

June 2024

# Barrington Pollinator Pathway



Welcome to all who are interested in growing the pollinator pathway in Barrington (and beyond)! Summer has unofficially arrived, and as we wait for our gardens to dry out so we can spend as many hours as possible outdoors, here is some gardening advice to keep in mind.

As you make changes in your gardens this season, try to choose a variety of plants with overlapping bloom times that will provide food for pollinators from early spring through late fall. Early spring flowers can be the hardest to supply, and while spring ephemerals offer some food, shrubs and trees offer some of the best and most plentiful early nutrition, especially for those early emerging bees. Planting multiples of the same species together will also better support pollinators by offering easier foraging opportunities.

Here are some charts and resources that showcase seasonal bloom times:

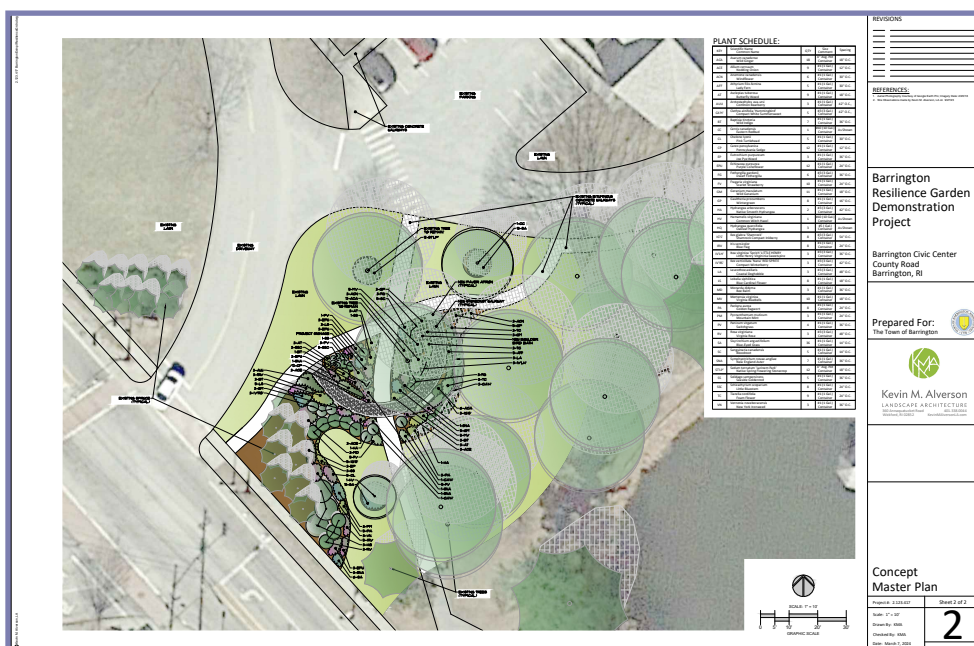
[https://grownativemass.org/sites/default/files/documents/](https://grownativemass.org/sites/default/files/documents/Xerces_Pollinator_Plants_Northeast_Region.pdf)

[Xerces\\_Pollinator\\_Plants\\_Northeast\\_Region.pdf](https://grownativemass.org/sites/default/files/documents/Xerces_Pollinator_Plants_Northeast_Region.pdf)

<https://www.pollinator-pathway.org/native-plant-resources>

<https://www.xerces.org/blog/planning-your-plantings-for-climate-resiliency>

## Update on the Barrington Resilience Garden



In case you missed hearing about it, an exciting new resilience garden is going to be planted at Government Center! The garden has been designed by a committee of townspeople working with landscape architect Kevin Alverson and Resilience Planner Karlo Berger. What will make the garden resilient? Native perennials, shrubs, and trees, which require less water and maintenance than traditional ornamental gardens. They also more easily adapt to climate fluctuations, and do not require the use of harmful pesticides or fertilizers.

The garden will provide habitat for native pollinators, other insects, and birds. It will be planted by volunteers of all ages from our community.

Planning for the Resilience Garden is ongoing. The shopping list for the tools to be purchased is completed, the wording for the signage and the maintenance plan is close to being finalized, and work is being done on elements of the garden webpage. After a recent site visit, a few small changes to make in the design were identified.



The big news is that instead of planting in June as originally planned, we will now be planting in September. The extra heavy rainfalls we have been experiencing have stretched DPW to their limit and they are no longer able to do the preparation for the garden in time for a June planting. Late summer is an excellent time to plant perennials, so we are confident that a September planting will be fine. If you have signed up to volunteer with the planting and/or maintenance of the garden or if you would like to sign up, keep an eye out for information about the planting date and work sessions. We would love to have you join us in the garden!

For more info on the garden and how to volunteer:  
<https://www.blct.org/more-about-us/pollinator-pathways/>

## April Showers Bring ...?

Is anyone still drying out from spring? Remember the pooling water in your yard? Eroded hillsides? A rain garden might be in your future, and now is the time to plan and construct it before the next round of flooding destroys your favorite garden bed.

A rain garden is usually a crescent or bowl shaped depression designed to absorb water during rain storms and flooding. It can have a berm on its downhill end to keep excess water from draining out, or be dug deep enough to keep water contained within its bed.



It's planted with native vegetation that can withstand wet conditions for relatively short periods of time, usually 24-48 hours. It can look pretty much like your other garden beds, but it has the ability to help with flooding and erosion mitigation, and also filters out pollutants before they reach storm drains and make their way into our waterways.

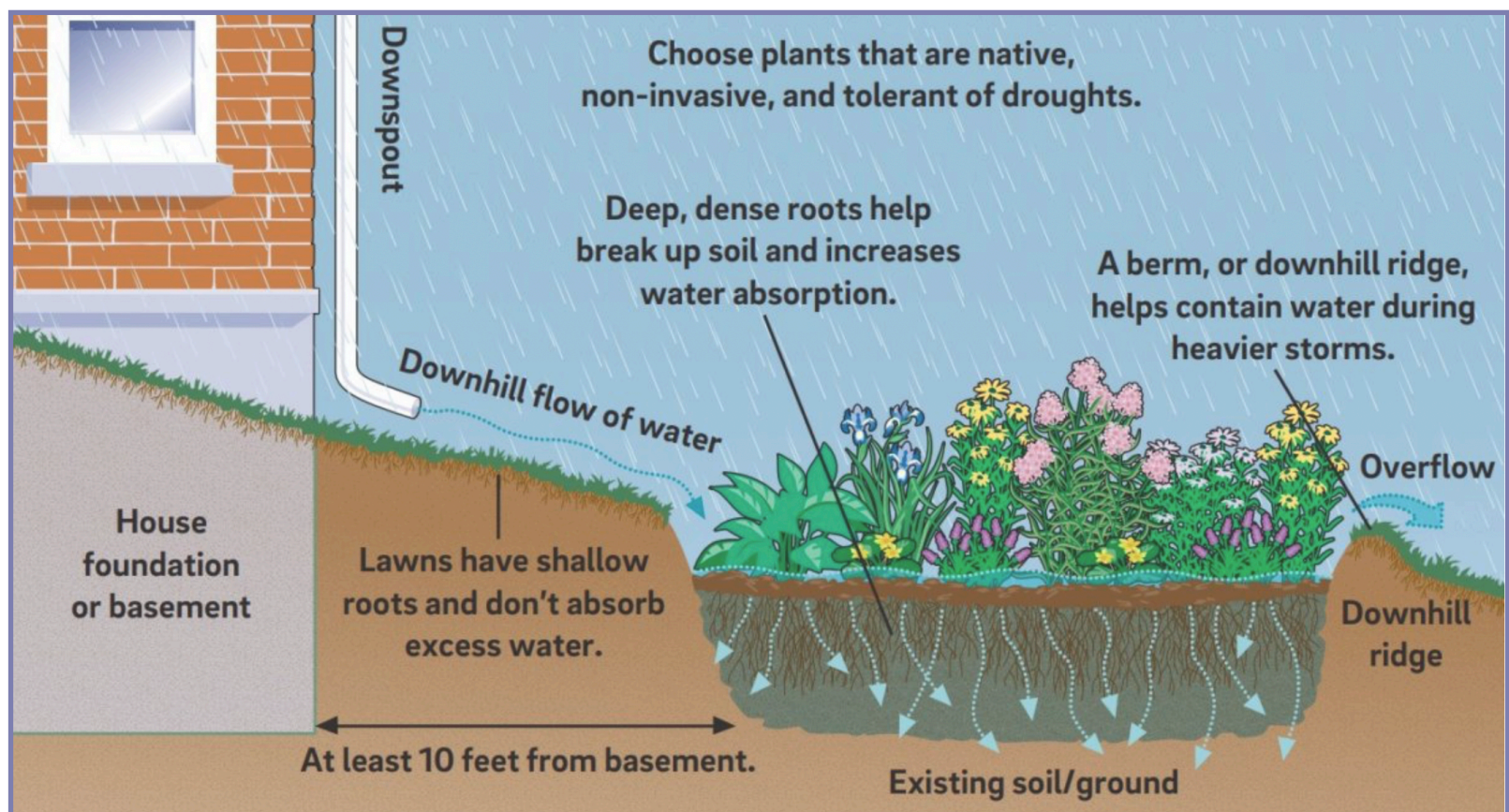






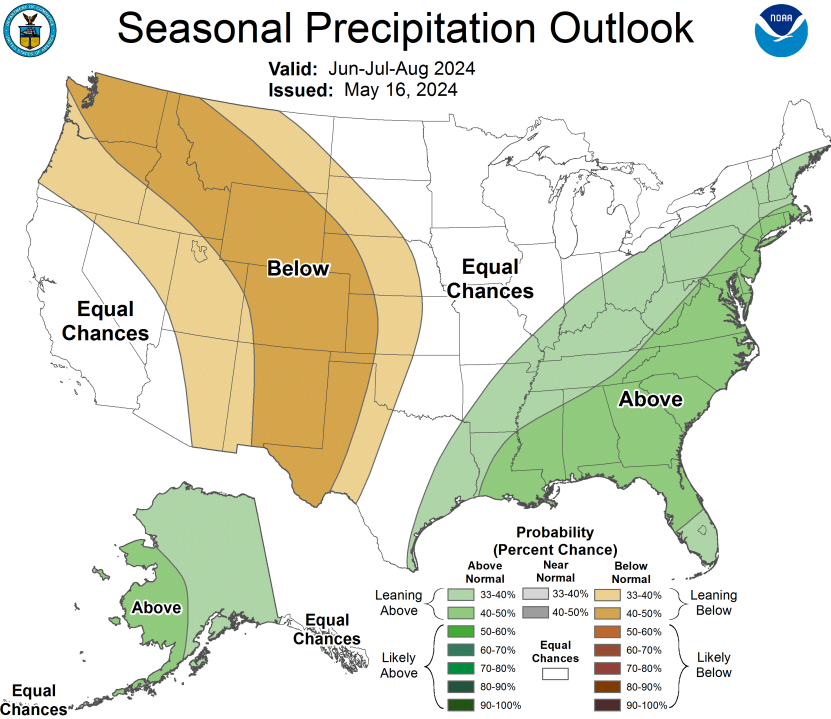
Photo by Mark Bugnaski

### Rain gardens should be located:

- At least 10 feet away from home foundations and at least 50 feet away from septic systems or wells
- In a level part of your yard, not in a low, wet spot, put it somewhere with good drainage (if you don't have good drainage, you will need to amend the soil)
- Where they can collect the most rainwater runoff as possible, likely near driveways and downspouts
- Perpendicular to entering water runoff
- On your property and not directed at neighboring properties or into a public road



The NOAA precipitation forecast for the summer of 2024:



For more detailed information on rain garden construction, click on the images:

**Stormwater Solutions for Homeowners Fact Sheet: Rain Gardens**

Stormwater is rainwater and snowmelt that runs over the ground, picking up pollutants along the way—such as oil from roadways, silt and sand from exposed soil, nutrients from fertilizers, bacteria from pet waste, and pesticides from lawns. These pollutants are not treated or removed when the stormwater flows through a storm drain or directly to the nearest body of water, resulting in stormwater pollution that can contaminate shellfish beds and swimming areas, cause algae blooms and fish kills, and otherwise impact people, wildlife, and ecosystems. This runoff can also cause flooding and erosion on your property and beyond. To help address these problems, the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) has developed Stormwater Solutions for Homeowners, a series of fact sheets on techniques to control runoff on your property and reduce stormwater contamination of local waters.

**Introduction**

Rain gardens are specially designed and planted depressions in the ground that collect, filter, and treat stormwater. These slightly sunken gardens allow collected water to be taken up by plants or slowly infiltrated (i.e., filtered into the ground), reducing the amount of water running off site. Rain garden soils—which are typically amended with mulch and sand to promote proper moisture levels and drainage properly—also remove pollutants (including metals, nutrients, sediments, oils/grease, and organic matter) before they reach groundwater or flow to coastlines and local waterbodies. By preventing stormwater from running into roads, storm drains, and waterways, rain gardens may also help reduce localized flooding and erosion. Rain gardens are an excellent choice for most properties and are a potential do-it-yourself project with many options for shape, plantings, and size (even small rain gardens provide great benefits). Planting a rain garden with flowering and fruiting plants, shrubs, and trees will also provide visual interest, as well as food and habitat for wildlife (see “Native Plants for Rain Gardens in Massachusetts” at the end of the fact sheet for recommendations, including options for coastal sites).

Rain gardens can be strategically located to collect and treat water flowing from roof downspouts, paved areas, or sump pumps, helping to reduce drainage problems and soggy areas in your yard—and because rain gardens more effectively capture and absorb rainwater than lawns, they make an excellent runoff-control alternative for yard areas. Rain gardens do require an appropriate soil depth to effectively treat stormwater, so they may not be suitable in areas with poorly drained or clay soils, ledge, or a high groundwater table. Be sure to follow the guidelines in this fact sheet for siting a rain garden to ensure success and avoid harmful effects.



A rain garden planted along the road collects and filters stormwater before it runs off and drains to local waterbodies.

# Native Plants for New England Rain Gardens

This plant list includes native plant species and cultivars that are adaptable, available, and have been widely successful in our northern New England region. It is a place to begin, but it is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all plants that may be used in rain gardens. Plant enthusiasts may want to consult other resources and try new plants on their own, but those who want a “tried and true” list of plants to choose from may find all that they need right here. We use natives because rain gardens may border natural areas and we want to avoid introducing new non-native plants into the environment.

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## RAIN GARDEN PLANTING ZONE

The plant list identifies the ideal rain garden planting zone for each plant (characterized by soil moisture).

**BASE:** Periodic or frequent standing water may keep the root zone wet for several days at a time. After the initial establishment period, base zone plants should also be tolerant of dry periods up to two weeks during the growing season.

**SLOPE:** Periodically wet or saturated soils during larger storms. Plants in the Slope Zone can help to protect against erosion once established. Shallow residential rain gardens may not have a definitive slope zone.

**BERM:** Drier soils, infrequently subject to inundation or saturation. This zone may be a raised berm or simply the perimeter of the rain garden. Plants should be quite drought tolerant and blend into the existing landscape of the site.

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

**Exposure** - Plants are adapted to either full sun (≥ 6 hours of direct sunlight), partial sun (3-6 hours of direct sunlight), or full shade (≤ 3 hours of direct sunlight). Consider that some areas of the garden may be sunny and some may be shady and that the exposure may change throughout the seasons.

**Soil Moisture** - Clay soils tend to stay wet for longer periods than sandy, well-drained soils. There is also variation in soil moisture between the rain garden planting zones. Use the soil moisture preferences to choose plants that tolerate the conditions in your rain garden and to place them in the proper zone.

**Plant Spacing** - Mature size is given as a range because it varies greatly depending on cultivars and environment. The height and spread (width) of each plant is listed. Space plants to allow them to grow to their full size. Consider placing taller plants in the center or back of the garden with shorter plants layered under or in front of them. Ground covers work well on the berm.

**Bloom Period & Color** - Consider how different colored flowers will complement each other in the garden. Select plants with early, middle, and late season blooms to provide interest and support pollinators throughout the season.

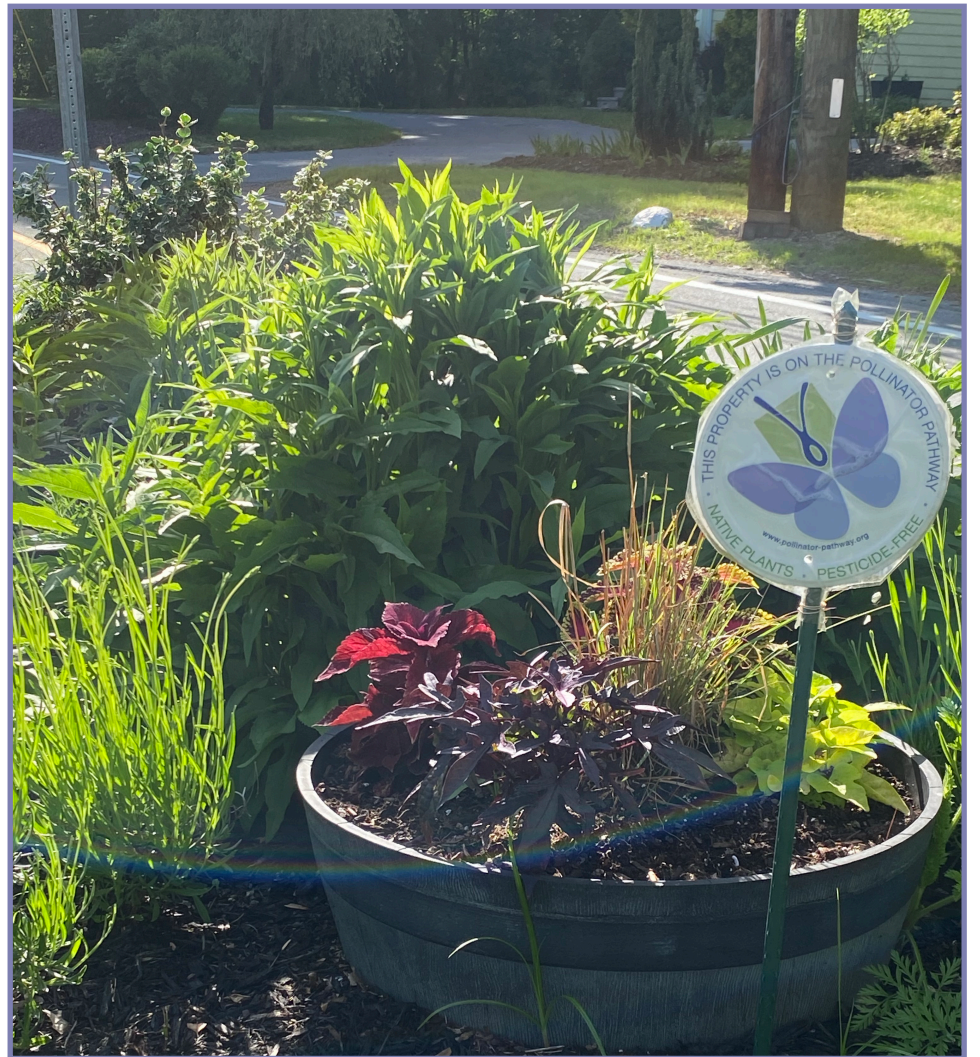
**USDA Hardiness Zone** - The USDA Plant Hardiness Zone is the standard used to indicate which plants can survive the winter based on the average annual minimum winter temperature for a given location. New England hardiness zones range from 3 in the northern parts of the region to 7 in the southern and coastal areas.

This project was funded, in part, with Clean Water Act Section 319 funds from the US Environmental Protection Agency, and by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Office for Coastal Management under the Coastal Zone Management Act in conjunction with the NHDES Coastal Program and with assistance from the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension.



## Pollineighbor Spotlight

A Pollinator Pathway sign was spotted in the Hameho Garden triangle at the end of Massasoit in Hampden Meadows. Boneset and coneflower were discovered growing happily in this pocket garden that is usually observed by car. Way to go Hameho!



## Recommended Podcasts

Instead of books, this time around we're recommending a couple of podcasts to enjoy (while you're out working in your garden).

### **The Joe Gardener Show: Tiny and Wild: What to Know To Build a Small Scale Meadow Anywhere, episode 365**

Landscape designer Graham Laird Gardner talks through the steps of establishing a small meadow garden in your home landscape. Gardner blends aesthetics with ecological practices for a slightly more curated look if the "randomness" of a meadow doesn't suit your situation.

We recommended Gardner's book, *Tiny and Wild* in the January 2024 newsletter. The book will walk you step by step through the process of developing a small meadow, but the podcast is a great place to start!

### **The Joe Gardener Show: Easy Ways to Help Heal Earth, episode 364**

Basil Camu started out as an arborist who's main occupation was cutting down trees. He took a 180 degree turn, and now spreads the word about healing the ecosystem. He's written a book titled, *From Wasteland to Wonder: Easy Ways We Can Help Heal Earth in the Sub/Urban Landscape*. The book is available for **FREE** as a digital download, or for purchase here: <https://www.leaflimb.com/wonder/>

### **A Way to Garden: Basil Camu on Supporting Trees, May 27, 2024**

This is another interview with Basil Camu, with more of a focus on how to best support and care for your trees. There's information on what's happening in the soil around the base of your trees, why it's important, and how to stay ahead of problems.



## Stay Tuned...

The Barrington Pollinator Pathway is hosting its first ever garden tour this September! Open house? Pollineighbor event? Whatever we call it (we can't make up our minds!), it won't be your traditional garden tour. Expect lots of talking and sharing with garden hosts about native plants, the lasagna method, and what plants just didn't survive the season in your garden. We're aiming for a mid September event, so stay tuned for details!



The Barrington Land Conservation Trust is still hard at work planning a native wildflower meadow for the Johannis Farm Wildlife Refuge. Approximately three quarters of an acre of the entire meadow is being prepped for planting in the fall. If you're interested in helping us seed the meadow in October, please contact us at [pollinatorpathways@blct.org](mailto:pollinatorpathways@blct.org).

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 [pollinatorpathways@blct.org](mailto:pollinatorpathways@blct.org)



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