

January 2024

Barrington Pollinator Pathway



Welcome to all who are interested in growing the pollinator pathway in Barrington!

As we make our way through the winter, some of us are already ruminating on our gardens and what we'll plant, move, or replace this next growing season. It's no coincidence that seed catalogues are already arriving in the mail. If winter is your time to hunker down with a book, check out the recommended titles at the end of the newsletter.

If you'd rather get your hands dirty, January and February are the perfect time to start native plants from seed. Winter sowing is a no fuss way to grow native plants from seed and is perfect for the lazy gardener. The Wild Seed Project does a great job walking you through the steps: Autumn and Winter Seed Sowing in Six Easy Steps: <https://wildseedproject.net/2016/11/ideal-time-for-sowing-native-seeds>.

Pollinator Pathway Meet Up

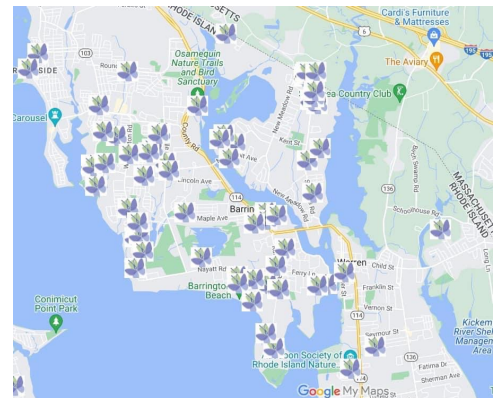
Tuesday, February 6, 6:30pm

Salem Family Auditorium

Barrington Public Library

Are you already missing your time in the garden?

Did you have an amazing growing season, or do you have more questions than answers when it comes to this native plant gardening business?



Join the Pollinator Pathway group on Tuesday, Feb. 6, at 6:30 pm in the Salem Family Auditorium at the Barrington Public Library for a casual sharing of ideas and questions, whether it's about or how to speak with your neighbors about the "tidiness" of your space, or "what on earth is a nativar"?

You can send us 3-5 photos of your garden (by January 28 please) and we will share them with the group at the event. If you'd like to speak about your successes and challenges, please be prepared to present for about 5 minutes. If you'd rather not speak, but have photos to share, please send those along too.

Register for the Event and Upload Your Photos:

https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/uac7gawlr5AJ8v8LTZyQzQ

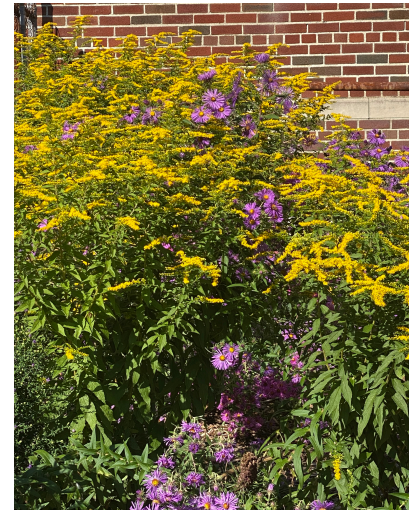
Reach out with any questions to pollinatorpathways@blct.org.

Pollineighbor Spotlight

If you've driven by or visited the Warren post office recently, you might have noticed a change in the landscaping.

The project started when gardener Wendy Brennen applied for and received a grant from the RI Wild Plant Society (RIWPS) to incorporate natives into the gardens at the post office. Brennen worked with the Warren Volunteer Gardeners to transform the Warren post office grounds from lawn and exotics to native plantings. "The project was about native plants and pollinators, but also about bringing together people with diverse gardening skills and interests," says Brennen.

Many hands designed, selected plants, and solicited plant donations for the project. It started with grass removal along with most of the non natives in late May of 2023. On planting day volunteers, including Warren post office employees, put all the plants into the ground.



Fellow volunteer and RIWPS member Dottie Dylag says, "with global warming, native plants are so important. We need to continue to plant what Mother Nature created and give the birds and bees the food and sustenance they need."

The summer brought rain, and plants thrived and continued to bloom into November. "We had so many compliments on the project as we were weeding or watering over the summer. We warned others that the garden would not look "neat and tidy" over the winter as we let nature take its course," says Dylag.

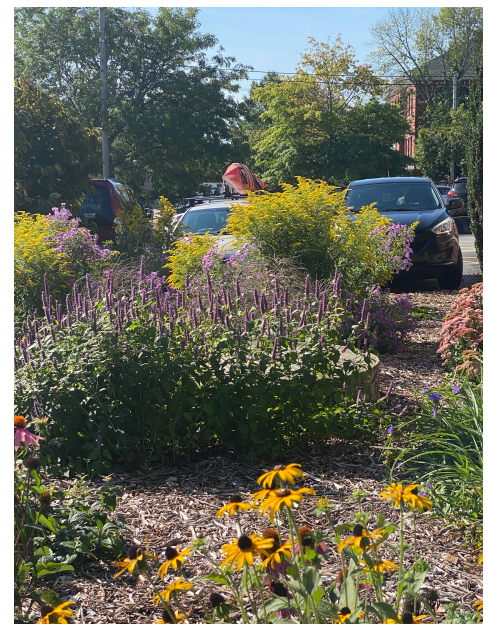


Brennen and Dylag are trying to initiate other native plant projects in Warren and bring in more people to help, so be on the lookout for more of their fantastic work!

Books that inspired their journey:

Doug Tallamy: *Bringing Nature Home*

Ben Goldfarb: *Eager: The Surprising Secret Life of Beavers*





Lawns into Meadows: Growing a regenerative landscape

By Owen Wormser

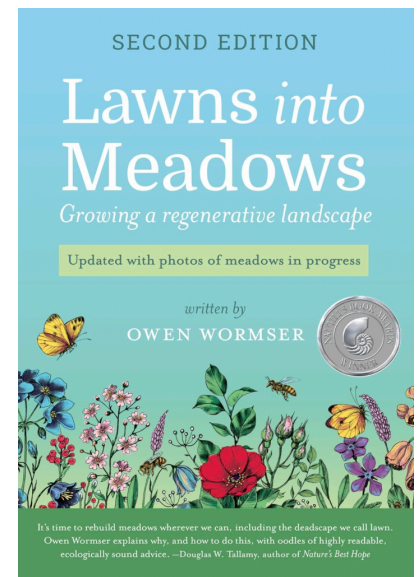
155 pp. Stone Pier Press

If you've ever thought of creating a meadow but didn't know where to start, this is the book for you! The author walks you through all the steps required: designing your meadow, site preparation, examples of plant choices, educating the neighbors and building support, and maintaining your meadow. Yes, there is maintenance required.

If you're wondering, What IS a meadow, it's a loose term, but generally it's a habitat of herbaceous (non woody) plants that includes grasses and wildflowers. In a meadow, plants are allowed to spread and move at will, so it's a dynamic and changing landscape. A meadow could be as small as a garden bed, or stretch for acres.

There are a lot of resources available on starting a meadow, but Wormser walks through the process with clarity, and explains everything you need to know in easy to understand terms. This is a great book for beginners, but it also offers enough for more seasoned native plant gardeners. Coming in at 155 pages, it's concise, practical, and easy to follow.

The author is based in western Massachusetts, and most of his plant choices are applicable here in Rhode Island, which offers similar growing conditions and shares the same ecoregion (59). You may have even visited some of his work. He designed the Eric Carle Museum meadow and the downtown plots near the Northampton, MA City Hall among others.



More on Meadows...

Meadows do require some effort, especially in the early stages. Site preparation is crucial, and meadow plants (we're talking about native plants) often take several years to fully germinate and succeed. (If you're planting plugs or larger plants, the process will obviously be quicker, though more expensive than growing from seed). While you're waiting for these beauties to emerge, you'll need to keep out the weeds, especially aggressive invasives. Woody plants need to be pulled out as well because if they are allowed to grow they'll eventually shade out your meadow plants.

Once established, a meadow will require much less work; an annual mowing (to keep out woody material) and an always vigilant eye out for invasives.

Meadows provide cover, food, and nesting sites for birds, insects, and other wildlife. Without this important habitat, these species would disappear. Meadows also absorb stormwater runoff, helping prevent flooding and soil erosion.



The Barrington Land Conservation Trust has started work on a meadow project at the Johannis Farm Wildlife Refuge, thanks to a grant from NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service), a division of the USDA. Approximately half an acre of the "meadow" at Johannis is currently being prepped for planting in the fall. Stay tuned for more updates and photos on this project.

Recommended Winter Reading

Tiny and Wild: Build a Small-Scale Meadow Anywhere: Graham Laird Gardner

How to Catch a Mole: Marc Hamer

The Humane Gardener: Nancy Lawson

The Comfort of Crows: Margaret Renkl

The Quickening: Elizabeth Rush

Please share this newsletter with a friend or neighbor, and if you're not on the pollinator pathway map yet, please consider joining!

<https://www.pollinator-pathway.org>

Please reach out to us with questions, newsletter ideas, or photos of your own pollinator garden. You can reach us at pollinatorpathway@blct.org

