Wild Ones
NATIVE PLANTS, NATURAL LANDSCAPES
SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA CHAPTER

November 2022 Newsletter

sepa.wildones.org

Visit us on Instagram and Facebook

November Meeting Highlights

Chapter Business

Membership stands at 144.

The chapter's grant program is open to organizations and individuals planning a native plant project to benefit the community. Contact us at secretary-wildonessepa@gmail.com for an application.

The following members were elected to the 2023 Board of Directors: Judy Balock, Susan Caughlan, Denise Everett, Jessie Shiffler, Marilyn Smith, Rick Smith (no relation to Marilyn Smith).

The following officers were elected for 2023:

President - Jessie Shiffler

Treasurer - Denise Everett

Secretary - Susan Caughlan

Membership Chair - Judy Balock

Open positions: Vice President, Homeowners Advisory Chair, and Community Projects Chair.

Native Shrubs for Four-Season Interest

Presented by Marc Radell, Master Gardener Emeritus, Penn State Extension

To begin, a shrub is defined as a plant having aboveground woody tissue that survives the winter. Shrubs are smaller than trees, usually less than 15 feet, and can be multi-stem or single-stem. The woody nature of a shrub's stems is what enables the plant to survive above ground over the winter.

Although all plans provide some basic ecosystem services, such as shelter, and water and carbon cycling, native plants are much better at supporting wildlife than nonnatives because natives have evolved together with their habitat. Plants are just one part of a web of interactions above and below ground.

The sun fuels the system of energy and nutrient cycling driven by plants. Insects, the primary consumer of plants, transfer this energy up the food chain and ultimately provide animals with oxygen, food, water, and shelter.

Ninety percent of herbivorous insects specialize in one family, genus, or even species of plant. Size, coloring, nutritional value, and timing of flowers and fruit are customized to attract specific pollinators and seed dispersers.

Every species contributes to functions within its ecosystem in some special way. Biodiversity promotes resilience of individual species and ecosystems. Each lost species is a crack in the fabric that makes up life on Earth - every native plant counts.

Native plants in general are easier for homeowners to manage than nonnatives because natives are generally adapted to local soil and site conditions and don't require soil amendments, fertilizer, extra watering, or pest control.

It's useful to observe how native shrubs grow in nature. In the mixed hardwood forest that is native to our area, shrubs occur as understory plants and at the edges. Sun-loving shrubs grow where matures trees don't -- in successional areas, on steep slopes, in poor or shallow soil, and in wet areas. Shrubs are an important structural layer between the tree canopy and ground-level vegetation. They provide abundant food and shelter for wildlife.

WO-SEPA 2022 Meeting Schedule

Dec. 1: Collecting and Saving Native Seeds

Recordings of past meetings are on our Youtube channel.

November meeting highlights, continued from page 1

When planning to add native shrubs, consider your site's microclimate. Shade, site grade, soil type and condition, wind exposure, radiant heat from nearby structures, and the cooling effect of water are part of your microclimate.

Next, look at local plant communities to learn which plants like to grow together. Plants grow as part of a community that shares a common environment. Plants interact with each other, with animal populations, and with the physical environment. The Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program has complied information on over 100 natural plant communities in Pennsylvania.

Siting, Planting, and Caring for Shrubs

When siting shrubs, space them according to their mature size to provide a continuous canopy and a continuous root zone. Blocky or round plantings are generally better than linear ones. Connect planting areas to provide a safe corridor for wildlife to travel. Choose plants with varied bloom and fruiting times. Layered heights provide more structures for wildlife and let you fit more plants into an area.

Plan to plant at least two of each species of shrub for best cross-pollination and fruit or berry production. Avoid cultivars, which are clones of the same plant and do not provide the genetic diversity of seed-grown straight-species plants. Native straight species from local genomes or ecotypes are best. Cultivars that change the leaf or flower petal color have been shown to have decreased value to wildlife. And of course, plants designed not to "shed" pollen are useless to pollinators!

Shrubs should be planted with the root crown at the level of the existing soil. Backfill with native soil. No fertilizer or soil amendments should be necessary. Mulch with a few inches of wood chips or a layer of leaves. For plants that require a male and female in order to produce fruit, these can be planted in the same hole.

New shrubs must be watered until they're established, usually 1 year. A rough guide for minimum water is 1" per week during the growing season. Maintain live vegetation (groundcover plants) or a layer of leaves or wood chips covering bare soil. If needed, prune spring-flowering shrubs after they bloom (mid-summer), and summer-blooming shrubs in late winter.

Choosing Native Shrubs

Although roughly 275 species of shrubs are native to Pennsylvania, you can narrow your choices by focusing on plants with high wildlife value. Most shrubs tolerate a range of conditions, but many will not flower as well in shade, and some might grow spindly or in tree form due to lower light levels.

Choosing Shrubs for Certain Conditions

Evergreen shrubs: inkberry (Ilex glabra), prostrate juniper (J. communis var. depressa), mountain laurel (Kalmia latofolia), rosebay (Rhododendron maximum)

Screening shrubs: Carolina allspice (*Calycanthus floridus*), witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*), American elder (*Sambucus nigra ssp. canadensis*), highbush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*), arrowwood viburnum (*V. dentatum*)

Foundation Shrubs: black chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*), New Jersey tea (*Ceanothus americanus*), sweetfern (*Comptonia peregrina*), shrubby St. John's wort (*Hypericum prolificum*), lowbush blueberry (*Vaccinium angustifolium*)

Shrubs for Wet Areas: smooth alder (*Alnus serrulata*), buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*), sweet pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*), shrub dogwoods (Cornus *racemosa, C. amomum, C. sericea*), winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*), swamp rose (*Rosa pallustris*), swamp azalea (*Rhododendron viscosum*), withered (Viburnum *nudum var. cassinoides*)

Shrubs for Shade: hazelnut (*Corylus americana*), northern bush honeysuckle (*Diervilla lonicera*), smooth hydrangea (H. *arborescens*), spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*), coralberry (*Symphoricarpus orbiculatus*), mapleleaf viburnum (*V. acerfolium*), roseshell azalea (*Rhododendron prinophyllum*)

Marc's presentation slides include information on the characteristics, site conditions, and wildlife value for each of the above shrubs.

Native shrubs provide a wide range of benefits to people, animals, and ecosystems all year.

Resources

Marc's slides for this program can be viewed here.

National Wildlife Federation Native Plant Finder

Audubon Society Native Plant Database

Pollinator Partnership Ecoregional Planting Guides

Chesapeake Bay Native Plant Center

USDA PLANTS Database

Are Nativars and Cultivars of Native Plants Still 'Native'?

Native Shrubs: Guide to Landscape Uses

Native Trees, Shrubs, and Vines: A Guide to Using, Growing, and Propagating North American Woody Plants, W. Cullina

Essential Native Trees & Shrubs for the Eastern United States, T. Dove & G. Woolridge

Thought of the Month -- Light Pollution

Humans love to light up the night. Whether you're in a city, the suburbs, or out in the country, you can find outside lights shining all night long. Some are so bright that you might be confused and think the sun has risen. What effect does this have on people and animals?

Light pollution, or artificial light at night, is the excessive or poor use of artificial outdoor light. It disrupts the natural patterns of wildlife, contributes to increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, disrupts human sleep, and obscures the stars.

The whole world is disrupted for nocturnal animals when night becomes day. As we talked about last month, many migratory birds are killed when they fly into the windows of our homes and workplaces. Nighttime illumination makes this problem worse because it disrupts the navigation of birds that migrate at night. Light pollution can alter the vocal communication of birds as well.

Birds' breeding season can be disrupted in areas with a lot of artificial light at night. Some birds have been found to lay their eggs a month earlier than normal, resulting in chicks hatching early, before there is a sufficient supply of food.

Insect mating is disrupted by light. Many insects are drawn towards light and will exhaust themselves by daybreak, hovering around lights. And we already know that fewer insects mean fewer birds.

The nighttime croaking of frogs and toads is part of their breeding ritual. This is disrupted by artificial light. Sea turtle hatchlings are wired to head toward the moon over the ocean, but they can become disoriented and head towards the bright lights of homes and businesses along the coastline.

Artificial lighting harms people, as well. It disrupts sleep, potentially leading to health problems and impaired functioning. For those who love dark nights, it takes a toll on emotional health as well. More than 80 percent of the world's population lives under sky glow -- the brightening of the night sky due to lights from traffic, street lighting, factories, outdoor advertising, and office buildings.

Light pollution is a global issue. This became glaringly obvious when the World Atlas of Night Sky Brightness, a computer-generated map based on thousands of satellite photos, was published in 2016.

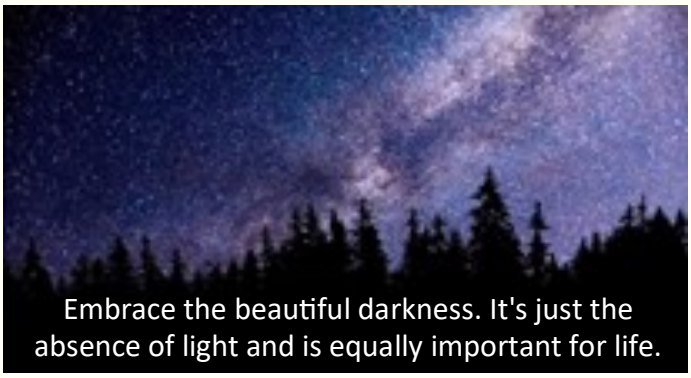
Bring Back the Dark Sky

When was the last time you saw the Milky Way (not in a planetarium)? Light pollution is a side effect of industrial civilization, but a lot of outdoor lighting at night is inefficient, too bright, poorly directed, not shielded, and sometimes just unnecessary.

We can all appreciate the beauty of a landscape that's illuminated at night, but is it worth it? As the winter holiday season approaches, many of us will put extra lights on the exterior of our homes. Let's consider using a timer so these lights don't stay on all night.

If you have lights for security reasons, try adding motion sensors. That way, the light is on only when it's needed. Other suggestions include using lights that are shielded and facing down, and using bulbs with a red or yellow tint because their long wavelengths are less visible to most animals.

Many cities have adopted a "Lights Out" program to turn off building lights at night during bird migration. Even in places meant to provide protected natural habitats for wildlife, light pollution is making an impact. The National Park Service has made maintaining a dark night sky a priority.



Embrace the beautiful darkness. It's just the absence of light and is equally important for life.

Resources

New World Atlas of Night Sky Brightness

MapMaker: Light Pollution

NASA Blue Marble Navigator

Tree of the Month -- American Holly

The American holly (*Ilex opaca*) is a medium-sized evergreen tree that can be found in the woodland understory of the eastern US. In cultivation, typical height is about 50 feet. It's a tree worth consideration as a specimen tree, as a hedge, or for screening and sound reduction in your yard. It's beautiful and interesting in all seasons and a valuable tree for wildlife. Hollies tolerate pruning well, so you'll always have a supply for holiday decorating.

The small greenish-white flowers bloom in spring with a mild fragrance, attracting butterflies and bees. Hollies are dioecious -- each tree bears either male or female flowers, and a male plant is needed for the female to produce the iconic red berries. Male flowers occur in clusters (left); female flowers occur singly or in twos and threes (right). The berries persist through winter, feeding songbirds, game birds, and small mammals.

The holly's glossy evergreen leaves are thick and spiny. Leaf drop occurs in spring, with emergent leaves starting out light green and becoming darker and leathery through the summer. Holly bark is smooth and light grey. Trunk cavities on older trees can provide nesting sites for birds.

American holly is the host plant for Henry's elfin butterfly.

The American holly has a pyramid form in full sun, with dense branching right to the ground -- another reason it works well for screening. It's a slow grower but can live to be over 200 years old. Full sun is best for berry production, but hollies are understory trees, so they are shade tolerant as well, albeit with fewer berries and sparser foliage than in full sun. A shorter, multi-trunked form may grow in lower-light situations. Though American holly is tolerant of occasional flooding and drought, it prefers moist, well-drained and slightly acidic soil.

American Holly Quick Facts

Height: 25-50 ft

Form: pyramid

Growth rate: slow

Soil: well-drained, slightly acidic

Sun: full sun to part shade; woodland edges

Leaves: evergreen, dark green, spiny

Flowers: small white

Fruit: bright red berries

Habitat value: berries for birds and small mammals; host plant for Henry's elfin butterfly

Pledge To Rewild -- Engage Your Local Civic and Community Associations

In January, we invited readers to start off 2022 with a pledge to rewild. This initiative by the Wild Seed Project aims to meet the challenge of biodiversity loss head-on by restoring a minimum of 70% of native plant biomass to support healthy populations of butterflies, bees, birds, and insects that are crucial to a functioning ecosystem.

The pledge to rewild includes 10 action steps to help you get started. This month, we focus on how individuals can work on a community-wide scale to improve native habitat.

Revising Outdated Municipal Ordinances

In the past, when zoning and land development ordinances dealt with plants at all, it was to regulate the spread of noxious weeds like Canada thistle and ragweed, to require absentee landowners to keep the grass mowed, and to make sure new development included a landscaped buffer for the neighbors and a few street trees.

For the past few decades, some municipalities have revised their development ordinances to prohibit developers from planting certain invasive species (for example, Norway maple and callery pear). EACs (Environmental Advisory Councils) have been a big help in this regard, providing technical information and public education. Why not take the next step and require that native plants be used in all new residential subdivisions and commercial development?

It's not that big a deal for the developers; they're far more concerned with the installation of public sewers and roads than with what kind of trees are required. Their landscapers will design whatever the ordinance requires. Wild Ones' national organization is slated to release a model native plant ordinance sometime next year, but a simple requirement to use only plants that are native to North America and adapted to the mid-Atlantic region is a good start. Requiring straight species instead of cultivars would be an added benefit.

Once a few municipalities have started down this path, landscape designers and the nursery industry should be able to adapt to meet the demand. How wonderful would it be to move into a new home and find the common areas planted with red maple instead of Japanese maple, mountain laurel instead of hybrid rhododendron, and little bluestem instead of Chinese silver grass!

Educating the Weed Police

The old zoning and landscaping guidelines in our communities ignore the necessity of allowing and even designing urban and suburban landscapes to support natural systems. Weed ordinances were designed to control just that -- weeds -- not native meadows. If your municipality tells you that you must mow down your native planting because it violates their weed ordinance, do a couple of things first:

1. Read the ordinance. Most weed ordinances include an exception for gardens and ornamental plantings. So, design your planting accordingly. Add decorative features like a small statue, a birdbath, or even a sign indicating that your planting is a certified wildlife habitat, monarch habitat, or whatever.
2. Invite the zoning officer to visit your garden to explain the reason for your native planting. A little education can go a long way toward making your point that your plants are serving an important purpose.
3. Design your planting to be attractive and educational. If you get a visit from a zoning officer, it's probably because someone saw your planting and didn't know what it was. Native plantings next to public areas like sidewalks and streets deserve extra thought, to foster appreciation instead of apprehension.

   You might decide to edge your garden with bricks or landscaping pavers to define the area.

Pledge To Rewild, continued from page 5

Be considerate of neighbors and the public -- keep taller plants away from the property line and the sidewalk or pavement. These visual indicators of stewardship, sometimes called "cues to care," show that your native planting is a managed area, not weeds.

This sidewalk planting emphasizes colorful plants all season -- golden Alexander, moss phlox, and penstemon in spring; monarda, butterfly milkweed, purple coneflower, and coreopsis in summer; and asters, goldenrod, and aromatic sumac (for colorful leaves) in fall. Shorter plants are along the sidewalk, with taller plants behind.

Working With HOAs

Homeowners associations (HOAs) are another level of regulation. The Declaration that governs these developments is a contract that binds each purchaser of a home. Unlike zoning ordinances, which hardly ever actually forbid growing native plants instead of lawn, an HOA Declaration can require a homeowner to plant lawn on some or all of their property. While these requirements might be outdated, they can be difficult to get around. However, they can be changed.

One HOA resident in Maryland waged a years-long battle against the association's requirement to replace her pollinator garden with a manicured lawn. Ultimately, the resident enlisted the help of several state legislators to pass a law prohibiting HOAs from requiring residents to plant only turf grass.

Many HOAs are still attached to the anachronistic symbol of suburbia: lush lawns that, combined with commercial uses of turf grass, collectively suck up more water than any other irrigated crop in the country. Other HOAs are more amenable to working with residents and more welcoming of environmental practices. From parking strips to parklands, HOAs and other planned communities are full of mowed spaces that could be put to better use. What if there were a homeowners association for insects, birds, and bats?

Making Community Connections

Living Landscapes is a working group of Phoenixville Area Transition. Transition is a national movement toward localization and community. Various working groups focus on different areas, including sustainable gardening, reducing toxic chemicals in the environment, and increasing stormwater infiltration and carbon capture.

Conveners Maria Galarza, Shanlee Fisher, and Shannon Zabko are spearheading a native plant focus, including organizing presentations on Doug Tallamy's Homegrown National Park, winter seed sowing, native species for rain gardens, invasive plant ID and removal, and woodland natives.

Living Landscapes also installed four native garden plots at Reservoir Park Community Garden this summer. Plants were donated by parents of students at the Kimberton Waldorf School and were cared for all summer by volunteers. Seeds from this garden will be featured in an upcoming winter sowing workshop, with the goal of growing more plants for this garden and other projects.

This summer, WOSEPA members Shannon Zabko and Erin McDevitt started the "Phoenixville Pollination Corridor" with the goal of connecting properties in town to create a larger corridor for pollinators. Their Facebook group, Phoenixville Pollination Corridor, connects people locally who plant native and use eco-friendly gardening practices. You can find participating properties on the Phoenixville Pollinator Corridor map. To join the Facebook group or have your property added to the map, please email shannonzabko@gmail.com.

Other groups in our area that are planting natives in public spaces include Heart of Uwchlan, West Vincent Township's Pollinator Pathway, and West Chester Green Team.

Resources

Guide to Passing Wildlife-Friendly Property Maintenance Ordinances

Tips for Wildlife Gardening in an HOA Community

Plant This Not That -- Plants for Fall Color Here are suggestions for native plants, from trees to ground-covers, whose leaves, berries, stems, and even buds provide color and interest to the garden through fall and winter, and benefit wildlife as well.

Colorful foliage is the hallmark of fall. Even before the first frost, some of these trees, shrubs, and vines are starting to turn gorgeous colors. 	***Carya ovata* (shagbark hickory)** Tall tree (to 90 feet) with golden yellow leaves in fall. ***Acer rubrum* (red maple), *A. saccharum* (sugar maple)** Tall trees with flaming red to orange fall foliage. ***Liquidambar styraciflua* (sweet gum)** Tall tree (to 75 feet) boasting large star-shaped orange, red, and purple leaves in fall. ***Cercis canadensis* (redbud)** Medium-size understory tree, to 30 feet. Heart-shaped bright yellow leaves in fall. Peapod seeds hang from mature branches all winter. ***Fothergilla* spp. (witch alder)** Branching shrub to 6 feet. Long-lasting fall colors range from gold, orange, red, and purple, often at the same time. ***Quercus rubra* (northern red oak), *Q. coccinea* (scarlet oak)** Large trees with long-lasting dark red or scarlet foliage. ***Sassafras albidum* (sassafras)** Relatively fast-growing tree to 60 feet; often grows in clumps. Mitten, ghost, and oval shaped leaves turn yellow, orange, scarlet, and purple in fall. ***Cotinus obovata* (American smoke tree)** Small (to 30 feet) drought-tolerant tree with large oval blue-green leaves that turn orange to scarlet in fall. ***Rhus aromatica* (fragrant sumac)** Deciduous shrub to 5 feet or lower ('Gro Low') with spreading habit. Small leaves turn bright red to maroon in fall. ***Vaccinium corymbosum* (blueberry)** Twiggy medium-size shrub with bright red fall foliage. ***Itea virginica* (Virginia sweetspire)** The leaves of this medium-size suckering shrub turn as red as those of invasive burning bush and last much longer. ***Parthenocissus quinquefolia* (Virginia creeper)** Vigorous vine that is both a groundcover and a climber, up to 50 feet. Large five-fingered leaves turn dark red in fall. ***Hydrangea quercifolia* (oakleaf hydrangea)** Large shrub with red to purple fall foliage.
Berries/Stems/ Buds These natives have particularly colorful berries, stems, or even buds that persist through winter.	***Ilex verticillata* (winterberry holly)** Medium size shrub with clusters of red berries in fall. ***Callicarpa americana* (beautyberry)** Graceful arching stems covered with red-purple berries. ***Celastrus scandens* (American bittersweet)** Woody vine with clusters of orange berries in fall. ***Cornus sericea* (red-twig dogwood)** Suckering shrub with bright red stems in winter. ***Symphoricarpus orbiculatus* (coralberry)** Suckering shrub with small bright pink berries in fall. ***Hamamelis virginiana* (witch hazel)** Tall shrub with bright yellow thread-like flowers in winter. ***Tilia americana* (linden; basswood)** Tall tree whose buds are tinged with red over winter.
Foliage AND berries These natives have it all.	***Cornus florida* (dogwood)** This familiar understory tree has bright red to maroon fall foliage and scarlet berries loved by birds. ***Aronia arbutifolia (*red chokeberry), *A. melanocarpa* (black chokeberry)** Clumping shrubs with flaming red fall foliage and small red or black fruits. ***Nyssa sylvatica* (black gum or tupelo)** Medium-tall slow-growing tree with brilliant red, orange, yellow, and purple foliage in fall, along with small dark-blue fruit for the birds. ***Viburnum* spp.** Small trees or large shrubs with colorful fall foliage and blue, pink, or black berries.
In Pots Native alternatives to the standard chrysanthemums and ornamental kale.	***Symphyotrichum oblongifolium* (aromatic aster)** Masses of showy violet-blue rayed flowers in late fall. Pinch back by 1/3 in July for fuller display. Prefers full sun. ***Solidago sphacelata* 'Golden Fleece' (autumn goldenrod)** Arching sprays of golden yellow flowers in August and September. Full sun. ***Schizachyrium scoparium* (little bluestem)** Soft blue upright 2'stems turn reddish in fall. ***Symphyotrichum ericacea* 'Snow Flurry' (white heath aster)** In fall, clouds of tiny white flowers cover the stiff needle-like foliage of this 6" high groundcover and spill over the sides of a pot.

Diary of a Rewilder

The term rewilding was coined almost 40 years ago as a continental-scale vision to protect large tracts of wilderness and connect these areas with migration corridors. Wild Seed Project advocates rewilding not just in large wilderness areas, but in our own yards. Rewilding is a deliberate shift from human-centered, intensively managed landscapes to humans sharing our lands with the rest of nature. In restoring native plants in our landscape, we aim to reverse habitat loss, support ecosystems services, and bring nature back into our daily lives.

Rewilding begins with recognizing native plants as the basis of the local food web. Native plants are essential for the insects that support birds, amphibians, and mammals. Recent research by University of Delaware Professor Doug Tallamy has shown that a viable habitat should contain at least 70% native plants, in order to sustain the insects necessary to allow birds to raise enough young to maintain a steady population. Below this critical threshold, native food webs collapse, and habitats unravel.

> *"We are at a critical point of losing so many species from local ecosystems that their ability to produce the oxygen, clean water, flood control, pollination, pest control, carbon storage, etc, that is, the ecosystem services that sustain us, will become seriously compromised."*
>
> Professor Douglas Tallamy

According to Professor Tallamy, 83% of land in the U.S. is privately owned -- forests, farms, business parks, retirement communities, and our own backyards. Homegrown National Park Is a grassroots call to action to restore native habitat and regenerate ecosystem function by planting natives on 50% of this private land.

Clearly this is a hugely ambitious cooperative conservation project. Restoring half the privately owned land in our country to native habitat might seem overwhelming, but it starts with each one of us. We decide what to plant in our own yards.

At this point, you might ask, what does a native habitat even look like, and how can we make it happen in our own yards?

Shrink the Lawn

Most yards include one or more trees and some shrubs next to the house, but the majority of the property is usually planted in turf grass. A manicured lawn has been a status symbol since the founding of our country. And of course, lawns are also a place for the family to picnic and play.

In suburban developments, turf grass is installed as the default ground cover, with a few young trees if the local ordinance requires them. Grass might be easy to install, but it's intensive to maintain. Lawns need to be fertilized, watered during a drought, mowed regularly, and cleared of leaves every fall. What a lot of work and expense for something that contributes virtually no value to the ecosystem!

Lawn doesn't need to dominate our landscape. Beyond an area to play tag, have a picnic, or toss a ball, we don't need large expanses of grass. Huge, empty front lawns are just that -- empty of life-sustaining habitat, stormwater control, water quality improvement, carbon storage, and other ecosystem services that are provided by native plants.

The easiest way to get started on the goal of 70% native plantings is to shrink your lawn. But where to start?

Expand an Existing Bed

If there are foundation plantings around your house, enlarge the bed to give you room to plant native shrubs and perennials that are suited to the sunlight and soil conditions in that area of your yard.

Create a New Bed

Choose an area of lawn to plant one tree, or several, along with understory shrubs and perennials that share the same sunlight and soil conditions as the trees.

Step by Step

Your first step is to get rid of the grass. You don't actually need to remove it; one of the easiest techniques is to smother it with a thick (6") layer of compost, decomposed leaves, or wood chips. Commercial mulch is not recommended because it's usually so finely shredded that it packs into an impermeable crust. If you don't have a lot of natural material available, cardboard topped with a thin layer of wood chips is an easy alternative.

In case you're thinking that this is a major undertaking, here's a breakdown of the tasks and the time frame for one person to complete each task:

1. 20 minutes -- Using a length of rope, clothesline, or flexible hose, lay out the shape of the

Diary of a Rewilder, continued from page 8

new bed on the ground. Our example is a 30' long x 6' deep expansion of an existing bed.

2. 20 minutes -- Weed-whack the grass inside the new area down to bare ground. This isn't absolutely necessary, but it will kill the grass faster.

3. 45 minutes -- Install a border of bricks, logs, or native stones along the outside edge of the bed. The border makes maintenance easier and gives a finished look to the planting.


Step 3

4. 1 to 1-1/2 hour -- Spread a deep layer of compost or leaves over the new bed, or cut and fit cardboard to cover the area and top with a layer of wood chips. When using cardboard, be sure to cover any gaps.


Step 4

5. 1 hour -- Shade-tolerant shrubs and perennials were planted under the birch tree, with sun-lovers along the front of the bed. To plant right away, cut holes in the cardboard with a knife. The cardboard will soften after the first rain.


Step 5

Choosing Your Plants

One of a plant's most important jobs is to capture energy from the sun and convert it to food. Insects that consume a plant's leaves, pollen, or nectar capture the energy stored there and in turn become a source of food and energy for the birds or amphibians that eat those insects. Caterpillars are an important contributor to this food web for birds.

Professor Tallamy suggests that we prioritize our plant choices to focus on supporting the insects that have the greatest impact on our ecosystem by contributing the most energy to the food web. A few families of natives plants do the lion's share of producing the food that fuels these insects. These **keystone species** include:

Native trees: oaks, cherries, willows, birches, cottonwoods, elms

Native herbaceous plants: goldenrods, asters, sunflowers

Space your plants close together, the way they grow in nature. After one season, the wood chips on your new bed will disappear as the plants grow to their full size. Native volunteers like white heath aster (*Symphyotrichum ericoides*), jumpseed (*Persicaria virginiana*), white avens (*Geum canadense*), wood poppy (*Stylophorum diphyllum*), honewort (*Cryptotaenia canadensis),* enchanter's nightshade (*Circaea lutetiana*), and wingstem (*Verbesina alternifolia*) will also show up to fill in any gaps. Learn to recognize their young leaves so you don't pull them by accident while weeding.

Maintenance

You won't be mowing, fertilizing, or raking leaves any more, but native plantings do need to be monitored for the occasional weeds. Remember to leave fallen leaves on the bed, and allow plant stems to remain standing over winter, to provide nesting sites for native bees.

RESOURCES

Native Groundcovers for Beauty and Biodiversity

Native Plants for the Woodland Understory

Beauty and Pollinator Benefits of Asters and Goldenrods

National Wildlife Federation Native Plant Finder

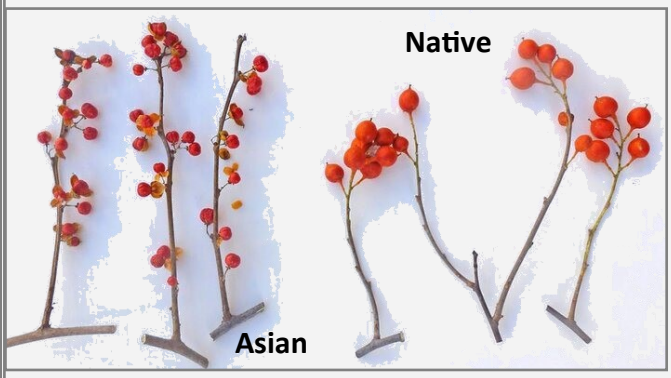
Audubon Plants for Birds

How To Create a Meadow

Invasive Species Alert -- Asian Bittersweet

Blue Ridge PRISM reminds us that fall is one of the best times to identify and remove invasive Asian bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) from our properties. The bright orange berries are easy to spot. Asiatic bittersweet will still have some yellow or green leaves present well into autumn. It retains its leaves late into the season when most other deciduous trees and vines have shed theirs.

This fast-growing vine can wrap itself around tree trunks and girdle them, cutting off the flow of water and nutrients. The weight of bittersweet vines can break the upper branches of trees.



Remove bittersweet by hand-pulling small seedlings. Cut larger vines below the soil level and the root crown. Don't pull vines from the trees, as this could damage branches.

You can distinguish our native bittersweet (uncommon in the wild) by looking at the berry structure. Asian bittersweet carries its berries all along the stem (see left, above), whereas the native has berries only at the tips of the stems (see right, above). The berry capsule on the berries of Asian bittersweet is yellow, whereas the native's berry capsules are orange.

Nesting and Overwintering Habitat for Pollinators and Other Beneficial Insects

The primary habitat features used by pollinators and other insects for shelter include stems and branches of trees, shrubs, and wildflowers; fallen leaves; undisturbed ground; bare ground; dead wood; brush piles; and rock piles.

Retaining and incorporating as many of these features as possible into your landscape (rather than "clearing" them away) will help attract and support a diversity of bees and other beneficial insects.

More information from the Xerces Society on providing critical overwintering habitat for beneficial insects can be found here.

Events in the Community and Beyond

Nov. 26-27 Redbud Nursery Winter Market. 904 N. Providence Rd, Media PA. 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Dec. 10 Community Science with iNaturalist App. Mt. Cuba Center, 3120 Barley Mill Rd, Hockessin DE. 10:00 a.m. - noon.

Educational Opportunities

Nov. 16 100 Plants to Feed the Monarch Butterflies. Ecological Landscape Alliance webinar, noon-1:00 p.m.

Dec. 14 Urban Pollinator Corridors. Ecological Landscape Alliance webinar, noon-1:00 p.m.

Keystone 10 Million Trees Partnership

The Keystone 10 Million Trees Partnership is committed to improving Pennsylvania's communities, economy, and ecology by planting 10 million trees throughout the Commonwealth.

Wild Ones of SEPA is partnering with Chester County Conservation District (CCCD) to help plant 10,000 trees in southeastern Pennsylvania.

CCCD plans to request trees through the K10M program for distribution **the week of April 17, 2023**.

Trees are 1-yr-old containerized seedlings. The trees come with tubes, stakes, and bird nets.

Projects must be verified by recipients. Photos of completed tree plantings must be sent to ctrice@chesco.org within 2 weeks of picking up your trees. Trees must be planted before the summer and must be watered as needed. Recipients commit to maintaining the trees they receive through the program.

Wild Ones of SEPA Chapter Members can request up to 20 trees through the chapter. **Copy the list in the opposite column** and indicate next to each species the quantity you are requesting. If a species becomes unavailable, substitutions may be made by the supplier.

- **Minimum request is 10 trees**. If you would like fewer trees, find a friend and combine your requests. Send ONE request to secretarywildonessepa @gmail.com.
- **To request 10 to 20 trees,** send your request to secretarywildonessepa@gmail.com.
- **Pickup** for trees requested through Wild Ones SEPA will be in Pottstown unless other arrangements are made.

To request more than 20 trees, send your request to Cori Trice at ctrice@chesco.org. You will be responsible for picking up your trees at Brandywine Red Clay Alliance, West Chester, PA.

ALL REQUESTS ARE DUE BY NOV. 23

Volunteer to help organize the trees for pick up:

Friday 4/14/2023 @ 9:00 a.m.

Brandywine Red Clay Alliance in the Browning Barn, 1760 Unionville Wawaset Rd, West Chester, PA 19382

Please contact Cori Trice at ctrice@chesco.org to add your name to the volunteer list

Spring 2023 Species List

American Beech (Fagus grandifolia)
American Hazelnut (Corylus Americana)
Arrowwood (Vibernum Dentatum)
*Balsam Fir (Abies Balsamea)
Basswood (Tilia Americana)
Black Chokeberry (Aronia Melanocarpa)
Black Gum (Nyssa Sylvatica)
Black Locust (Robinia Pseudoacacia)
Black Oak (Quercus Velutina)
Black Walnut (Juglans Nigra)
Black Willow (Salix Nigra)
Blackhaw Viburnum (Viburnum Prunifolium)
Buttonbush (Cephalanthus Occidentalis)
Chestnut Oak (Quercus Prinus)
*Easter Red Cedar (Juniperus Virginiana)
Eastern Redbud (Cercis Canadensis)
*Eastern White Pine (Pinus Strobus)
Elderberry (Sambucus Canadensis)
Flowering Dogwood (Cornus Florida)
Grey Birch (Betula Populifolia)
Grey Dogwood (Cornus Racemosa)
Hackberry (Celtis Occidentalis)
Hawthorn (Crataegus Phaenopyrum)
Highbush Blueberry (Vaccinium Corymbosum)
Highbush Cranberry (Viburnum Trilobum)
Honey Locust (Gleditsia Triancanthos)
Nannyberry (Viburnum Lentago)
Ninebark (Physocarpus Opulifolius)
Paw Paw (Asiminia Triloba)
Persimmon (Diosptros Virginiana)
Pin Oak (Quercus Palustris)
Pussy Willow (Salix Discolor)
Quaking Aspen (Populus Tremuloides)
Raspberry (Rubus Occidentalis)
Red Chokeberry (Aronia Arbutifolia)
Red Maple (Acer Rubrum)
Red Mulberry (Morus Rubera)
Red Oak (Quercus Rubra)
Red-Osier Dogwood (Cornus Stolonifera)
River Birch (Betula Nigra)
Sandbar Willow (Salix Exigua)
Scarlet Oak (Quercus Coccinea)
Shagbark Hickory (Carya Ovata)
Silky Dogwood (Cornus Amomum)
Silky Willow (Salix Sericea)
Silver Maple (Acer saccharinum)
Spicebush (Lindera Benzoin)
Sugar Maple (Acer Saccharum)
Swamp White Oak (Quercus Bicolor)
Sweet Bay Magnolia (Magnolia Virginiana)
Sweet Gum (Liquidambar Styraciflua)
Sycamore (Platanus Occidentalis)
White Oak (Quercus Alba)
*White Spruce (Picea Glauca)
Willow Oak
Winterberry (Ilex Vericillata)
Witch Hazel (Hamamelis Virginiana)
Yellow Birch (Betula Alleghanienis)

*** Conifers are more likely to experience crop failure; therefore, we are likely to receive only part of what we request or none at all. Please keep this in mind when planning your planting.**