

Buzzings

Summer 2021



Hello to our Pollinator Planting friends! Are you enjoying time outdoors and witnessing pollinators among your native plantings? Blossoms continue to unveil themselves and it's hard to peel ourselves away to go indoors! As your own gardens come to life, please email us a photo or two that we might share with other pollinator-happy friends on our Facebook page or webpage.

Are you ready to Bee part of the Pollinator Pathway?

Your yard is a "mini-ecosystem" and the perfect stop for birds and insects; but it also plays a crucial role in the larger ecology of Old Lyme and beyond. Your home pollinator haven is welcomed to join the Pollinator Pathway Northeast.

Once you have added native plants to your yard and eliminated pesticides, you can add your own property to the national map by filling out the form here:

<https://www.emailmeform.com/builder/form/1ucl5O6ohay8> which is part of www.pollinator-pathway.org.

Now it's time to announce your part in this national effort with a Pollinator Pathway lawn medallion! Available through *Pollinate Old Lyme*, these 6" metal medallions are easy to display in your garden or yard. Email us at PollinateOldLyme@gmail.com or watch for other emails announcing where we'll be this summer selling the medallions for \$10 each.



Bee Busy This Summer

What to do this summer to make the most of your pollinator-friendly landscape?

Stroll the Streets. In addition to the public garden spaces we share below, check out your neighborhoods and open spaces for these native trees and shrubs in bloom including Mountain Laurel (*Kalmia*) growing naturally in preserves, as well as Ninebark, Rhododendrons and Azaleas in landscapes. What might you want to plant this Fall?

Don't Deadhead Your Blooms Yet! We want to leave the seed heads for birds to enjoy later. Native flowers budding and blooming in the coming days include

Penstemon, Lupines, Beebalm, Yarrow, Joe Pye, Rudbeckia, Coneflowers, Milkweeds, Mountain Mint, Anise Hyssop.

Water Strategically. Aim to give your plants one inch of water per week. Newly-planted annuals, perennials, shrubs and trees need deep and thorough waterings through the summer. Remember to check containers more often, they dry out quicker, water as needed.

Minimize the Weed Seeds. Snip off weeds at ground level so they don't overshadow your flower beds or go to seed. No need to pull weeds up by the roots – this can stir up more weed seeds in the soil. Keep removing invasive species, too, see CT River Coastal Conservation District's Invasive Plants in Your Backyard, 2020 expanded edition https://www.conservect.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Invasives_guide_2020_web.pdf and help Nix the Knotweed around town.



Leave the Mowing an Extra Week. Mow your grass only when needed, and set your mower 3 inches or taller. Leave the grass clippings on your lawn as a natural fertilizer. You can also save water by letting your lawn go dormant – once temperatures get into the 80s, our cool season grasses naturally turn brown. They will green up when cooler temperatures and more moisture return in the fall. See “Bee Ready for Fall Lawn Care” below for Tom Christopher's expert lawn care advice.

Discourage Mosquitos. Bats and tree swallows love to snack on mosquitos, but keep these pesky insects at bay by remembering to drain standing water in containers and refresh your bird baths every few days.

Activities for Chicks in the Nest

We encourage families across Old Lyme to participate in *Pollinate Old Lyme!* Visit the Pollinator public spaces around town, create a special pollinator space in your yard, and learn more about butterflies, birds and insects that help us to produce the world's food supply.

Lymes' Youth Service Bureau recently offered a fun pollinator-themed playgroup called Pollinator Superheroes. Fun crafts included creating butterfly toys, using cheese powder to simulate pollen, creating pompom hummingbirds, planting some hummingbird-friendly plants, and making a bee bath to bring home.



In conjunction with the Lyme Pollinator Pathway and the Lyme Land Trust, LYSB offers a four-part series "Bee Lyme to Spring 2022." Join the fun beginning Saturday July 10th with a Wildflower Seed Bomb-Making Workshop, then continue the fun with three additional events over the course of the next 12 months leading up to a Pollinator Meadow Celebration! Learn more details at LYSB.org .

Town Wide Pollinating!

Check out the pollinator havens and gardens across Old Lyme and get ideas for your own landscape:

Old Lyme Land Trust/Watch Rock: With help from the High School's Environmental Group, the OLLT recently planted milkweed in a sunny spot at Watch Rock. A pathway sign (photo) will alert you to the milkweed patch.



Haines Park/Rogers Lake: The Rudbeckia will be blossoming soon at this Riparian Buffer garden meant to protect against erosion and improve water quality by helping filter pollution and sediments from runoff entering the Lake. New additions to the plantings include Woodland aster, Beebalm, and Boneset. Stop by to see this lakeside garden.



The Artists' Trail at Florence Griswold Museum: Be sure to check out the Artists' Trail, open to the public, for an ever-abundant display of native plants, including the recent Kalmia blossoms alongside Eastern hay-scented fern (see photo at left).

Lyme Art Association Check out the native plantings including cattails, elderberry (see photo at right), grey & silky dogwoods and woodland asters along the banks of the Mile Brook.



Cross Lane Wildlife Garden: Planted by the LOL Junior Women's Club and Duck River Garden Club, enjoy the blooming perennials along the playground fence: baptisia, echinacea, fleabane, coreopsis. Shrubs include red chokeberry, arrowwood viburnum, and witchhazel.

Old Lyme Police Station: A sunny spot by the flagpole, this Duck River Garden Club civic beautification site combines sunny annuals with pollinator plants: yarrow, New England asters and little bluestem grass.

Coming Soon:

Lyme-Old Lyme Food Share Garden/Town Woods: The volunteers working to create a vegetable garden to support local food banks have in their plans a pollinator meadow along the garden fencing. Right now the field is awash in an array of flora including Monarch-friendly milkweed as well as some invasive species such as Mugwort.

Roger Tory Peterson Estuary Center: Watch for updates on future activities and pollinator plantings on the grounds of the Estuary's future home at 100 Lyme Street.

Putting Knotweed to Good Use

Ingenuity at its best! Suzanne Thompson and her gang of volunteers have been nixing Knotweed around town including at the Lyme Art Association, where volunteers are in "Year Two" of

Knotweed eradication. Stem cuttings as small as ½ inch can sprout into new plants, so volunteers are solarizing the Knotweed cuttings in plastic bags and between tarps or plastic sheeting. The L-OL Food Share Garden meanwhile needs to rid its future garden space of invasive Mugwort. Solution for both!



Food Garden volunteers are smothering their site's Mugwort with LAA's solarizing Knotweed cuttings and coverings, eliminating two invasive plants at once!

To learn more about Nix the Knotweed's three-step organic control process done over three years, see the Nix the Knotweed brochure emailed to you along with this newsletter, and be sure to follow the program on Facebook at "NixTheKnotweed."

Bee Ready for Fall Lawn Care

Fall is the best time to seed/reseed a lawn, so now is the time to start planning how to create a more sustainable lawn. Special thanks to **Tom Christopher** who spoke to us all via Zoom on April 14th about Pollinator-Friendly Lawns. Here are his great lawn and grass tips from that presentation:

Start with a soil test/nutrient analysis. Mail in samples to the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station for a free analysis:

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/CAES/DOCUMENTS/Publications/Brochures/CAES-Soil-Testing-Trifold-Brochure_Web.pdf

UConn Soil Analysis Lab - \$12, <https://soiltest.uconn.edu/sampling.php>

Learn how to “read your weeds” in your lawn. See what soil conditions & practices contribute to them. Great sources can be found at:
<https://www.beyondpesticides.org>

Consider an alternative grass in fescues. If your goal is to have a lawn that uses less nitrogen and water than the typical Kentucky Blue Grass (“KBG”)-Perennial Ryegrass lawn, try reseeding or overseeding with these alternative grasses. Choose them based on your sun/shade, soil type and moisture requirements:



- Fine Fescues – tolerant of part-shade to shady sites, less tolerant of foot traffic, can be mowed as few as 3 times/season. Low fertility, drought resistant, do well in poor soils, needs lighter soils, not heavy or compacted. Naturally grows up to 6 inches tall and flops over. Look for chewings, creeping red and hard fescues.
- Sheep Fescue - *Festuca Ovina*, ‘azay blue’ is naturally compact. Sheep Fescue can be mowed only once a month and never needs watering unless a severe drought.
- Turf Type Tall Fescues – full sun, hold up well under foot traffic and playing fields, need ½ fertilizer of typical KBG lawn. For high-traffic areas where you want a sturdy turf.(Fescues photo by Tom Christopher).
- Rough Bluegrass, *Poa trivialis* – Although some golf courses consider it a weed, this grass grows well in damp, compacted soils.

Reseed with grass seed mixes for healthier lawns: Look for mixes with at least 3 different grass cultivars. Add in up to 5 percent white clover, a nitrogen-fixing legume. Ask for seed that has been treated with Endophytes, a beneficial fungus that will gives grasses some insect and disease resistance. The Chas. C. Hart Seed Company, Wethersfield, CT, offers multiple low fertilizer, drought-tolerant grass seed mixes. See Harts Turf Pro <https://hartsturfpro.com>

Consider Ornamental Grasses and Groundcovers where turf isn’t needed. In low-traffic areas where you don’t need turf, change out your lawn for these ornamental grasses and groundcovers that don’t need frequent mowing and can support pollinators:

- Purple love grass, *Eragrostis spectabilis* – ornamental, reddish seed
- Sedges in part to full shade areas, native to eastern US: *Carex albacans*, white-tinged sedge; *Carex plantaganacae*, Seersucker sedge, *Carex woodii*, *Carex pensylvanica*. Grubs do not like sedges.
- Bluets, *Houstonia caerulea* – spring-blooming flower

See more writings & advice and get Tom’s Growing Greener Podcasts at
www.thomaschristophergardens.com

Check out a Pollinator Garden Tour

The Pollinator Pathway organizations in Guilford and Branford are planning a joint pollinator garden tour free to the public on Saturday, June 26th, from 10am to 2 pm. More information will follow on the "Pollinator Pathways of Guilford and Branford" Facebook page or email GuilfordPollinatorPathways@gmail.com.

Rainy Day Learning

Some days (and late nights!) are meant for inside reading and learning. Here are some great resources for adding to the sustainability of your pollinator landscape:

- **June is National Pollinator Month!** Check out lots of tips and an upcoming talk by Doug Tallamy from Garden for Wildlife by the National Wildlife Federation: <https://us.e-activist.com/page/email?mid=8ef1c87c5c964548b6ea685dff8f1e4e>
- **Save the Sound's May 26 Healthy Yards webinar:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8h9eWhDTpG8>
- **Septic Friendly Plants for Your Yard:** <https://www.wrenvironmental.com/septic-friendly-plants-for-your-yard/>
- Remember, **Pollinate Old Lyme! has its own YouTube channel** – check it out and watch past workshops including our ABC's of Pollinator Plants with the RTPEC Audubon Society: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrUmWw2vutOB3jc8mY_lkRw

Help Spread the Word!

We appreciate and need your help in spreading the buzz across Old Lyme! Recruit your neighbors and friends; engage your book club to learn more; invite Old Lyme friends to "like" our Facebook page. We value saving paper; but, if you have a friend or neighbor who doesn't have computer access, please consider sharing with them a print-out of this newsletter.

Send us your questions at PollinateOldLyme@gmail.com or post them to our Facebook page and we will provide the answer or help find someone who will know the answer!

Pollinate Old Lyme! is organized and led by the Board of Selectmen's Sustainable Old Lyme Team. Sustainable Old Lyme is responsible for documenting and leading initiatives as part of the Sustainable CT certification process. *Pollinate Old Lyme!* Co-Leads are Suzanne Thompson and Cheryl Poirier. To contact us, email PollinateOldLyme@gmail.com. The *Buzzings* newsletter was created for *Pollinate Old Lyme!*

