Bring wildlife to your yard with native plants

See plant lists beginning on slide 116. Lists with scientific names begin on slide 125.
We all want to bring birds and butterflies to our yards
Here’s how you can do it
Most plant-eating insects (like butterfly caterpillars) can only feed on native plants.
Planting native plants will provide food for plant-eating insects such as caterpillars (there are hundreds of different kinds), as well as provide food for the birds and other animals that feed on those insects.
What do we mean by “native”? A plant is native to Connecticut if it was growing here before the arrival of European settlers.
Many plants that now grow here are not native.
And, many of the plants that are sold by nurseries are not native. Some are even invasive.
A yard with a variety of native plants will provide the requirements that birds and butterflies need to survive.
All animals must find shelter . . .
and food in order to survive
They also need water,
and enough space to find all of the food, water and shelter that they need to survive and reproduce.
All species need space in order to dodge the extinction bullet. So far, we have not shared space very well with our fellow earthlings.” - Douglas W. Tallamy

But over half of the lower 48 states has been converted to cities and suburbia.
Many species of birds and other animals are disappearing.

Brown thrasher
The biggest threat to wildlife . . .
is loss of habitat
As we convert land to houses and lawn, we are taking away food, water, shelter and space
“...the wild creatures we enjoy and would like to have in our lives will not be here in the future if we take away their food and the places they live.” – Douglas Tallamy
But, we can provide food, water and shelter for those wild creatures right in our own yards.
“If nothing moves in your landscape but a lawnmower, it’s time to think of designing a natural yard.” – Rochelle Whiteman
Why native plants?
Consider the following:
There will be more food for wildlife if the plants growing in your yard are native plants.
What difference do you see between the invasive Asiatic bittersweet (left) and the native black cherry (right)?
Insects eat only those plants that they have evolved with. Native plants provide food for native plant-eating insects. Most non-native plants do not.
Those insects provide food for animals higher up in the food chain.

- Turtlehead leaves
- Baltimore caterpillar
- Common yellowthroat
- Red-shouldered hawk
A better way to view this is with a food pyramid. Plants make up the base of the pyramid. Lots of plants are needed to feed the next level up. Insects, more than any other group of animals, are responsible for converting energy from plants up to the higher levels of the pyramid.

Losing native plants would mean losing many insects.
“Insects are the little things that run the world” – E. O. Wilson
And what is it that nearly all of our terrestrial birds feed to their young?
Insects!
Nearly all of our terrestrial birds raise their young on insects.
Many of those insects are caterpillars that feed on plants. Native plants.
Within the suburban landscape, native plants have been replaced by lawns (consisting of mostly alien grasses),
invasive plants,
and other non-native ornamentals
But the suburban yard has great potential to help wildlife
How much wildlife habitat is protected in Connecticut?
Wildlife Management Areas make up only a tiny portion of the land and lack of funding limits the amount of habitat that can be managed.
That is why wildlife needs the help of private landowners.
How much space is needed?
Eastern bluebirds can survive in relatively small patches (as little as an acre) of grassland habitat with an abundance of insects. This is a species that many backyards in Connecticut can help to sustain.
But even if your yard is smaller than that, you can still help wildlife by planting native plants.
You may not have enough space in your yard to sustain brown thrasher, a shrubland species that has become rare in Connecticut,
but you probably have enough space for a shrub patch big enough to attract gray catbirds
“Which animals will make it, and which will not. We make this decision every time we plant or remove something from our yard.”

– Douglas Tallamy
So what should we remove?
Invasive: Multiflora rose
Invasive: Norway maple

Red-leaved variety

Green-leaved variety
Invasive: Japanese barberry
Invasive: Asiatic bittersweet
Once the invasive plants have been removed, what will replace them?
Check out this publication to see some alternatives to the more common invasive ornamental plants (see link at end of slideshow)

Invasive: Morrow’s honeysuckle
So instead of autumn olive,
how about winterberry, which not only has beautiful red berries, it is also the plant that the Harris’ three-spot caterpillar feeds on
And, the berries persist into the winter when they feed birds like robins and bluebirds.
Willows, such as pussy willow, have leaves with white undersides like autumn olive, but willows provide food for over 400 native moth and butterfly caterpillar species, including mourning cloak and viceroy.
The viceroy is a monarch look-alike. You can tell the difference by the black lines on the hindwings of the viceroy.
Instead of invasive burning bush,
which invades the forest understory,
How about highbush blueberry which not only has beautiful red fall color, it provides food for over 200 native caterpillar species including the spring azure.
Or red-osier dogwood with stems that turn bright red in the winter.
Native dogwoods provide food for over 100 species of caterpillars, provide nectar for pollinators,
and berries for birds to supplement their diet of insects
Looking for a shade tree? Instead of Norway maple,
how about a sycamore?
Sycamores provide food for an assortment of interesting caterpillars, including this one,
the sycamore tussock moth caterpillar which feeds only on sycamore

The adult moth is well-suited to living on the camouflage bark of this tree

Lacy L. Hyche
Which Connecticut plant provides food for the greatest number of caterpillar species?
The mighty oak.
Over 500 species of caterpillars feed on its leaves.
Compare that to a popular landscaping plant – butterfly bush. How many of our native caterpillars can feed on this plant?
No native caterpillars have been found to feed on butterfly bush. This plant is also considered to be invasive on some parts of the country.
Butterfly bush invading streamside habitat.
Instead of butterfly bush, how about butterfly milkweed?
Monarch butterfly caterpillars feed only on milkweeds.
Without milkweed plants, monarchs would not exist.
Butterfly milkweed in the pollinator garden at the Belding Wildlife Management Area
Other specialists include the Baltimore checkerspot whose caterpillars feed on turtlehead.
The spicebush swallowtail caterpillar feeds on spicebush or sassafras
Some more plants to think about for your garden:

(Remember to provide both nectar sources for pollinators, and host plants for caterpillars)
Carolina rose has beautiful, fragrant flowers that attract bees and other pollinators. It also provides food for the camouflage looper which turns into the wavy lined emerald moth (seen below).
Wild columbine is one of the first native wildflowers to bloom in the spring.

Remember to plant a variety of nectar sources that will bloom throughout the season.
Bee balm blooms in July and is a favorite of hummingbirds.

Although hummingbirds feed primarily on insects, they also depend on nectar for energy.
Cardinal flower blooms into August, providing nectar for hummingbirds after the bee balm has gone by.
Trumpet honeysuckle provides nectar for hummingbirds and is a food plant for the hummingbird clearwing moth caterpillar.
Mountain mint attracts a wide variety of pollinators. Look for hermit sphinx moth caterpillars feeding on it.
New England aster blooms in September and October and is a host plant for many caterpillars.
Caterpillars – a cure for Nature Deficit Disorder

For more on Nature Deficit Disorder, read *Last Child in the Woods* by Richard Louv.
Imagine finding a camouflage looper. (You have to look very closely.)
Or a monkey slug caterpillar.
If you are starting with bare ground, perhaps after removing a section of lawn, don’t worry if it looks a little sparse at first. Native plants are well-adapted to growing in our native soil.
Your native landscape will soon fill in
If you plant it, they will come...

Monarch butterfly

Great spangled fritillary

Silver-spotted skipper

Tiger swallowtail
But what about when the native wildflowers lose their blooms?
That’s a beautiful sight for American goldfinch who feed on the seeds.
Indigo buntings will fuel up on seeds before their fall migration.
Some plants, like common evening primrose, will still have caterpillars that migrating warblers will fuel up on. (Hummingbirds also feed on the nectar of common evening primrose.)
Common evening primrose is a host plant for the caterpillars of several beautiful moth species.

Ronnie Pitman
https://www.flickr.com/photos/78366623@N00/456022742
You may want to let a section of your yard “go wild”. Although some non-natives will likely invade and will need to be dealt with, native plants that might pop up may include joe pye weed, boneset and common evening primrose.
If you have Joe Pye weed, you will have butterflies
Boneset attracts a variety of pollinators,
and things that eat pollinators
And things that eat things that eat pollinators. The food web in action.
But what will the neighbors think?
A neat grassy path through your native landscape will make it look managed and inviting.
And as your plants bloom, don’t be surprised to find your neighbors stopping by to ask questions, or simply to admire...
A few more things to think about as you get started
Is your yard sunny?
Shady?
Somewhere in between?
Will you be planting or encouraging perennials?
Shrubs?
Trees?
A combination?
Here is a partial list of plants native to Connecticut to help you get started.
## Perennials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bloom time</th>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Part sun</th>
<th>Shade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| May        | Blue-eyed grass  
Lupine, wild blue  
Pussytoes, field | Columbine, wild red  
Hepatica  
Mayapple | Carolina spring beauty  
Bloodroot  
Foamflower  
Dutchman’s breeches  
Wood anemone  
Golden ragwort  
Bluebead lily |
| June       | Golden alexanders  
Milkweed, common | Wild blue phlox  
Wild geranium  
Foxglove beardtongue | Black cohosh  
Ramps  
American spikenard |
| July       | Milkweed, butterfly  
Milkweed, swamp  
Wild bergamot  
Scarlet bee balm | Cardinal flower  
Culver’s root | Hog peanut |
| August     | Joe-Pye weed  
Boneset  
Purple-headed sneezeweed  
Turtlehead  
Pearly everlasting  
Common evening primrose | Great lobelia  
Woodland sunflower | |
| September  | Showy goldenrod  
New England aster  
Fall sneezeweed  
Small white American-aster  
Calico American-aster | Blue-stem goldenrod  
White snakeroot  
Heart-leaved aster  
Smooth aster | |
Ground covers

Sun
- Birdfoot violet
- Strawberry, Virginia
- Bearberry
- Blue-eyed grass
- Virginia creeper
- Heath aster

Part sun
- Phlox, creeping
- Golden ragwort
- Yellow star grass
- Twinflower

Shade
- Dutchman’s breeches
- Trout lily
- Canada mayflower
- Wild ginger
- Bunchberry
- Partridgeberry
- Wintergreen (tea berry)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bloom time</th>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Part sun</th>
<th>Shade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Fragrant sumac</td>
<td>Running serviceberry, American black currant, Nannyberry</td>
<td>Spicebush, Pinxter bloom, Nannyberry, Hobblebush</td>
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<td>Beach plum</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Northern bayberry</td>
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<td>June</td>
<td>Sweetbells</td>
<td>Highbush blueberry, Northern bush-honeysuckle, Elderberry</td>
<td>Winterberry, Mountain laurel, Great laurel, Rosebay rhododendron, Arrowwood</td>
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<td>Red chokeberry</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Virginia rose</td>
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<td>New Jersey tea</td>
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<td>Staghorn sumac</td>
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<td>July</td>
<td>Sweet pepperbush</td>
<td>Red-osier dogwood, Trumpet honeysuckle, Purple-flowering raspberry</td>
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<td>Meadowsweet</td>
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<td>Steeplebush</td>
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<td>Shrubby cinquefoil</td>
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<td>August</td>
<td>Sweet pepperbush</td>
<td>Sweet pepperbush</td>
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<tr>
<td>September</td>
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<td>Witch hazel</td>
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# Grasses, sedges, rushes and ferns

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<tr>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Part sun</th>
<th>Shade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Little bluestem</td>
<td>Pennsylvania sedge</td>
<td>Common polypody</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poverty grass</td>
<td>Spreading sedge</td>
<td>Christmas fern</td>
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<td>Purpletop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Purple love grass</td>
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<td>Indian grass</td>
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<td>Big bluestem</td>
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<td>Path rush</td>
<td>Wood rush</td>
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<td>Virginia wild rye</td>
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<td>Switchgrass</td>
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<td>Maidenhair fern</td>
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<td>Lurid sedge</td>
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<td>Soft rush</td>
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<td>Cinnamon fern</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moist</td>
<td>Cotton grass</td>
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<td>Cotton grass</td>
<td>Silvery sedge</td>
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<td>Spike rush</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Other Important Shrubs and Trees

Oaks
Willows (including pussy willow)
Black cherry
Dogwoods
Alder
Hickory
Aspen
Maple
Shadbush (serviceberry)
Hornbeam
Eastern redcedar
Northern white-cedar
Beaked hazelnut
American hazelnut
Sweetbay
Sweet gale
Fireberry hawthorn
Sweetfern
Beware of plants that are described as “naturalized”. These plants are not native. Asiatic bittersweet and other invasive plants are “naturalized”.

To see if a plant is native to Connecticut, visit the New England Wildflower Society at: https://gobotany.newenglandwild.org/

To search for native plants by state, visit the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at http://www.wildflower.org/plants/

The CT Botanical Society lists a few native wildflowers to get started with native plant gardening: https://www.ct-botanical-society.org/Gardens/view
The native plants that have been listed here are available for sale at native plant nurseries in CT. More native plant species may become available for sale in the future. When buying native plants, ask about the source. It’s better to buy plants that were grown from a local seed source than from a seed source from a different region, in order to preserve the local genetics.

**Where to buy natives:**

Ernst Conservation Seed - [www.ernstseed.com](http://www.ernstseed.com)


This book lists host plants for different species of butterfly caterpillars.

This book lists host plants for different species of moth and butterfly caterpillars.

This is the top book on the subject of sustaining wildlife in your yard with native plants.
Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group
http://www.hort.uconn.edu/cipwg/
• Native plant list
• Invasive plant management
• Alternatives for Invasive Ornamental Plant Species

Pollinator Partnership
http://www.pollinator.org

Alternatives for Invasive Ornamental Plant Species

SELECTING
PLANTS
FOR
POLLINATORS
A REGIONAL GUIDE FOR FARMERS, LAND MANAGERS, AND GARDENERS IN THE EASTERN BROADLEAF FOREST

EDITED BY: TIMOTHY M. ALBRECHT

The Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group

Eastern Broadleaf Forest
Oceanic Province
Including the states of Connecticut, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and parts of Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, and Virginia, Tennessee
**Common and scientific names**

**Perennials**

American spikenard (*Aralia racemosa*)
Black cohosh (*Actaea racemose*)
Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*)
Bluebead lily (*Clintonia borealis*)
Blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium spp.*)
Blue-stem goldenrod (*Solidago caesia*)
Boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*)
Calico American-aster (*Symphyotrichum lateriflorum*)
Cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)
Carolina spring beauty (*Claytonia caroliniana*)
Columbine, wild red (*Aquilegia canadensis*)
Culver’s root (*Veronicastrum virginicum*)
Dutchman’s breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*)
Fall sneezeweed (*Helenium autumnale*)
Foamflower (*Tiarella spp.*)
Foxglove beardtongue (*Penstemon digitalis*)
Golden Alexanders (*Zizia aurea*)
Golden ragwort (*Packera aurea*)
Great lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*)
Heart-leaved aster (*Symphyotrichum cordifolium*)
Hepatica (*Hepatica nobilis*)
Hog peanut (*Amphicarpaea bracteata*)
Joe-Pye weed (*Eutrochium maculatum*)
Lupine, wild blue (*Lupinus perennis*)
Mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*)
Milkweed, butterfly (*Asclepias tuberosa*)
Milkweed, common (*Asclepias syriaca*)
Milkweed, swamp (*Asclepias incarnate*)
New England aster (*Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*)
Pearly everlasting (*Anaphalis margaritacea*)
Purple-headed sneezeweed (*Helenium flexuosum*)
Pussytoes, field (*Antennaria neglecta*)
Ramps (*Allium tricoccum*)
Scarlet bee balm (*Monarda didyma*)
Showy goldenrod (*Solidago erecta*)
Small white American-aster (*Symphyotrichum ericoides*)
Smooth aster (*Symphyotrichum laeve*)
Turtlehead (*Chelone glabra*)
White snakeroot (*Ageratina altissima*)
Wild bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*)
Wild blue phlox (*Phlox divaricata*)
Wild geranium (*Geranium maculatum*)
Wood anemone (*Anemone quinquefolia*)
Woodland sunflower (*Helianthus divaricatus*)

**Ground covers**

Bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*)
Birdfoot violet (*Viola pedata*)
Blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium angustifolium*)
Bunchberry (*Cornus Canadensis*)
Canada mayflower (*Maianthemum canadense*)
Dutchman’s breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*)
Golden ragwort (*Packera aurea*)
Heath aster (*Symphyotrichum ericoides*)
Partridgeberry (*Mitchella repens*)
Phlox, creeping (*Phlox stolonifera*)
Strawberry, Virginia (*Fragaria virginiana*)
Tartlet lily (*Erythronium americanum*)
Twinflower (*Linnaea borealis*)
Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*)
Wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*)
Wintergreen (tea berry) (*Gaultheria procumbens*)
Yellow star grass (*Hypoxis hirsuta*)
Shrubs/Vines

American black currant (*Ribes americanum*)
Arrowwood (*Viburnum dentatum*)
Beach plum (*Prunus maritima*)
Elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*)
Fragrant sumac (*Rhus aromatic*)
Great laurel (*Rhododendron maximum*)
Highbush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*)
Hobblebush (*Viburnum lantanoides*)
Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*)
Mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*)
Nannyberry (*Viburnum lentago*)
New Jersey tea (*Ceanothus americanus*)
Northern bayberry (*Morella pensylvanica*)
Northern bush-honeysuckle (*Diervilla lonicera*)
Pinxter bloom (*Rhododendron periclymenoides*)
Purple-flowering raspberry (*Rubus odoratus*)
Red chokeberry (*Aronia arbutifolia*)
Redosier dogwood (*Swida sericea*)
Rosebay rhododendron (*Rhododendron maximum*)
Running serviceberry (*Amelanchier stolonifera*)
Shrubby cinquefoil (*Dasiphora fruticose*)
Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*)
Staghorn sumac (*Rhus typhina*)
Steeplebush (*Spiraea tomentosa*)
Sweet pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*)
Sweetbells (*Leucothoe racemose*)
Trumpet honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*)
Virginia rose (*Rosa virginiana*)
Winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*)
Witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*)

Grasses, sedges, rushes and ferns

Christmas fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*)
Common polypody (*Polypodium virginianum*)
Cotton grass (*Eriophorum virginicum*)
Fox sedge (*Carex vulpinoidea*)
Gray sedge (*Carex grayi*)
Little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*)
Lurid sedge (*Carex lurida*)
Maidenhair fern (*Adiantum pedatum*)
Path rush (*Juncus tenui*)
Pennsylvania sedge (*Carex pensylvanica*)
Poverty grass (*Danthonia spicata*)
Purple lovegrass (*Eragrostis spectabilis*)
Purpletop (*Tridens flavus*)
Silvery sedge (*Carex canescens*)
Soft rush (*Juncus effuses*)
Spike rush (*Eleocharis palustris*)
Spreading sedge (*Carex laxiculmis*)
Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatu*)
Virginia wild rye (*Elymus virginicus*)
Wood rush (*Luzula multiflora*)
Other important trees and shrubs

Alder (*Alnus incana*)
American hazelnut (*Corylus Americana*)
American Hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*)
Aspen (*Populus spp.*)
Atlantic white-cedar (*Chamaecyparis thyoides*)
Beaked hazelnut (*Corylus cornuta*)
Black cherry (*Prunus serotine*)
Dogwoods (*Swida spp.*)
Eastern redcedar (*Juniperus virginiana*)
Fireberry hawthorn (*Crataegus chrysocarpa*)
Hickory (*Carya spp.*)
Maple - red (*Acer rubrum*), silver (*Acer sacharinum*), sugar (*Acer saccharum*)
Oaks (*Quercus spp.*)
Shadbush (serviceberry) (*Amelanchier canadensis*)
Sweet gale (*Myrica gale*)
Sweetbay (*Magnolia virginiana*)
Sweetfern (*Comptonia peregrina*)
Willows, including pussy willow (*Salix spp.*)
Once you have attracted birds and other wildlife to your yard, remember to further protect them by keeping cats safe indoors. Outdoor cats kill over a billion birds a year.

For more information on the Cats Indoors campaign, visit the American Bird Conservancy.
Remember, there are lots of possibilities when landscaping your yard for wildlife, so have fun and go native!
Visit us at the

Belding

Wildlife Management Area

http://www.ct.gov/deep/belding