



Ashford Pollinator Pathway News

By Jennifer Sterling-Folker, May 2024

“THE DOS AND DON'TS OF NATIVE PLANT GARDENING”

Saturday May 18, Rain or Shine

At Westford Hill Distillers

1:00PM tickets sales begin at door (Talk begins 1:30PM)

Tickets \$15/person - cash or check preferred

Includes specialty cocktail, door prizes, light refreshments, & more

A fundraiser for Ashford Garden Club & Pollinator Pathway

Greetings Ashford! I'll be speaking at Westford Hill Distillery on May 18 about my own 20-year, trial-and-error experiences developing a pollinator-friendly, native plant garden here in Ashford. The talk will cover basic mistakes to avoid & procedures to follow when growing native plants for pollinators & wildlife, as well as desirable native trees, shrubs & flowers that enhance pollinator habitat, and other steps to support pollinators & wildlife whose habitats have rapidly declined. Along with the talk & cocktail, we'll have door prizes, free give-aways, light refreshments & informational handouts on related topics.



Our hosts are Lou & Margie Chatey, gracious owners of Westford Hill Distillers (196 Chatey Rd), New England's first craft spirit distillery right here in Ashford (<https://www.facebook.com/WestfordHillDistillers>). Their flower gardens surrounding the 18th century home have been cultivated for four generations, with special care taken to plant unusual specimen trees and maintain native species. The private gardens will be open to visitors for this fundraising event, with proceeds supporting Ashford pollinator efforts. Bring your lawn chair or blanket to linger for craft cocktails & browsing after the event.



What exactly are native plants & why are they so important? Native plants were in this country before European settlement & evolved with our pollinators (bees, butterflies, moths, hummingbirds). Most pollinators cannot adapt to non-native or cultivated plants as food sources, yet these are the plants most commonly found at gardening centers. Cultivated plants are often bred to enhance their appearance to the human eye, not to what attracts & sustains pollinators. This does not mean a non-native plant garden has no ecological value, but pollinators will struggle to collect sufficient nectar from it and often need specific native plants for larvae development. The relationship

between declining Monarch Butterfly populations and Milkweed, as the only food its caterpillar can eat, is just one example of what is happening to many other pollinating species who can no longer find their required food source due to native plant decline & habitat destruction.



Calendar

All Month Long – No Mow May!

5/4 – Spring Jamboree, 2-5PM, Ashford School - Stop by our table with Ashford Garden Club to get free native plant seeds, stickers & temporary tattoos (flowers & bugs) for kids

5/11 -- RI's Wild Plant Society's Early Native Plant Sale, 9AM-2PM in Saunderstown, RI – features spring bloomers.

<https://riwps.org/native-plant-sales>

5/11 -- Quiet Corner Garden Club Plant Sale, Woodstock Fairgrounds, 9AM-noon.

<https://quietcornergardenclub.com/annual-plant-sale/>

5/18 – Our “Dos & Don'ts of Native Plant Gardening” talk at Westford Hill Distillery, 1PM

5/31-6/1 – MA's Spring Grow Native Plant Sale, Waltham, MA.

Advanced registration required:
<https://grownativemass.org/Our-Programs/Native-Plant-Sale>

6/8 & 6/9 – Annual Local Art and Garden Tour, 10AM-5PM. The tour is free and self-guided. Map and info at their website:

<https://artgardenct.com>



For questions, to schedule a site visit, a PP medallion &/or to receive our newsletter, email AshfordPollinatorPathways@gmail.com