



HEALTHY YARDS NEW ROCHELLE

healthyyardsnr@gmail.com

Welcome to the MARCH / APRIL 2023 ISSUE of our Healthy Yards New Rochelle (HYNR) newsletter. Our purpose is to provide information for creating healthy and sustainable yards in New Rochelle. We welcome participants who are new to healthy gardening as well as experienced gardeners.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

In addition to our members opening their gardens for tours starting in the spring, we are working with the New Rochelle Library to begin a series of presentations either virtually or in person. Our first presentation will be:

UNDERSTANDING PESTICIDE RISKS: Protecting Your Health and Your Yard Click on Link to Register:

[Virtual Program - Understanding Pesticide Risks: Protecting your Health and Your Yard | New Rochelle Public Library \(librarycalendar.com\)](https://www.librarycalendar.com)

VIRTUAL

New Rochelle Public Library
www.nrpl.org

HEALTHY YARDS NEW ROCHELLE
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**UNDERSTANDING PESTICIDE RISKS:
PROTECTING YOUR HEALTH AND YOUR YARD**

Wednesday, March 29
7:00 pm

Many commonly used chemicals by homeowners and gardeners may cause serious health effects in children, adults, and pets. In this virtual presentation, you will hear the latest science on how common pesticides impact health, children's unique vulnerability, and steps that families can take to reduce pesticide exposures.

Presented by Sarah Evans, PhD MPH, Assistant Professor of Environmental Medicine and Public Health Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

Presented in collaboration with Healthy Yards New Rochelle

Registration required at:
bit.ly/Pesticides_03_2023

@NRPUBLICLIBRARY @N.R.P.L @NRPLIBRARY
1 Library Plaza, New Rochelle, NY 10801 | nrpl.org | info@nrpl.org | (914) 632-7878

April 22nd Noon to 4:00 PM: Please join us at the 2023 **SUSTAINABLENR EARTH DAY FESTIVAL** to be held at the unveiling of **New Ro PARC Plaza** in downtown New Rochelle between the Library and New Roc City. The event will include tables hosted by HYNR, the Lincoln Park Conservancy, Ward Acres Garden as well as 20 other vendors and displays. Activities will also be present for children. Details to follow.



Bob Finkelstein's native varieties small garden area

Email us a picture of your garden for our newsletter!

ASK THE HEALTHY GARDENER

When Should I Start My Native Garden Cleanup?

Do not clean up your winter-killed landscape too soon. Insects in various stages of life use our gardens to overwinter; some winter as adults, while others seek refuge as larvae or eggs.

Do not clear or cut back plant material until temperatures are consistently above 50 degrees overnight. These warmer temperatures will stimulate



insect activity, including eggs to hatch, larvae to emerge and butterflies or moths, cleverly mimicking plant parts, to erupt from their camouflaged chrysalis.



An ecosystem of pollinators seek refuge in every garden. Modify your cleanup to keep them around. Pollinators may be seeking refuge in your garden at this moment. Some species overwinter at the base of its host

plants such as black-eyed Susan's, coneflowers, and sunflowers. Caterpillars that matured by the end of last season are likely seeking refuge too. If you spot a chrysalis, attached to, or near the stem of these host plants, it needs to remain undisturbed so the butterfly can develop properly. *Pictured Eastern Comma.*

In addition to butterflies, various species of bees, including carpenter bees, overwinter in the pith of stems. In the early spring, as the bees wake up and seek suitable stems for nesting, their presence can be encouraged by gardeners cutting the tips of stems which open them up for easier entry. To encourage spring egg laying, cut stems back to a height of 12-18 inches. Snipped-off foliage, which will still be harboring some nesting bees, should be chopped into large chunks and spread around the garden, instead of being composted.



In late spring, dead stems could be cut to the ground, but if left in place, new foliage will cover these dead stems and your garden will become a year-round haven to the bees. Spring clean-up that consists of cutting down and removing materials suitable for cavity-nesting disrupts the 30 percent of native bees that nest above-ground. When cleaning up your garden this season, consider leaving plant stems which are favorites for native bees: asters, goldenrods, thistles, bergamot, black-eyed Susan, and coneflowers.

The rest of our native bees are overwintering in the ground and will emerge when spring weather warms. Delay spring mulching which inhibits the emergence of wonderful spring-flower pollinators. Credit University of Illinois Extension March 18, 2022, Haig and Frillman.

Additional information about spring clean-up may be found at [For Pollinators' Sakes, Don't Spring into Garden Cleanup Too Soon! | Xerces Society](#)

HELLSTRIPS By Theresa Beyer

What do you call that forlorn bit of land between the sidewalk and the street? I have heard it called the verge, the parking strip, and the tree lawn, but my favorite term is the hellstrip, which was coined by American horticulturalist Lauren Springer Ogden in her 1994 book *The Undaunted Garden: Planting for Weather-Resilient Beauty*. Hellstrips are often hotter and drier than other garden areas as they are exposed to the sun, the sidewalk, and the street. Hellstrips are usually owned by the city but are required to be maintained by the property owner.

As public spaces, they need to account for possible foot traffic, trash, dog waste, piles of snow, road salt, automobile exhaust, compacted soil, and the occasional bicycle. Luckily, there are lots of native species that can tolerate much of this abuse. If you are new to gardening with native plants this is a perfect place to start as the space is small and well defined.

In New Rochelle Section 197 of the Municipal Code covers what your rights and responsibilities are regarding these spaces. Important points:

- No tree shall be planted where the clear space between the curb and the sidewalk is less than three feet nor within 20 feet of an intersection.
- Grass, reeds, or rank vegetation is not allowed to be higher than six inches, and noxious weeds such as ragweed and poison ivy are not allowed.

- Shrubs and hedges are allowed, but they must be under three feet tall (even on your own property) if you are on a corner lot within the triangle measuring back 20 feet from the intersecting corners of each right-of-way.

Last fall the Pelham chapter of Healthy Yards met up to look at using sedges in hellstrips. Tai Montanarella, has been experimenting with several different sedges. You can check them out at 464 Esplanade. Sedges are a grasslike plant in the genus *Carex* with triangular stems. Most are not very tall and don't need mowing, though some of the non-clumping varieties can be mowed. They can take moderate foot traffic once established.

So, what sedges might you consider? It depends on your growing conditions and what appeals to you. Those native to more boggy areas prefer moisture, while others are fine with dry soil. Most are quite shade tolerant, but some will tolerate sun. Some spread by rhizomes and can be used like grass while others form discrete clumps.

If you have part or full shade and dry to average soil, consider *Carex pensylvanica* or Pennsylvania sedge. It is a popular lawn alternative. It fills in to form a dense turf that doesn't need mowing.

If you prefer the clumping sedges and have a dry area, consider *Carex brevior* or Shortbeak sedge and likes sun, or *Carex eburnean* or Ivory sedge which prefers some shade and is short enough to plant between pavers.

Carex albicans or White tinged sedge is very drought tolerant and likes some shade.

Clumping sedges that do well with more moisture and some shade include *Carex amphibola* or Creek Sedge, which is a host plant for Skipper caterpillars. *Carex bromodes* or Brome sedge likes light shade, even moisture and it also hosts a number of caterpillars.

You could also try *Carex plantaginea* or Plantain leaf sedge which has wider leaves than the other sedges.

These are only a few of the many sedges that grow in this area. Tai says, "my sedge hero has been *Carex amphibola*. It likes moist and shady conditions and is semi-evergreen and pretty much has self-seeded successfully to all other conditions" making it "a strong, green, ground covering mulch." A good source for learning about sedges is website of The Mount Cuba Center which recently completed a four-year study of sedges. You can check it out at: <https://mtcubacenter.org/trials/carex-for-the-mid-atlantic-region/> Sedges are hard to find in local nurseries, one online source is izelplants.com.





ENRAC and CITY of NEW ROCHELLE

New Rochelle's Ecology and Natural Resources Advisory Committee (ENRAC) plays an important role with the City of New Rochelle's 2023 initiatives identified below. If these are of interest to you, please email HealthyYardsNR@gmail.com.

Updating of the original 2010 GreenNR sustainability plan is underway. This update will emphasize climate action and environmental justice, and increased alignment with state and federal climate action opportunities.

The Climate Vulnerability Assessment (CVA) will soon begin by gathering local input to identify climate hazards and the risks posed to community resources. The CVA will also feature a natural resources inventory and a resilience hub assessment. The City was awarded technical assistance from HUD for the CVA to support the City's engagement of vulnerable populations including seniors, low-income households, and residents for whom English is not their primary language.

Sustainable landscaping will be demonstrated at three "Green Zones" at New Rochelle city parks this year in partnership with the American Green Zone Alliance (AGZA) and others.

New Rochelle will begin the evaluation of policies for climate resiliency that focuses on extreme heat, resilient shorelines and establishing an annual environmental, social, governance reporting framework.

City School District of New Rochelle

The City School District of New Rochelle is moving forward with their Green Schools Initiative to make schools safer, more sustainable, and more energy efficient. The goal is to reduce their carbon footprint and help protect the environment while involving students in learning life-long, environmentally sustainable practices. Raised bed vegetable gardens and native plants will be part of the program.

Jefferson Elementary School Principal Kim Nieves is Co-Chairing the Education Committee along with Nicole Forman. Rod Rolette and Bob Finkelstein will be serving as Education Committee members.

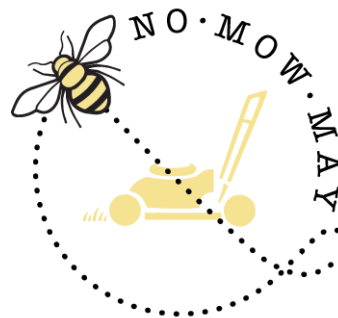
GARDEN BUDDY

[Not sure how to get started or what to do next?](#)

We are here to help and would be happy to designate a [Garden Buddy](#) for you. Your Garden Buddy will be an experienced HYNR volunteer who is looking forward to sharing their expertise and ideas in a no-pressure setting. Let us know if you would like to meet with a Garden Buddy to help you on your way or discuss issues with your mature or growing garden.

NOTES of INTEREST

No Mow May



Coming up No Mow May was first popularized by Plantlife, an organization based in the United Kingdom, but is now gaining traction across North America. The goal of No Mow May is to pause mowing during the month of May, allowing flowers to bloom in your lawn to help early season pollinators.

Beech Leaf Disease

Beech Leaf Disease is present in New Rochelle. BLD affects and kills both native and ornamental beech tree species. It is associated with a nematode, *Litylenchus crenatae mccannii*. This disease has only been discovered in recent years and much about it, including the full cause and how it spreads, is still unknown. To learn more about the disease, how to identify infested trees, control measures, and how to report it click on the following link:

[Beech Leaf Disease - NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation](#)





YARD SIGNS



Yard sign distribution is well under way with 65 signs distributed to date! You can pick up signs at one of our meetings or send an email to HealthyYardsNR@gmail.com. Bob Finkelstein will follow-up with you and can coordinate dropping off a sign at your house. Proudly display your support for healthier yards and our environment.

STAY CURRENT WITH EVENTS

To keep current on events and resources please be sure you are on our email list and check the following resources on a regular basis:

[Healthy Yards New Rochelle | Facebook](#)

[Healthy Yards – Learn How to Change to More Sustainable Landscaping.](#)

[Westchester Pollinators | Facebook](#)



NEW HYNR WEB PAGES

Check out our new Healthy Yards New Rochelle Website and Native Garden Guide developed by Mark Napier. It features general information and links about our group including contact information and resources. Click on the two links to view the sites:

- ✓ [Healthy Yards New Rochelle \(healthyyardsnr.org\)](http://healthyyardsnr.org)
- ✓ [Native Garden Guide](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES LINKS

- ✓ [Healthy Yards New Rochelle | Facebook](#)
- ✓ [Healthy Yards – Learn How to Change to More Sustainable Landscaping.](#)
- ✓ [Westchester Pollinators | Facebook](#)
- ✓ [The Native Plant Center - SUNY Westchester Community College \(sunywcc.edu\)](http://sunywcc.edu)
- ✓ [Planting Westchester \(westchestergov.com\)](http://westchestergov.com)
- ✓ [Native Flowers, Grasses, Shrubs, Trees, and Vines \(ny.gov\)](http://ny.gov)

ABOUT HYNR

[Healthy Yards New Rochelle](#) is here to encourage you to help restore our natural environment while still enjoying a beautiful yard. Learn how to invite pollinators, avoid pesticides, love leaves, use better equipment, plant wisely, go native, have a healthier lawn, and how to discuss healthy practices with your neighbors and landscaper.

- [JOIN our monthly meetings and yard tours, meet knowledgeable people.](#)
- [LEARN about the importance of native plants in supporting pollinators and local fauna.](#)
- [SUPPORT our events and local nurseries.](#)

HYNR STEERING COMMITTEE

HYNR is an organization of New Rochelle residents and neighbors committed to working together to learn about healthy yard practices that protect our environment, children, families, and pets.

We are part of a local and regional movement taking steps to improve our yards and make them safer and healthier. HYNR Business Meetings are held monthly on zoom and are open to everyone. Please let us know if you would like to attend. We welcome your suggestions and participation whether or not you have a particular area of interest. Each meeting's zoom link will be available a couple days before the meeting. For more information email us at HealthyYardsNR@gmail.com.

Amy Ehrlich: Co-President, Treasurer
Bob Finkelstein: Co-President, Newsletter
Theresa Beyer: Communications, Event Coordination
Marilyn Brown: ENRAC, Newsletter
Ruth Bryan: NR Library Coordination, Event Support
Nicole Forman: CSDNR Education Committee Co-Chair, Composting Mentor
M. Genevieve Hitchings: Newsletter Support
Millie Magraw: Editorial Support
Natali Meytin: Communications, Event Coordination
Mark Napier: Website, Help Page Coordinator
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