



Ashford Pollinator Pathway News

By Jennifer Sterling-Folker, October 2025



As you prepare your garden for winter, consider what you can do to support **Soft Landings**. In gardening, the term refers to underplanting trees with native plants & leaving leaf litter & other natural materials around it. Doing so helps caterpillars & other beneficial insects that utilize the tree for larvae development & provides a critical habitat & shelter under the tree for their life cycles. These insects include butterflies, moths, bumble bees, fireflies, lacewings, & beetles.



Melinda MacDonald, Ashford PP Steering Committee member, recently wrote about this on our website, explaining that “by

providing **Soft Landings**, i.e. dense plantings of native plants beneath our landscape trees, we are providing a safe and comfy place for insects and wildlife to live and safely overwinter. Imagine caterpillars falling off of trees into soft landings to complete their life cycle in or beneath the native plants and leaf litter. Then imagine the alternative – the rakes, the blowers, the mulching mowers. It’s not pretty!”



Her article provides excellent links to Youtube videos & other resources on the

topic. She also notes that there will be a webinar on **Soft Landings** by Heather Holm (well-known biologist, pollinator conservationist, & award-winning author) on **November 13, 2025, 1-2:30 PM Eastern**, with a link to the webinar. If you haven’t yet checked out (& registered) for our blog, use the QR code above (or go to <https://ashfordpollinatorpathway.org/2025/09/06/soft-landings/>).



Funded by a grant from Wild Ones Minnesota. ©2021 Heather Holm and Neighborhood Greening. Developed in consultation with Desiree Narango, Ph.D.; artwork by Elisa Cousins. * For more on creating soft landings under trees: visit www.PollinatorsNativePlants.com/softlandings.html



Since the Citizen is published on the 1st of each month & articles need to be submitted a few weeks prior, I can’t report on our September brunch gathering yet. But more info will be provided in the November article on what was discussed & how you can join us for future Ashford PP & eco-gardening events & activities. Meanwhile we have **FREE Cold Stratification Native Plant Seeds** (Milkweeds, Indigo, Nodding Onion, Maine Lupines, etc) - email me for a list & if you’d like some dropped off or sent to you (jsfolker@yahoo.com)