AUGUST 2025

*Native Rosa virginiana, not to be confused with non-native Rosa rugosa.

Sustainable Plymouth

SUSTAINING PLYMOUTH

Your yard has an important role in

Sweet Joe Pye Weed

> "What if each American landowner made it a goal to convert half of his or her lawn to productive native plant communities? Even moderate success could collectively restore some semblance of ecosystem function to more than twenty million acres of what is now ecological wasteland... bigger than the combined areas of the Everglades, Yellowstone, Yosemite, Grand Teton, Canyonlands, Mount Rainier, North Cascades, Badlands, Olympic, Sequoia, Grand Canyon, Denali, and the Great Smoky Mountains National Parks."
>
> — ***Doug Tallamy,***
> *Entomologist, Ecologist, Conservationist, Professor & Author*
> *Co-founder of Homegrown National Park movement*
> *homegrownnationalpark.org*

Learn More

Sustainable Plymouth
SustainablePlymouth.org

Ecological Landscape Alliance
EcoLandscaping.org

Native Plant Trust
NativePlantTrust.org

Pollinator Pathway
pollinator-pathway.org/towns/plymouth

LOCAL NURSERIES

- **Blue Stem Natives**
  376 Washington St Rear, Norwell
- **Blue View Nurseries**
  200 Bay Rd, Norton
- **Crystal Lake Garden Shop**
  252 Summer Street, Plymouth
- **Kennedy's Country Gardens**
  85 Chief Justice Cushing Hwy, Scituate
- **Mahoney's Garden Center**
  Multiple locations
- **Morrison's Home & Garden**
  90 Long Pond Rd, Plymouth
- **Sylvan Nursery**
  1028 Horseneck Rd, Westport
- **Tree Talk Natives**
  163 Vaughan Hill Rd, Rochester

NATIVE SEED SOURCES:

- **Ernst Conservation Seeds**
  www.ernstseed.com
- **New England Wetland Plants**
  www.newp.com
- **Wild Seed Project**
  www.wildseedproject.net

Sustainable Plymouth

North and South Rivers Watershed Association Greenscapes

Wild Ones South Shore MA Chapter

Tips for Home Owners

Native Plants Recommended for Homeowners and Planners

Cape Cod Native Plantings

Special Thanks to Love Albrecht Howard of A.H. Love Design/Build

WHAT CAN WE DO?

FIVE CHOICES

you can make to help sustain Plymouth

1. RETHINK YOUR LAWN - YOU DO NOT NEED TO LOSE IT ENTIRELY!

- Shrink the size of your lawn and replace it with gardens that support wildlife and require far less water and labor.
- Lawns do not support pollinators or birds.
- Lawns are highly water intensive–so much so that our Summer water demands can be TWICE as much as our Winter water use.
- Lawn chemicals used to control weeds and insects are toxic to a wide variety of living organisms including birds, insects, fish, humans and pets, and they pollute lakes, streams and groundwater.
- Fertilizers pollute groundwater and wetlands and cause algae blooms to our ponds and lakes.
- Consider top-dressing lawns with compost in lieu of fertilizer or a combination of compost and loam, then overseeding.

2. PLANT NATIVES & LEAVE THE LEAVES

- Plant native ground covers that require less water and no chemicals.
- Participate in "*Leave the Leaves*" in the Fall and "*No Mow May*" in the Spring.
- Mow HIGH (at like ~4 inches), mow only when the lawn is dry, and with sharpened blades on your mower.Leave grass clippings for free fertilizer!
- Plant native pollinator friendly trees, shrubs and perennials. They require less water, and provide shade and moderate temperatures.
- Avoid cutting down mature trees – trees are our best line of defense for climate resiliency, and they cool the areas around our homes.
- Consider the 'cardboard method' for transitioning from lawn to gardens.*(This method involves layering cardboard over existing grass, then adding a layer of mulch, effectively smothering the lawn and creating a nutrient-rich base for new plants.)*
- Using native plants is like a natural bird feeder. It takes ~ 15,000 caterpillars to raise a clutch of baby birds!

3. AVOID USING CHEMICALS

- Pesticides are intentionally toxic. They are designed to kill – and these toxins are unhealthy for us, our children and our pets, too. Use natural and chemical-free alternatives.
- A yard free of fertilizers, pesticides, fungicides and insecticides is a healthy one that welcomes children, pets and wildlife, and won't contribute to nutrient pollution, cancer, etc.

4. MANAGE STORMWATER

- Protect water quality by minimizing use of impervious surfaces (like pavement) so rain and snow melt can slowly soak into the ground and recharge our aquifer.
- Plant buffers of vegetation between the lawn and the street or between your active spaces and nearby wetlands. This intercepts rainwater and helps absorb nutrients before runoff reaches our fragile wetlands.
- Harvest rainwater in a rain barrel from a gutter downspout for use in your garden.
- Install a rain garden to capture water runoff.

5. REMOVE INVASIVE PLANTS

Invasive Plants: The 'Dirty Dozen' of Plymouth Identification & Control

PUT UP A SIGN TO HELP EDUCATE YOUR NEIGHBORS ON YOUR EFFORTS!

SUSTAINING OUR LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

Asclepias tuberosa or Butterfly weed

DID YOU KNOW?

- Per multiple studies, insect populations have fallen roughly 75% since the year 2000; some bumblebee species have dropped 96%.
- North American bird populations have dropped by 3 billion birds since 1970 – a 25% drop due to loss of food sources, loss of habitat and use of toxins in our landscapes.
- We are living in a drier, hotter world with more frequent droughts and wildfires.
- Flooding is in the news more and more as we experience drenching rains in shorter, more violent bursts.

WHAT ARE POLLINATORS AND WHY ARE THEY SO IMPORTANT?

- Birds, bees, butterflies, moths, beetles, bats, and other animals that pollinate plants are responsible for bringing us one out of every three bites of our food.
- Pollinators sustain our ecosystems by moving pollen from plant-to-plant so flowering plants are fertilized, and they can set seed and reproduce.
- You can easily contribute to Plymouth's growing pollinator pathway with even a small green space, window boxes, planters and pots, etc.

AMERICA'S BIGGEST CROP: NON-NATIVE LAWN

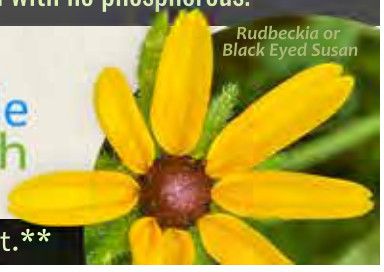
Over 40 million acres of land in the continental US is lawn – this represents an enormous opportunity for transformation to support local ecosystems.
Our common grass lawns do nothing to support biodiversity – in fact, they reduce it. Turf grasses have shallow roots and require huge amounts of water to maintain. Grass also consumes an outsized amount of energy for weekly maintenance, and gas-powered mowers and blowers cause air and noise pollution.

EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED.

Water is precious. Our groundwater is the source of our drinking water and is replenished solely by the rain and snow that soak into the ground. Groundwater ultimately flows to the ocean, so whatever enters the groundwater – or gets carried into ponds, lakes and streams by stormwater runoff – eventually enters the ocean. Nutrients from fertilizers and other chemicals also fuel unhealthy algal blooms in our coastal waterways and trigger toxic cyanobacteria blooms in our freshwater ponds.

TIPS

- When purchasing plants, ask your local nurseries for 'non cultivars' to get straight native species. And match plant to place!
- When adding soil, use a compost-loam blend for optimal results.
- Mulch your gardens to minimize weeds and maintain moisture. Best mulches are an application of compost or leaving the leaves for a nutrient-rich, chemical-free, beneficial top-dressing.
- If you're having a hard time transitioning away from fertilizer, consider slow-release or controlled-release nitrogen with no phosphorous.



Rudbeckia or Black Eyed Susan

Sustainable Plymouth

Thank you to the Association to Preserve Cape Cod for the inspiration for this pamphlet.