



Ashford Pollinator Pathway News

by Jennifer Sterling-Folker, April 2025



Happy Spring Ashford! Ashford Pollinator Pathway (PP) is back for the growing season & looking forward to working with **the newly created Ashford Invasive Plant Working Group (AIPWG)** encouraging native plant usage to help reverse declining pollinator, bird & other wildlife populations. We plan to provide native plants to fill in areas cleared by AIPWG in town & are once again providing **free native plant seed packets for Ashford citizens at the Babcock Library's spring seed bank.** The seeds we provide are "easy" grow perennials which should



sprout in the first season (coneflower, wild mints, smooth blue aster, culver's root, assorted others). We also have a variety of seeds that require overwintering in order to sprout next year (milkweeds, yellow indigo, ironweed, assorted others) – email me (jsfolker@yahoo) if you would like some of these cold stratification seeds now or you can wait until the Fall when we offer them again.

Over the winter we replaced our digital newsletter with an online blog that can be easily updated and has expanded features. It allows us to provide additional resources & information for native plant garden design & support, suggested readings on native plants, and a "plant this, not that" feature. Please use the QR code to the right to subscribe (or you can sign up at <https://ashfordpollinatorpathway.org/>).



Once again, our very own **Ashford Garden Center** will have a limited selection of native plants to offer in the spring & fall if you are looking for native plants. In fact, they are the very first nursery listed on UConn Extension's "Connecticut Native Perennial, Tree, & Shrub Availability List" thereby putting Ashford on the map (literally!) for native

plants. They are a family-owned & operated garden center, an Ashford PP Partner & also have natural & organic gardening & landscaping products. They are located at 330 Ashford Center Road (860-429-0854; Ashfordgardencenter@gmail.com).

FREE TALK - RESERVE THE DATE: Saturday April 19, I will be speaking on "The Dos and Don'ts of Native Plant Gardening," 11:00AM, at the Willington Public Library. For those of you who have missed this talk or want a refresher, I draw upon my own trial-and-error experiences developing a pollinator-friendly, native plant garden over a 25-year period to highlight basic mistakes to avoid & procedures to follow when growing native plants for pollinators & wildlife. See you there!

Spring Clean Up Reminders

Resist Early Spring Cleanup: Many bees and butterflies overwinter under leaf debris or have laid eggs to overwinter in broken flower stalks. Removing these too early will kill them. Some bees don't emerge until late May, so the longer we resist the temptation to tidy up our yards, the better for pollinators. Ideally wait until temperatures are consistently about 50 degrees over several days for pollinators to safely emerge before clearing leaves.



No Mow May: Avoid mowing grass for the month of May so that lawn weeds (clover, violets, dandelions), can bloom, providing vital spring food for bees emerging from hibernation & birds foraging to feed young. If you really hate the idea of not mowing your entire lawn until June, try leaving a few patches unmown or mow the edges of your lawn and have a few meandering paths down the middle.

