



Ashford Pollinator Pathway News

By Jennifer Sterling-Folker, August 2026



Greetings Ashford! A remainder that the family-owned

Ashford Garden Center right here in town regularly stocks a limited selection of native plants. While hours are reduced during the height of the summer, they typically reopen full-time in late summer with a fresh supply of native plants just in time for fall planting!



Controlling ticks & mosquitos in your yard without harming the environment or your health

As someone who suffers from chronic Lyme Disease, I take very seriously the concerns people have over controlling ticks in their yards, & every summer we know mosquito-borne Western Nile Virus will make headlines. Unfortunately, many companies take advantage of legitimate concerns over these insects to sell insecticide fogging services, an expensive but ultimately ineffective, even dangerous way to address the problem. Fogging temporarily **kills EVERYTHING in your yard**, including butterflies, caterpillars, fireflies, native bees & insects that would eat ticks & mosquitos. There are known **HEALTH RISKS** to fogging, which is why company workers must wear protective gear & tell you to stay in doors with all windows closed during & after the process. And it **FAILS TO ADDRESS THE ROOT PROBLEM**, ie: standing water in your yard or nearby (in buckets, ditches, etc) where mosquito larvae grow & ticks hitchhiking into your yard on mice, deer, & birds passing through. Newer, safer, less expensive, more effective techniques have been developed including:



Ticks like moist, dark vegetation, not hot & dry so **keep vegetation along woodland yard edges, wood piles, & stone walls cleared. Establish a 3 ft wide barrier** of dry wood chips, bark mulch or gravel between your lawn & the woods to discourage tick crossings.

Place **“tick tubes”** packed with permethrin-treated **cotton** around your yard edges monthly. Mice carry the cotton back to their nests and are unharmed but the ticks on them are killed. Commercial tubes are available (*Thermacell Tick Control Tubes*) or google how to make your own, BUT keep tubs away from cats & aquatic life as permethrin can be **toxic to them**.



Eradicate any invasive Japanese Barberry on your property (tick-carrying mice like to nest under it). Plant **native mountain mint** which produces aromatic oils that repel ticks **AND** mosquitos.

Get rid of any standing water in your yard &/or use Bti Mosquito dunks in ponds & ditches to safely kill mosquito larvae without harming other creatures.



Invasive vs. Aggressive

Why do Eco-gardeners often correct people when they refer to a native plant as **“invasive”** rather than **“aggressive”**? In practical terms there doesn't seem to be much difference - many native plants spread so rapidly they seem like invaders. Turn your back on native Goldenrod or Phlox for one season & suddenly they've taken over the entire garden! And if you ignore them, soon you'll be asking, where the heck did all my other perennials go?

AGGRESSIVE: Native Goldenrod, Phlox,



Yes, some native plants can be **“aggressive”** spreaders, but the term **“invasive”** is a specific scientific & legal designation reserved for introduced foreign plants that don't naturally belong in the New England landscape and do harm to the environment, economy, or human health. Invasive plants are aggressive spreaders too, BUT also displace native plants that pollinators need & they don't provide much for pollinators or other wildlife in return. “Invasive” is also a legal designation signifying plants that states recognize as dangerous to the environment and legally regulate their sale, transport, and management.

INVASIVE: Japanese Knotweed, Garlic Mustard

