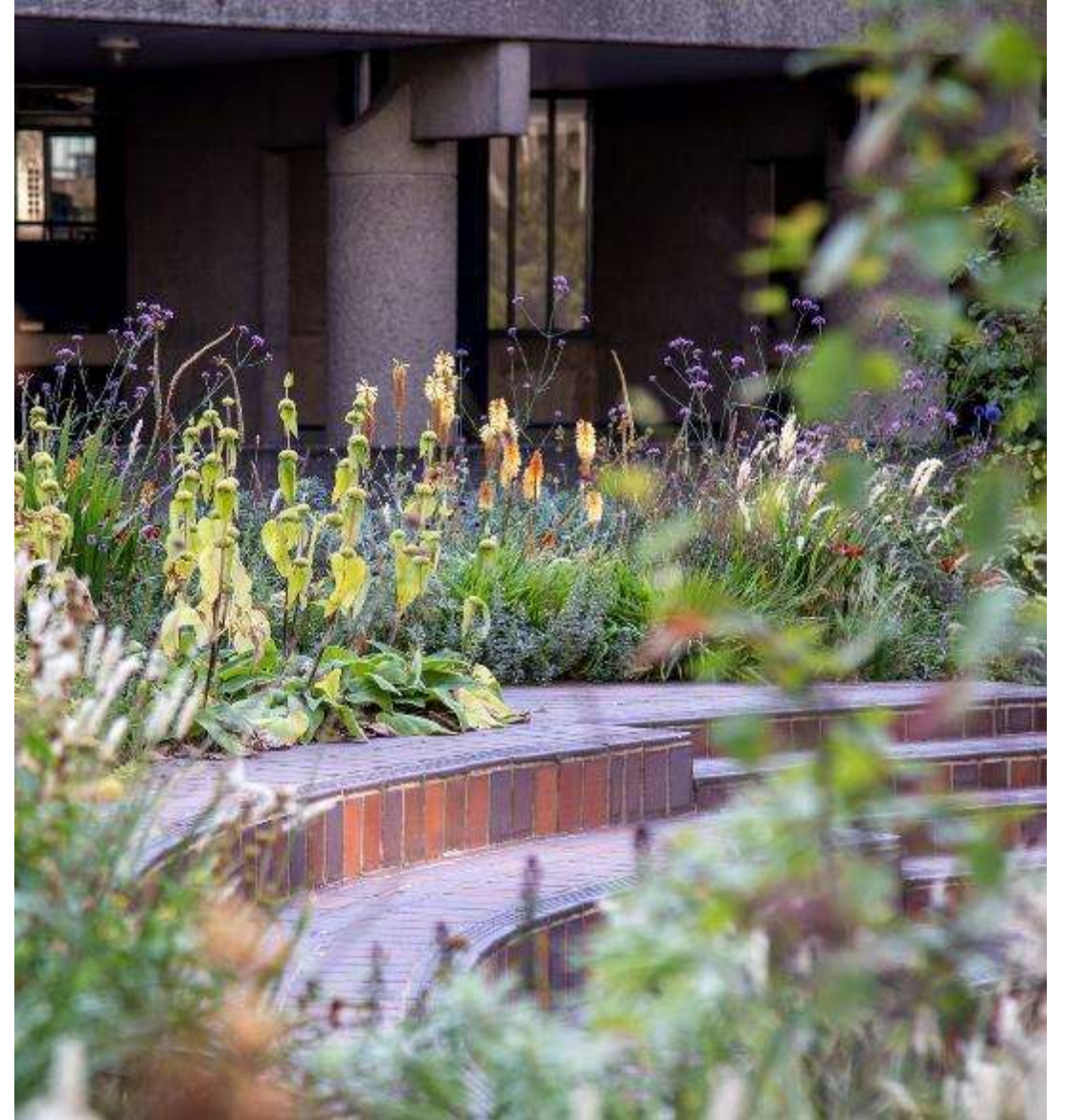
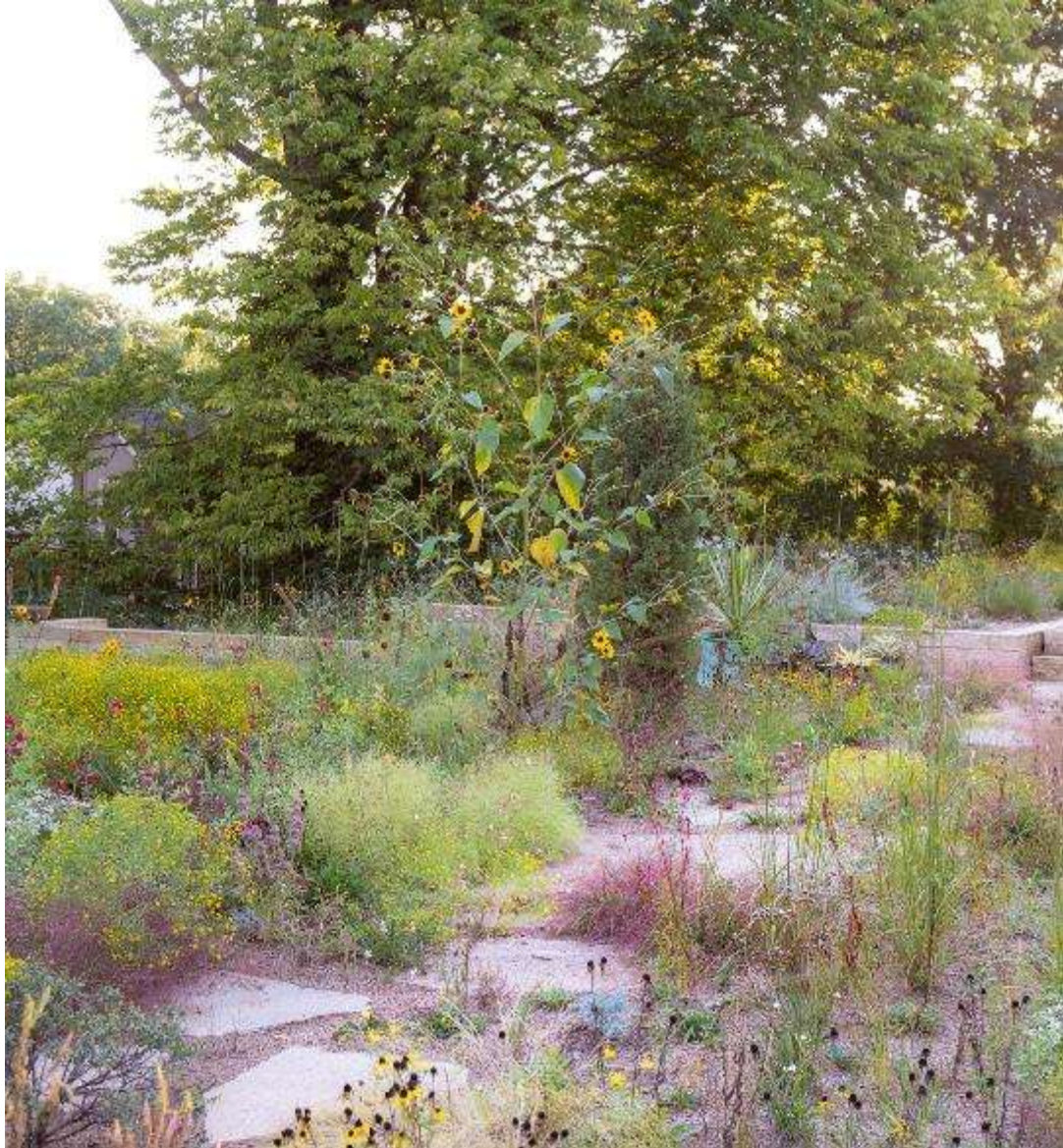
Edwina von Gal,
The Perfect Earth
Project
www.PerfectEarthProject.org

Photos,
Allan Pollock Morris for
Architectural Digest
used with permission



Edwina von Gal, The Perfect Earth Project





Plantsman Kelly D. Norris (used with permission)





Photos Larry Weaner Design Associates
Used with Permission

NOTE: Learn from Larry at
www.NDAL.org



- **What things did you see that you like?**
- **What didn't you like?**
- **What surprised you?**
- **How often do you see abundant landscapes like this nearby?**
- **What could you / would you replicate in your own landscape?**

What does “Wild” mean to you in the context of a residential landscape or community space?



How “wild” is your
own yard right now?

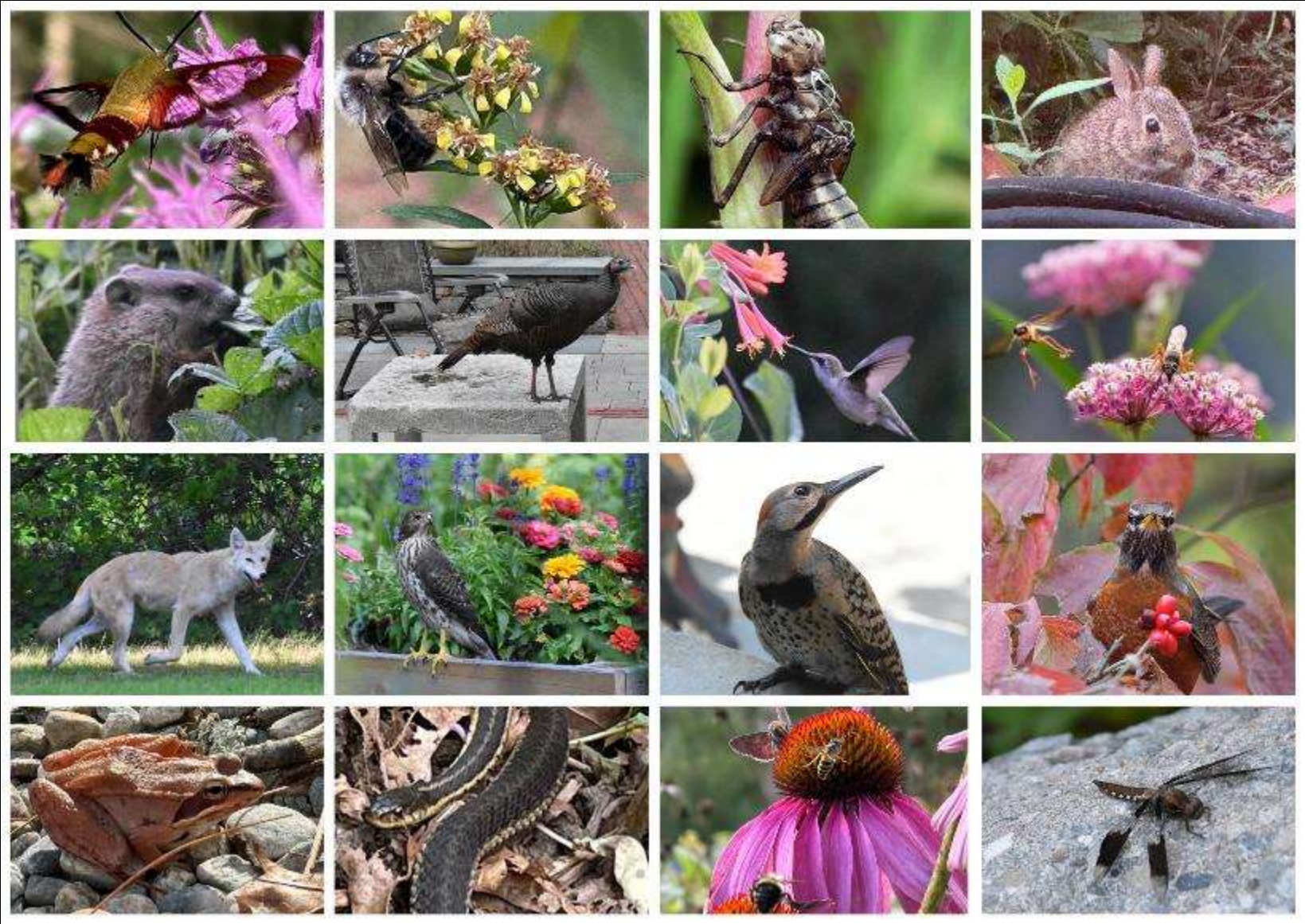




Is where you are where
you want to be?



Are you (honestly) willing to invite nature home



Wonderfully executed Wildscapes are vital for nature – and, also essential for our own wellbeing! This is a key driver of the “wilder” (healthier) landscapes trend.

Environmental Psychologists Rachael and Stephen Kaplan’s work showed that nature is essential for replenishing our limited cognitive resources. Their work suggests that modern life requires "directed attention"—a high-effort, fatiguing form of focus — while natural environments allow this system to rest...

Richard Louv coined the term “Nature Deficit Disorder” in 2005 and since that time an expanding body of scientific evidence suggests that nature-deficit disorder contributes to a diminished use of the senses, attention difficulties, and higher rates of emotional and physical illnesses. Research also suggests that the nature-deficit weakens ecological literacy and stewardship of the natural world.

For an environment to be truly restorative, it must possess four specific qualities:

- **Being Away:** A sense of escape from one's usual setting and daily demands.
- **Soft Fascination:** Elements like rustling leaves, birdsong, or moving water that capture attention effortlessly without being overwhelming.
- **Extent:** A feeling of being in a "whole other world" that is rich and coherent.
- **Compatibility:** A match between the environment's characteristics and the individual's interests



This is not what wellness looks like – for us
- for our kids - or for our communities!



Helping your landscape walk on the wild side means getting your hands in the dirt! And gardening is good for you...

- Improves mental and physical health
- Lowers blood pressure
- Increases vitamin D
- Reduces stress and tension
- Increases exercise
- Fosters healthier social connections
- Enhances mood
- Stimulates brain functioning
- Boosts immune system



Curated Wildness Meets “More is More” Maximalist Design

*This is where shovels
hit soil and it all
comes together in the
How-To get it done...*



Wildly Wonderful and Enthusiastically Ecological should not equal Abandoned House Aesthetic – That doesn't help the cause!



But – Simply using Native – or Wilder – Plants in Conventional Ornamental Arrangements – Also misses the mark!



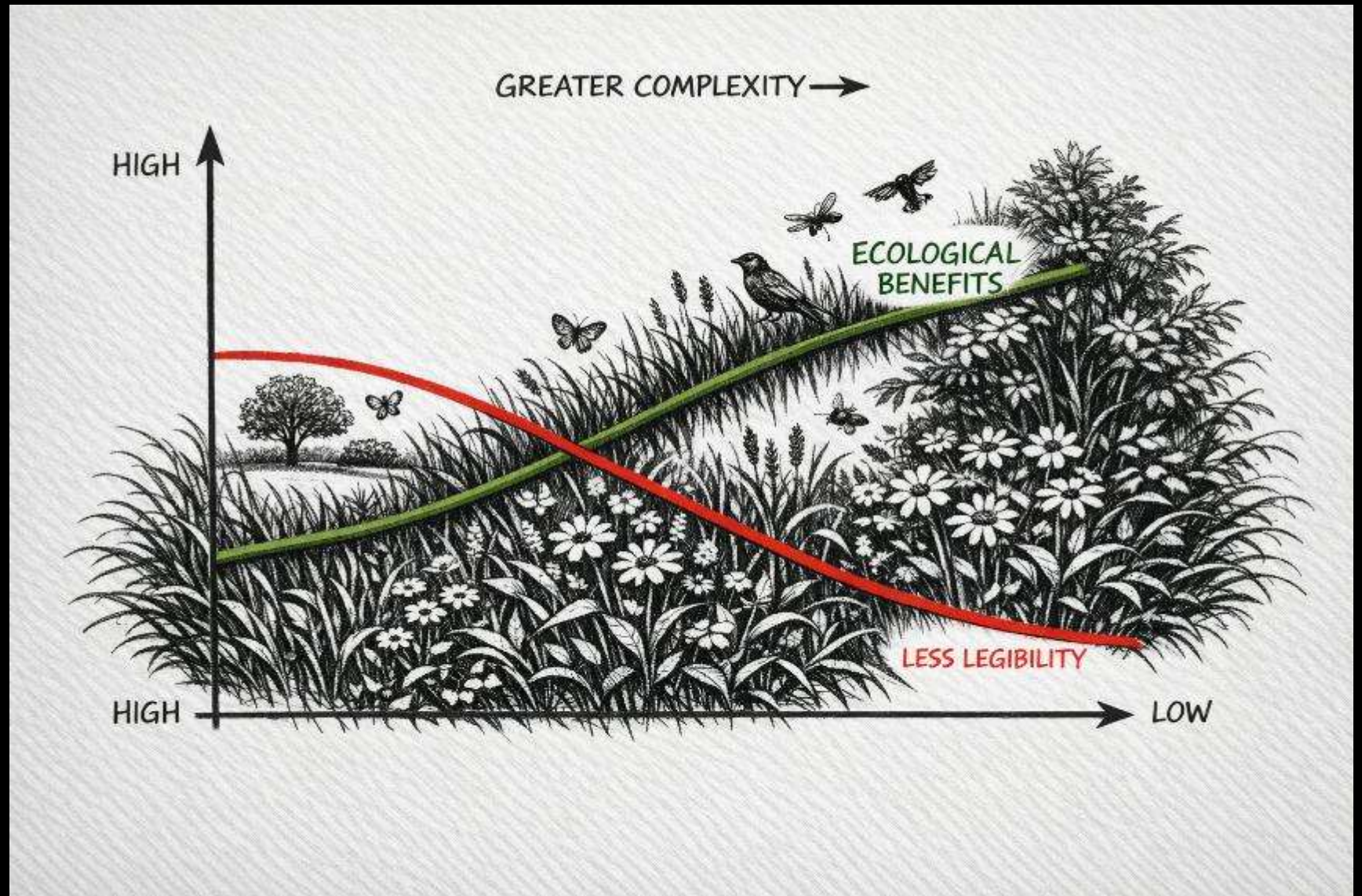


So, how do you find the right balance? The answer is different for everyone - but some principles are consistent across all spaces.

**This is NOT about taming the wild!
Dense, abundant, irregular plantings
that prioritize biodiversity mean
stronger, healthier, landscapes! Rules
about height, or color, or spacing, or
control all just feed into an
undergrown, unhealthy, ornamental,
landscape narrative. This is about
intentional design strategies that bring
coherence and legibility to spaces that
are different than what people are
accustomed to but that naturally
invite people to be part of them.**



CREATE LEGIBILITY



Keep in mind that people view the world through their own personal biases and sets of experiences. The best goal you can have is to create an ecologically valuable “wild” space that will compel YOU to want to spend time in it.





Good borders and bones hold your
Wild Spaces together

Legendary Irish garden designer Helen Dillon once said, “If you keep the edges tidy, no one minds the messy middle.”



Photos:
Benjamin Vogt
Kelly D. Norris
Larry Weaner
Used with Permission

Be thoughtful in creating pathways that allow people to move comfortably throughout the space.



**Research has shown lower rates of Lyme disease in spaces with higher biodiversity.
But - wider pathways offer extra safety.**



Even in the most “More-is-More” landscape it’s important to offer places to pause and and let the eyes rest...



Architectural elements can be simple or elaborate – but are key hacks in legibility.





**Repeating
architectural themes
offer structure**



Simple seating signals that a space is lived in. It provides “pauses” and makes the space more understandable & inviting.



If your 2026 landscape projects include hardscaping, consider the impact of Pervious versus Impervious materials as well as the growing trend of softening the harder parts.

Impervious



Pervious



With the bones
built, you can
begin to create
your thriving plant
communities.



CHOOSING PLANTS

"You don't really know a plant until you've killed it three times" *(every great horticulturalist/ fine gardener ever!)*



A HARD TRUTH

“Plant This – Not That” quick charts

Pre-made kits

Pre-planned gardens

Garden center suggestions made from a simple
cell phone photo

Online consultations made with no sense of place

All might sell plants – but – they don't build
thriving ecological landscapes uniquely suited to
person and place...

Resilient, Sustainable Landscaping means focusing on matching plants to the site & to each other.

"Right Plant - Right Place"

Is it a "generalist" - adaptable to many settings - or does it require very exact conditions to grow? To build vibrant landscapes consider:



Amount of Sunlight



Bloom Time



Amount of Moisture



Soil Consistency



Root Type (Fibrous or Deep)



Plant Aggressiveness



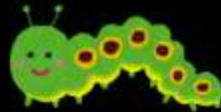
Compatibility with Other Plants



Mature Height



Species Supported



Site Challenge Tolerant (Salt, Herbivores, Runoff, etc.)

Some plants are “Generalists” (they can grow in a wide range of conditions) and – Some plants are “specialists” (they need a very particular environment to thrive. For example:

Asclepius Syriaca (Common Milkweed) is a Generalist



Asclepius Incarnata (Swamp Milkweed) is in the Middle



Asclepius Verticillata (Whorled Milkweed) is a Specialist



Plant choices & arrangement that benefit aesthetics – and – ecology:

- At least three varieties (perennials, shrubs, trees) in bloom (and many more is much better) all the time from April – November.
- Plant in groupings – and repeat!
- Consider sight lines – forget the “rules” about tall plant placement – putting all tall plants in the middle or at the back can create a visual block versus an artistic effect.



Both Design & Nature Win When You Repeat - Repeat - Repeat! But Mix It Up...



Assess your tolerance for spread – and – choose accordingly!

In his new book “Your Natural Garden”, ecological designer Kelly Norris writes, “A reasonable gardener thinks what if things get out of control. A natural gardener thinks what if plants exceed all expectations.”

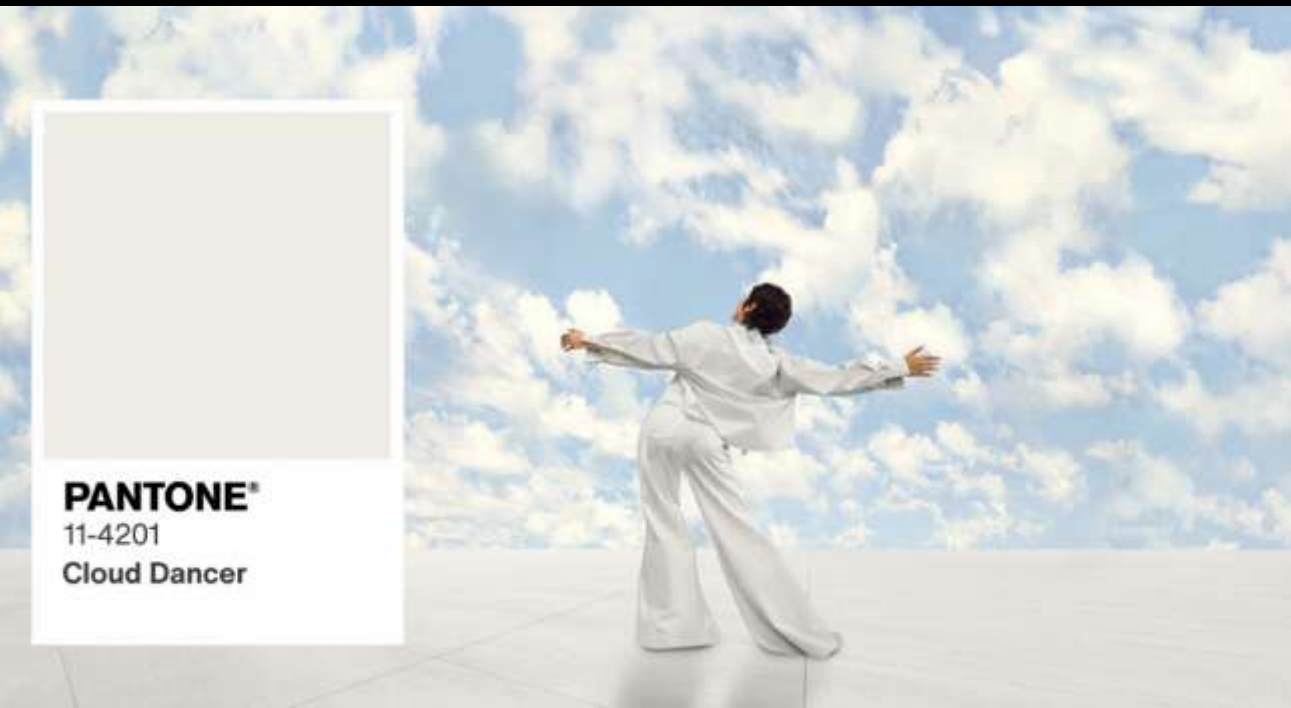




Color Considerations

The Pantone color of the year is “Cloud Dancer” a muted shade of white with gray and pink undertones. It is actually the color of blooms in many native plants and a color that is especially good for the hardworking night shift of pollinators – moths.

Use these muted tones generously to create a soothing wildscape but insert some color pops in reds and yellows for effect.



PANTONE®
11-4201
Cloud Dancer

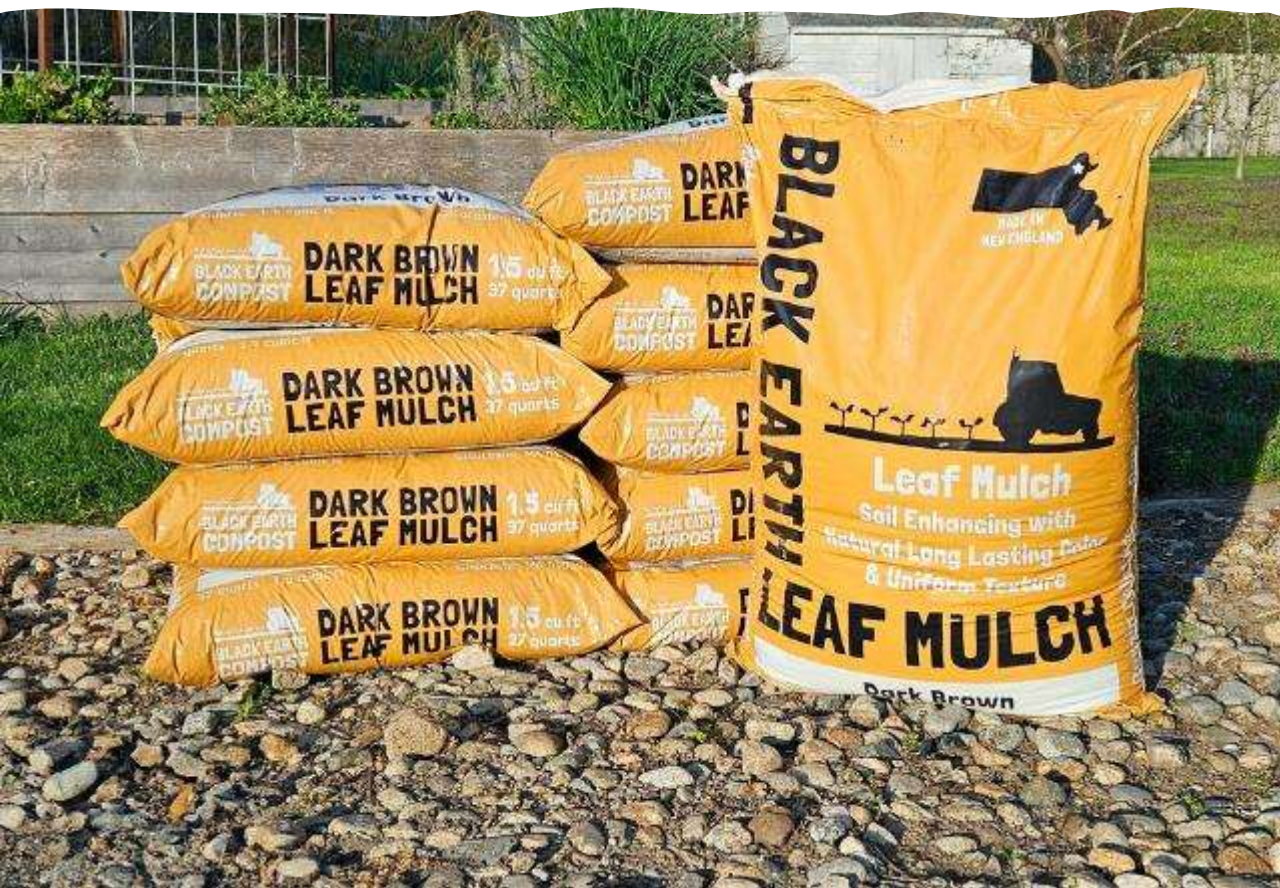
Choose Plants for All Seasons



“All of the Seasons” includes the season of death and decay



Building a resilient landscape means matching the plant to the place – NOT – amending the garden to match the plant! The ornamental horticulture and landscape industries are very resource – product intensive. That is the opposite of building resilience in a landscape.



New to Native
Plants and
Want to Learn
More?

THROUGH THE EYES OF THE PLANTS

TUES. MAR. 17 @ 1PM



Plant your structural elements first!

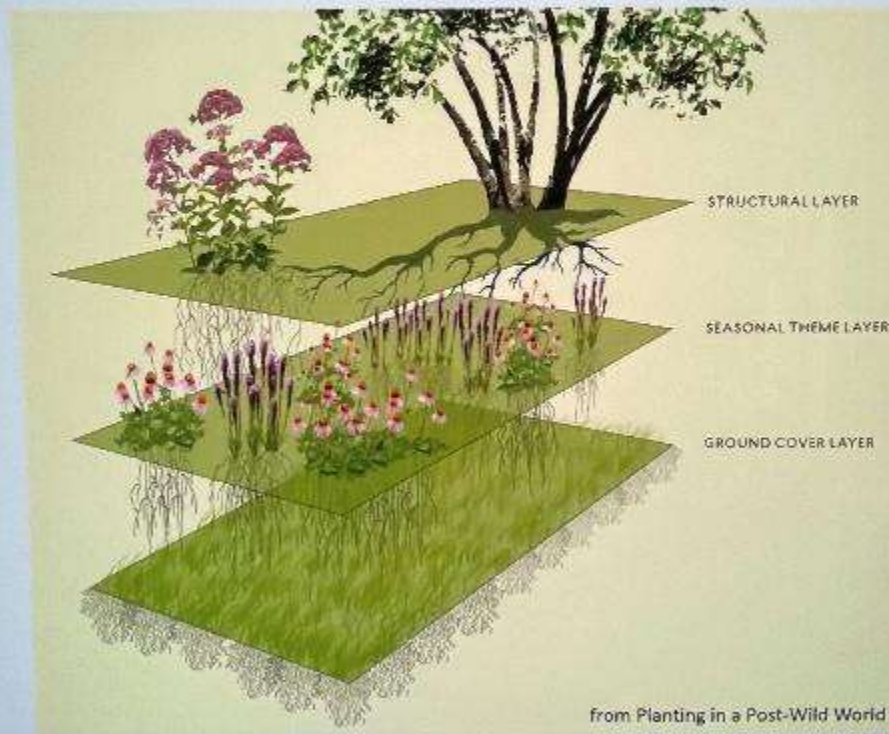
The plants that give us the most "bang for the buck" in improving biodiversity overall, are native trees and shrubs. They support the highest number of butterflies and moths, whose caterpillars are essential to the food web. Many provide the earliest source of nectar in our region. Some provide berries for birds - and for us. Because most trees and shrubs will live for a very long time, it is especially wise to prioritize natives!



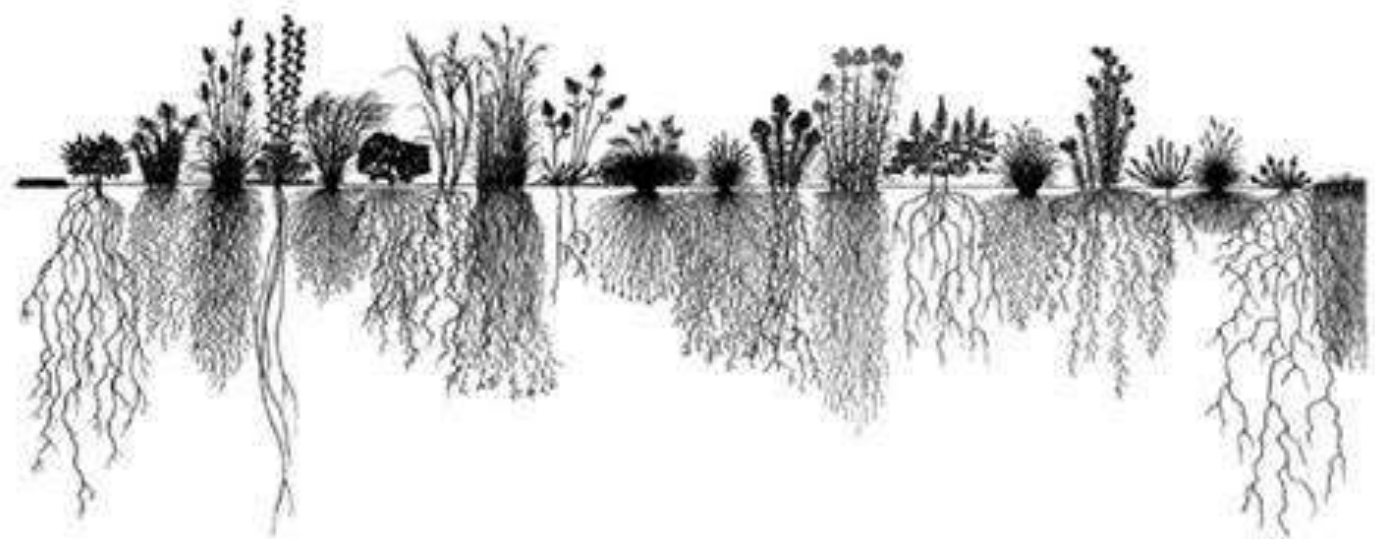
Natural Gardens – Wildscapes – flourish with abundance!

Tip - Plants do not want to be marooned in a sea of mulch. Plant closely together and use a "green mulch" layer to suppress weeds

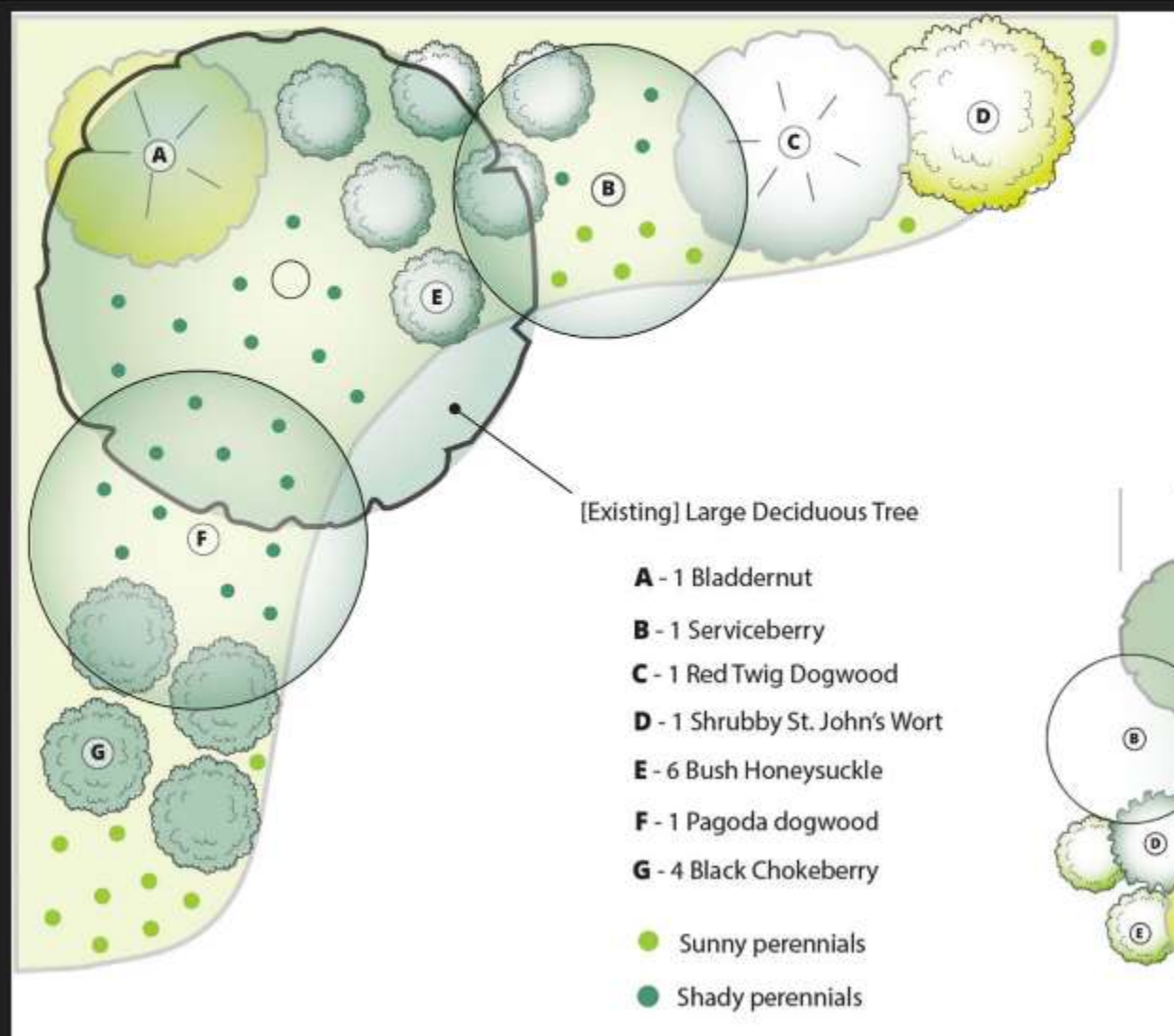
Plant Layers & Communities



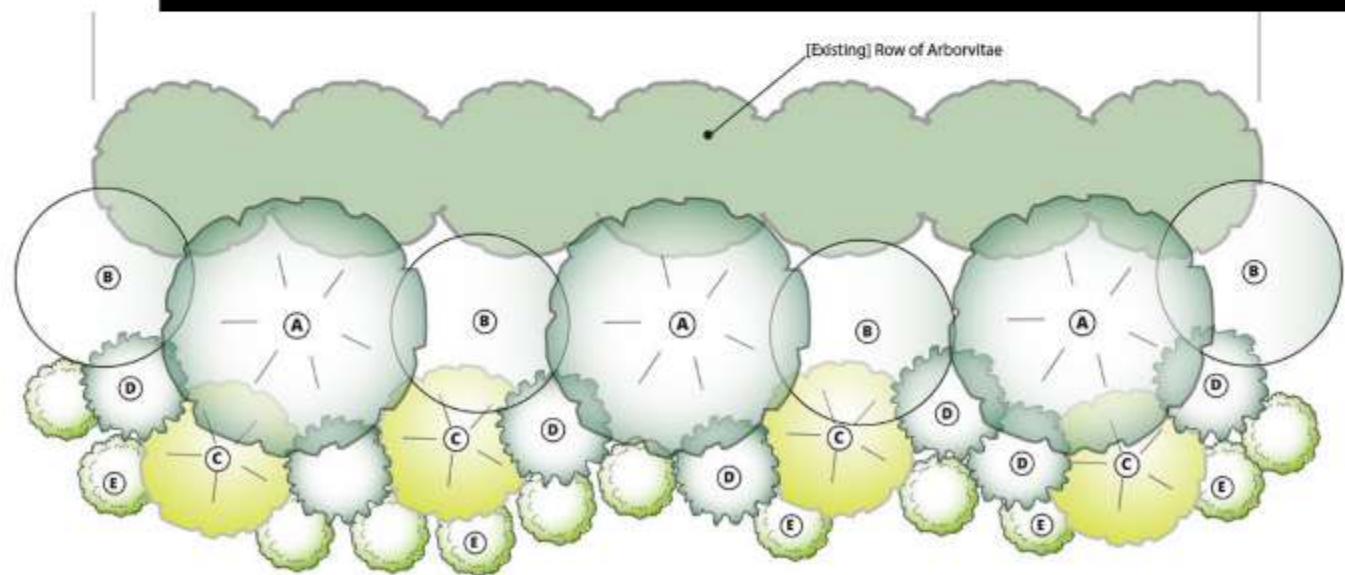
Layers form habitat and mimic nature - the edges and transition spaces are where the most life happens.



Think Hedgerows not Hedges!



An artful mix of beneficial shrubs - may also include small trees, groundcover and wildflowers - creates a living passageway for wildlife and a big boost for birds.



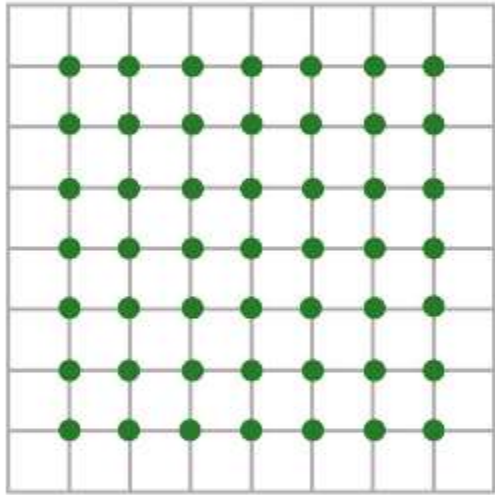
Matrix Planting Technique - mimics classic prairie planting but the concept is applicable to an array of settings - including top botanical gardens. A focus on density & repetition creates high diversity - high benefit - low maintenance gardens.



*A Brief Guide to
Matrix Garden Design*

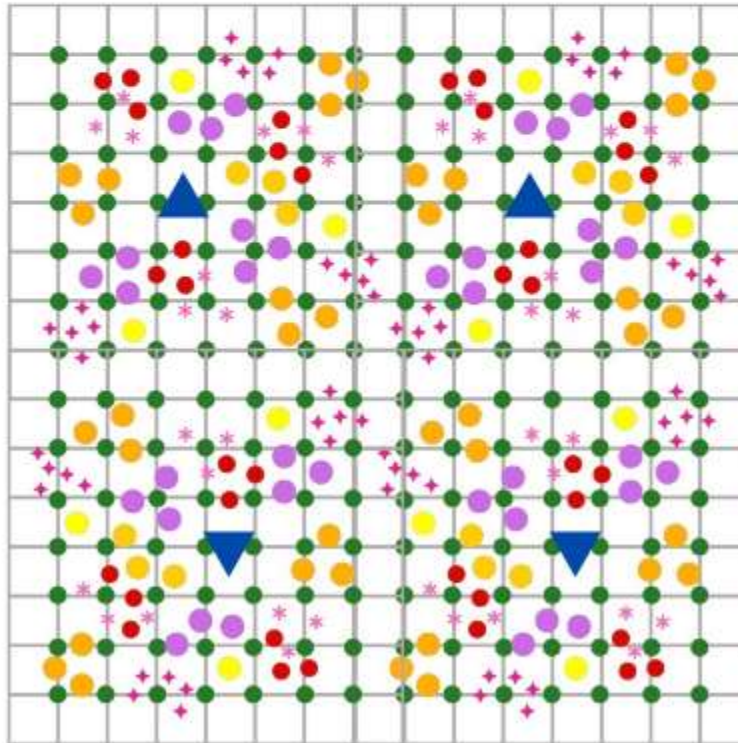
MONARCH GARDENS LLC | monarchgard.com

**1 or more plants per square foot. 50% grass/sedge matrix
with 50% seasonal forbs (flowers) grouped & intermingled.
Include some architectural plants (tall drama).**



- | | |
|--|---|
|  <i>Bouteloua gracilis</i> |  <i>Solidago serotina</i> |
|  <i>Aquilegia canadensis</i> |  <i>Liatris scabra</i> |
|  <i>Heuchera richardsonii</i> |  <i>Allium ostenum</i> |
|  <i>Cornus verticillata</i> |  <i>Symphoricarpos octangifolius</i> |
|  <i>Echinacea pallida</i> | |

The Matrix / Green Mulch



Matrix plantings aren't just for prairies or botanical gardens. They are taking root right here.



Why are native grasses (especially sedge) core to matrix planting?

- They create the groundcover to suppress weeds
- They minimize bunny & deer browsing
- They provide long lasting - evolving structure
- They have essential ecological and habitat functions
- Their roots are complimentary to forbs (flowers)



When
building plant
communities
consider all
the senses –
not just sight!



Touch



Smell

Taste



Hear



Edible Components – Food for Thought

Growing some of your **own organic food** is a **fantastic goal!** But there are ways that growing food can be incompatible with growing a thriving nature-centered ecosystem outside your door.

- Soil for veggie gardens is often heavily enriched and amended – soil for native plants should be whatever soil is there!
- Creatures (should be) welcomed to Wildscapes but are often banished from food gardens – the rub can be tricky
- “Pest” problems balance themselves in thriving native plant ecosystems but may be more complicated when growing food.

Consider learning more about the long history of edible and medicinal uses of the native plants that made up this landscapes for thousands of years and embrace the ways that Wildscapes can feed and nurture nature – and your family – all at the same time!



For those who are planting vegetable gardens – don't miss this must use resource on attracting beneficial insects with the use of Native Wildflowers!

Move over marigolds...

Research shows it is plants like Yarrow, Milkweed, Fleabane, Sneezeweed, Wild Bergamot, Goldenrod, and Mountain Mint that bring the beneficial bugs to do the hard work in your garden!

You'll find these lists – with other tools at the “Planning Your Garden” page of our website!

WILDFLOWERS FOR BENEFICIAL INSECTS: A Guide for Fruit and Vegetable Growers

<i>Achillea millefolium</i> Common Yarrow	<i>Amorpha canescens</i> Pale Indian Plantain	<i>Asclepias syriaca</i> Common Milkweed	<i>Asclepias incarnata</i> Swamp Milkweed	<i>Coreopsis americana</i> New Jersey Tea	<i>Coreopsis palmata</i> Prairie Coreopsis	<i>Dalea purpurea</i> Purple Prairie Clover	<i>Doellingeria umbellata</i> Flat topped Aster
<i>Eryngium yuccifolium</i> Bee Flycatcher	<i>Eryngium yuccifolium</i> Rattlesnake Master	<i>Eupatorium perfoliatum</i> Common Boneset	<i>Euphorbia corollata</i> Flowering Spurge	<i>Euthamia galetensis</i> Blaze-leaved Goldenrod	<i>Helianthus scaberrimus</i> Sneezeweed	<i>Helianthus divaricatus</i> False Sunflower	<i>Muhlenbergia fistulosa</i> Wild Bergamot
<i>Parthenium integrifolium</i> Wild Quinine	<i>Pyroanthemum tenuifolium</i> Slender Mountain Mint	<i>Pyroanthemum virginicum</i> Virginia Mountain Mint	<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i> Yellow Coneflower	<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i> Black-eyed Susan	<i>Rudbeckia subtomentosa</i> Sweet Black-eyed Susan	<i>Solidago rigida</i> Stiff Goldenrod	<i>Symphoricarpos latifolius</i> Panicled Aster
<i>Symphoricarpos latifolius</i> Calico Aster	<i>Sym. rose-anglicus</i> New England Aster	<i>Trichostema ahumatis</i> Ohio Spiderwort	<i>Verbena hastata</i> Blue Vervain	<i>Verbena alternifolia</i> Wingspore	<i>Verticillium gigantha</i> Tail Ironweed	<i>Veronica virginiana</i> Culver's Root	<i>Zizia aurea</i> Golden Alexander

Legend: Full sun, dry soil (orange square); Full sun, medium soil (yellow square); Full sun, moist soil (green square)

Prepared by Heather Helm www.PollinatorNativePlants.com Page 1

Things To Consider When Buying Native Plants

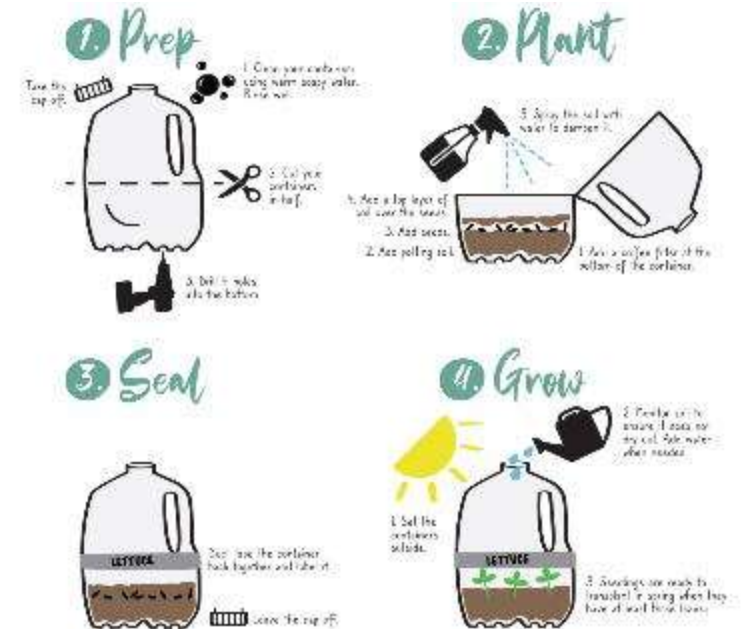
- Straight species versus cultivars (cultivars have cute names in "parentheses")
- Grown without herbicides and pesticides
- From northeastern seed sources
- From trusted source with knowledge of native plants



Liatris Novae-Angliae, New England Blazing Star. Listed under the Endangered Species Act in Massachusetts as a plant of special concern. Rare in RI and most of New England.



Photo: Lynne Seacord



Seed:

- Lower Cost
- Access to More Unusual Varieties
- Less Design Control
- Longer Time to Mature Garden

Be sure you are getting native seeds! Commercial "Wildflower" mixes are often filled with non-native seeds.
Good Seed Source: <https://wildseedproject.net/>



Landscape Plugs

- Fairly Inexpensive Compared to Full Nursery Size Plants
- Allows Design Control
- Most Grow Fairly Quickly
- Historically used for large scale planting or “planting up” and normally purchased in flats of 32-50 of a kind (but can find options for lower quantities)
- Better for planting in open areas than planting in already dense gardens





Nursery Plants

- **Much more substantial** and thus provide instant garden impact, faster weed suppression, and the most design control
- More costly (have often been growing 1-3+ full years)
- Generally preferred when adding to already mature gardens and landscapes or in high visibility settings

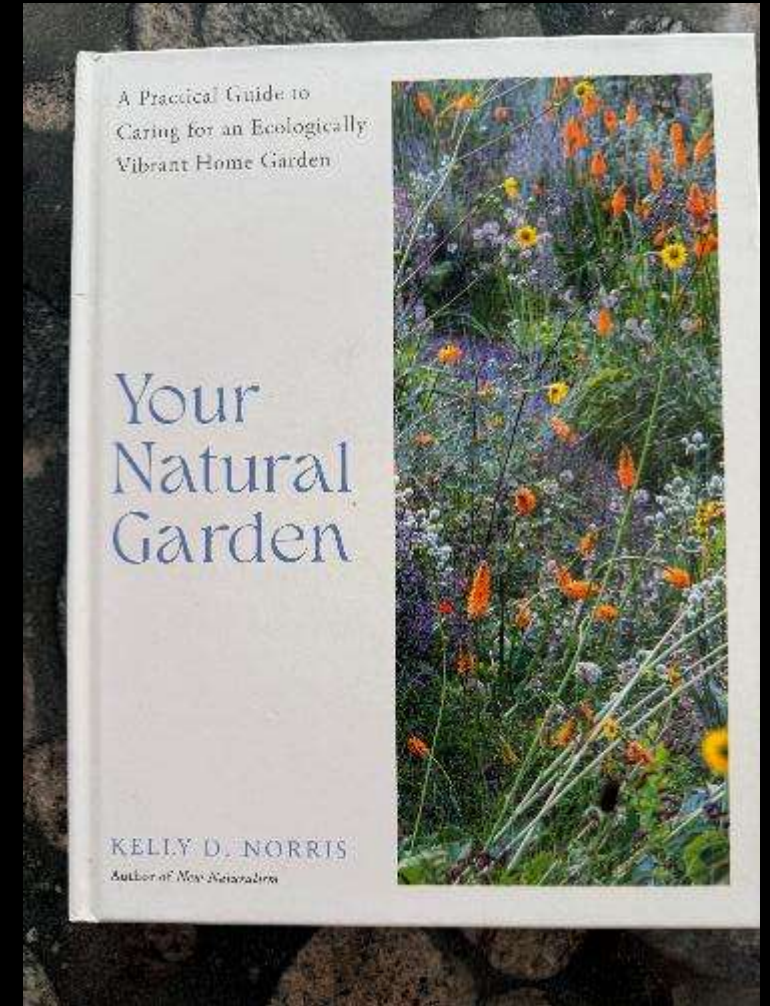


And – one of the BEST sources for native plants will become your very own seed bank – for free – once you learn to nurture and recognize native plant communities in your landscape.

This requires a very different mindset than is ingrained in ornamental horticulture and traditional landscaping!



An Ecological Landscape is not a Static Landscape – it will evolve and change over time and **educated editing** is essential to long term success.



Ways to connect – and learn

- **Wildscaper Meet-ups** at Prickly Ed's this Season (stay connected via social media or our newsletter for all the details!)

- Volunteer at the Barrington Resilience Garden



Be Sure to utilize our website

www.PricklyEds.com

Connect on Facebook and Instagram
@PricklyEdsCactusPatch

Download a PDF of tonight's presentation and a resource handout on the "Workshop Resources" page of our website.

