



Ashford Pollinator Pathway News

By Jennifer Sterling-Folker, September 2023

Greetings Ashford! September is a great time to plant for next year as plants still have time to get established before winter sets in.

Many native plant nurseries also have sales at this time. **Native Plant Trust's Garden Shop** in Framingham, MA, typically begins their fall native plant sale at the end of August and the sales continue until the shop closes for the season in October. Other nurseries, such as our own **Ashford Garden Center** on route 44, restock native plants for the fall, and the online native plant nursery **Prairie Moon** has begun their Fall bare-root plant and seed sales (<https://www.prairiemoon.com>).

Speaking of seeds, it's also a great time to start thinking about whether you want to sow native plant seeds that require cold stratification, ie: a period of cold temperatures to break their dormancy cycle. This includes Lupines, Bee Balms, Coneflowers, and Milkweeds and many other desirable native plants. While you can replicate the process indoors during the winter, you can also sow seeds directly into your garden or in pots left outside for the winter. Because birds and mice will try to eat the seeds before they've had a chance to germinate, be sure to cover the sown seed with screens. For instructions on how to cold stratify native plant seeds that need it, visit the Wild Seed Project's info page: <https://wildseedproject.net/how-to-grow-natives-from-seed/>. If you are looking for some free seeds to cold stratify this winter, stop by our table at Ashford's Family Day on September 17 or email us. We currently have small seed packets of Lupine, Common Milkweed, Indigo, and Coneflower to give away.

If you buy native plant perennials but can't get them into the ground in time, overwinter them right in their pot in a sunny, wind-protected location tucked in under old sheets or a frost blanket. I have overwintered many perennials on my deck this way for years; most survive the winter and are already starting to sprout (sometimes even bloom) in late April or early May when I begin to remove the frost blankets. Rodents also sometimes try to overwinter under these blankets so to deter them you can cover the pots with screen netting before putting on the sheet or frost blanket.

In July we had the opportunity to walk the Josias Byles Sanctuary, a Joshua's Trust property in Ashford off route 44, with its trail steward, Nord Yakovleff. This beautiful trail features both forest and meadow habitats, with some spectacular milkweed stands which are worth visiting this time of year to see Monarch butterflies. Joshua Trust properties are partnered with Pollinator Pathway and many trailheads have the PP medallion. If you need a free medallion for your native plant garden or property, email us. We also have information on native wildflowers for New England meadows and how to establish meadows that support Monarchs and other wildlife.



Upcoming Events

Ashford PP will be putting together a pollinator basket for the Babcock Library's fundraising silent auction at their annual wine-tasting event on Saturday, Sept 9th, 3-5PM at Church Farm in Ashford. Tickets for the event are \$25 and available at the Babcock Library.

We will be at Ashford Family Day on Sept 17th with free native plants, seed packets, and other goodies – stop by our table!



Our monthly newsletter has additional information and live links to PP, conveniently delivered right to your email inbox. Simply scan the QR code below in order to sign up to receive it.



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