

Learn How to Convert Lawn to a Native Plant Pollinator Garden

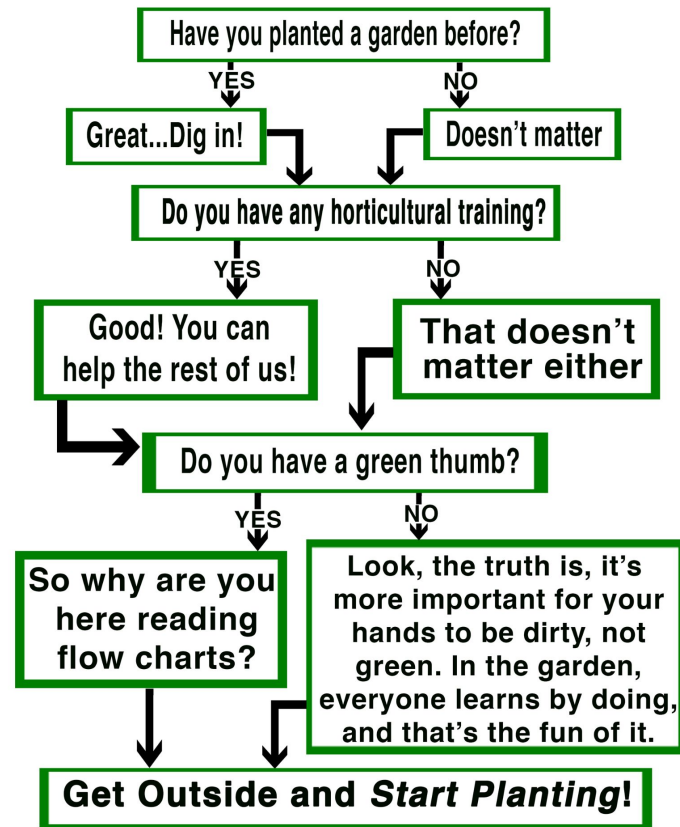


July 9th, 2024
Bob Finkelstein, Co-President

TODAY'S DISCUSSION

1. It's your yard, decide what is right for you.
2. Take the first steps
3. Location & Conditions
4. Plant Selection
5. Preparation
6. Planting
7. Mulching
8. Maintenance
9. You Can Do It!
10. One Month Later

Should I Plant a Garden?



PRETTY BORING

Lawn alternatives, like flower meadows, are not just prettier; they also restore biodiversity and help us in our fight against the climate crisis.

PRETTY

- Native plants do not require fertilizers and rarely pesticides
- Require less water and deep roots increase soil capacity to store water
- Can help reduce runoff and flooding
- Reduce air pollution - do not require mowing and can sequester carbon
- Provide shelter and food for wildlife
- Promote biodiversity and environmental stewardship

BORING

→ Mowers / Blowers/ Trimmers / Fertilizers /
Herbicides / Water / Maintenance / Environmental
Contamination / \$\$\$\$\$\$

TEN HEALTHY YARD PRACTICES

- Mow High and Water Less
- Avoid Pesticides and Herbicides
- Avoid Chemical Fertilizers
- Use Electric Equipment
- Leave the Leaves / Mulch Grass and Leaves
- Choose Native Plants
- Cover and Amend Soil Naturally
- Remove Invasives
- Reduce Lawn Surface
- Keep It Dark at Night

[Ten Healthy Steps – Healthy Yards](#)

TAKE THE FIRST STEPS

Tonight's presentation will demonstrate transforming about 75 square feet of lawn into a "Do It Yourself" pollinator garden.



Our first lawn transformation 2021 where a tree was removed. The area was covered in chips from stump grinding. We enlarged the area, added soil, and deeply rototilled to mix in the soil. Cardboard and mulched.

GETTING STARTED

Starting a native and / or pollinator garden can feel like an overwhelming task.

Resources - Budget and Time: A large scale project can be expensive.

- Conceptual Plan - \$500, Detailed Plan - \$2,000+, Plants / Installation - \$7,000+

Start small - even a few plants can make a difference

- Take out an area of lawn or expand an existing bed
- Visit the homes of local native gardeners to see plants and layouts
- Talk with a HYNR “Garden Buddy” or local native plant enthusiast
- Take your time and learn as you grow

About 75 square feet: Plants \$300, mulch \$50, Cardboard free, time - hours to a few days.

[Healthy Yards New Rochelle \(healthyyardsnr.org\)](https://healthyyardsnr.org)

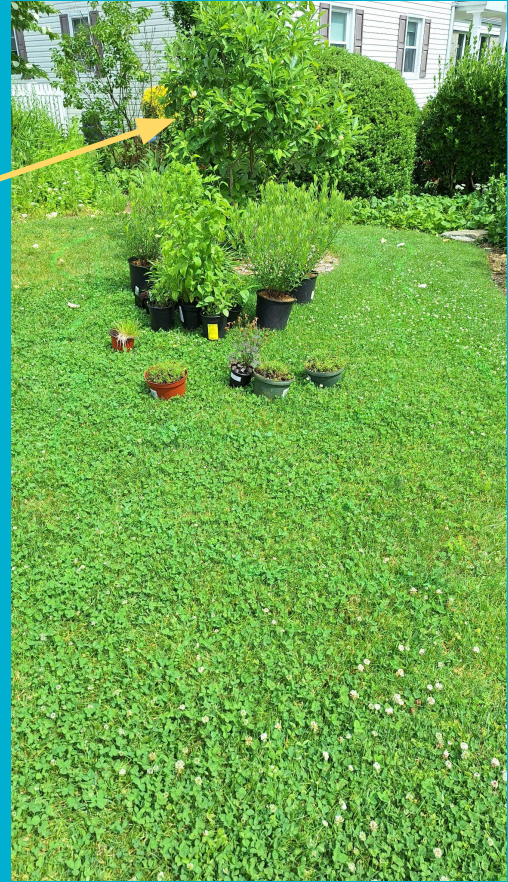
[Native Garden Guide](#)

[Native Plant Pollinator Garden Templates \(howardnature.org\)](https://howardnature.org)

LOCATION & CONDITIONS

Observe yard different times during the day / seasons

1. Planned around anchor plant - Sweet Bay Magnolia
2. Evaluate sun vs shade:
 - a. Full sun almost all day
3. Look at soil condition: Sandy / Silt / Clay?
 - a. Compacted clay
 - b. Poor quality fill
4. Wet vs Dry:
 - a. Dry
5. Slope:
 - a. May need to add erosion control such a degradable jut
6. Soil test?



LOCATION & CONDITIONS

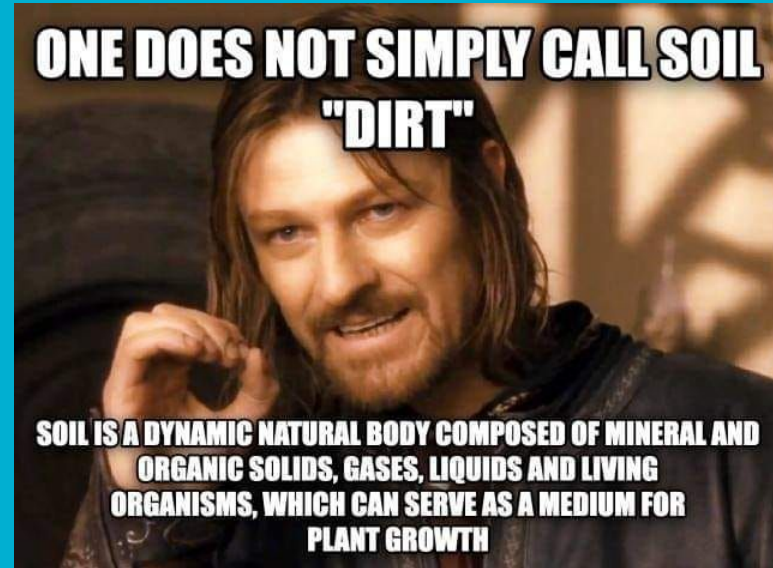
Soil is a living body

Soil Conditions: UMASS Amherst Testing Lab

[Services: Soil and Plant Nutrient Testing Laboratory | Center for Agriculture, Food, and the Environment at UMass Amherst](#)

Routine Analysis (\$20) Organic Matter (\$6)
Soluble Salts (\$6) Nitrate (\$8), pH, Toxic
metals

In general, if lawn is growing and no fertilizers
or herbicides have been added it may be OK
to proceed with planting.



PREPARATION



- Conditions - full sun, heavily compacted clay, dry
- Mark area of lawn that will be transformed
 - I marked the area 3 times over the period of a few weeks to get a feel for how it will look
- Decide which method to use for prep:
 - No dig - cardboard / compost / mulch
 - 6 weeks to 6 months
 - Lawn under cover may or may not compost well
- Remove grass layer
 - Scrape with a pick or shovel
 - Rototill grass layer, about 2 to 3 inches
 - Cardboard / mulch

Rake out rototilled grass and level area



PLANT SELECTION

I wanted to try a few early blooming plants not previously used. Sources: NPCenter WCC Sale, Rosedale Nursery. Weaver Gardens in Larchmont also has a nice selection. Many other nurseries, I shop local.

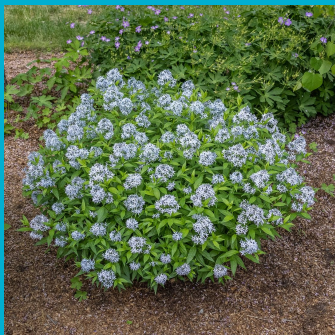
Blazing Star - *Liatris spicata*:

- Blooms July - November
- Full sun
- 2 to 6 feet tall



Blue Star - *Amsonia* *Tabernaemontana Fontana*:

- Blooms May - June
- Full sun to partial shade
- 1 to 2 feet tall



New Jersey Tea - *Ceanothus americanus*:

- Blooms March - August
- Sun to part shade
- about 3 feet tall



Pennsylvania Sedge - *Carex Pensylvanica*:

- Blooms May - July
- Sun to shade
- 6 to 12 inches tall



PLANT SELECTION

Creeping Phlox "Fort Hill" - *Phlox subulata*:

- Blooms March - June
- Sun to part shade
- About 8 inches tall



Moss Phlox - *Phlox subulata*:

- Blooms March - May
- Sun
- About 3 to 6 inches tall



Wild Bergamot (Bee Balm) - *Monarda punctata*:

- Blooms April - September
- Sun
- 6 inches to 3 feet tall



Wild Columbine "Little Lanterns" - *Aquilegia canadensis*:

- Blooms February - July
- Part shade to shade
- Up to 3 feet tall.



Zigzag Goldenrod - *Solidago flexicaulis*:

- Blooms July - October
- Sun to shade
- 1 to 4 feet tall

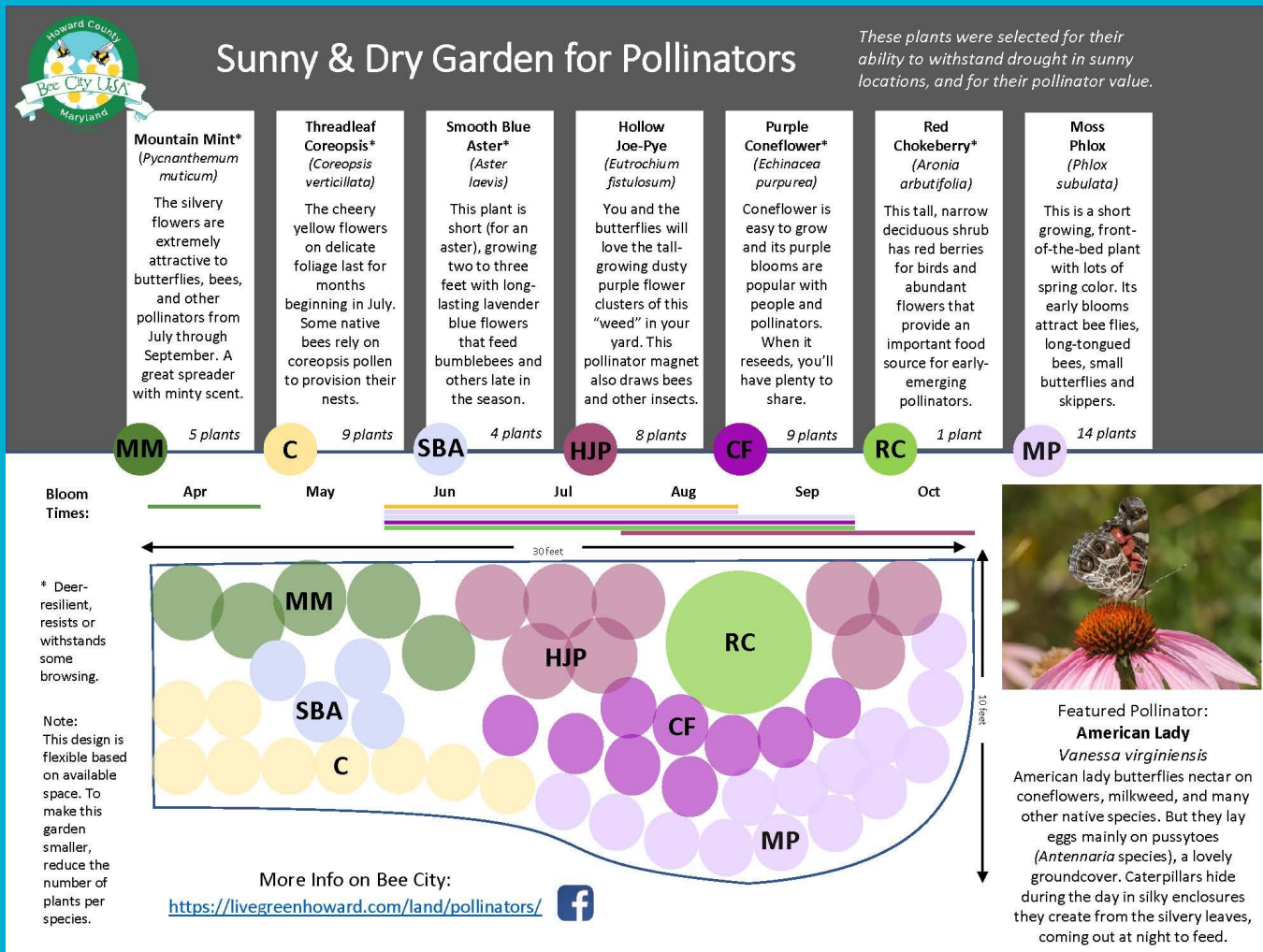


Howard County Maryland - Bee City

Example Templates

Native Plant Pollinator
Garden Templates
(howardnature.org)

Talk to us!
HYNR Garden
Buddy



PLANTING



- Set cardboard before or after plant placement
- 1-3-5 Method
- Arrange in groups
- Linear or nonlinear
- Group consensus

PLANTING



- Cut holes in cardboard
- Dig reasonable size holes
- Carefully remove plant from containers
- No amendments



Great team effort!

CARDBOARD CONTROVERSIES

There are numerous pro and con articles as to whether or not use cardboard due to the presence of toxic materials. To minimize their potential presence it is suggested:

- Use clean cardboard / brown boxes because they retain the natural color of tree pulp
- Remove tape, labels, and staples
- Avoid heavily printed, coated, and corrugated cardboard
- Avoid white or boxes with colors that may contain bleach or dioxin
- Cardboard from U.S. less likely to have hazardous levels of chemical present
- Olive oil test: Observe Olive oil after 1 minute for soaking in



MULCHING



- Double Hammered Hardwood Mulch - lightweight, knits together well
- Cover 2 to 3 inches deep
- Durable, re-mulch as necessary
- Leaves or compost also good; avoid dyed mulches and chips, Sweet peet

ALMOST THERE



- Finish mulching
- Clean up edges
- Review:
 - What did I want to accomplish?
 - Significant planning
 - Marked area several times
 - Researched plant choices
 - Go for it!

MAINTENANCE



- Water well and as necessary, be careful not to overwater
- Little maintenance required - touch up mulch, weed, Spring clean-up
- We do our own garden work using electric powered or hand tools

YOU CAN DO IT!



BEFORE



AFTER

Have fun

Take your time

Learn and grow

Be proud of your accomplishment

Thank you “team”
and special thank you to:

- Stefanie DuBois
- Natali Meytin
- Mark Napier

ONE MONTH LATER...



Looks nice and neighbors
compliment front garden
areas

Good growth

Overwatering Goldenrod?

Possible replacements:

Blazing star

Moss phlox

Penn sedge



THANK YOU!

Find us on Facebook
[Healthy Yards New Rochelle](#)

Our email address:
healthyyardsnr@gmail.com