



Environment and Natural Resources Committee

Native Plants- Conserving our natural environment that starts with your yard.

Are you interested in doing something good for your environment? The direction many ecologists are recommending is that it is achievable and practical for us ordinary individuals to start planting native plants in our yards to increase the stability and productivity of our natural environment. The more biodiversity in the natural environment, the more productive and stable it is. According to Naturalist Douglas Tallamy, author of Bringing Nature Home and Nature's Best Hope, our lives and our planet relies on this stability in our ecosystem. "Plants produce our oxygen, clean our water and delay its journey to the salty sea. They store atmospheric carbon that would otherwise wreak even more havoc with our climate. Plants build our topsoil and hold it in place and they prevent floods when we leave enough of them in our landscapes. Animals, in turn, provide pest control services and pollinate not just our crops but nearly 90 percent of all plant species." ¹But more often than not our yards are designed with grass and plants that probably evolved in Asia, Europe or South America and are unable to sustain ecosystem functions in our area. Non-native species are not productive parts of our natural ecosystems and their existence does not contribute to biodiversity. They do not attract natural animals and tend to outcompete with the native plants.

So do we have to redo our landscapes entirely? Well no, but when you replace plants in your yard, choose native plants. Consider reducing your lawn with native plants that will not need fertilizing and watering. Provide plants that will not only attract birds but more native insects that will feed birds and other animals. Native plants will provide nectar to pollinators. You'll see more swallowtails and monarchs. Increasing native plants in our yards, no matter how small or large, will increase the stability and productivity of our ecosystems. You and your neighborhood will benefit.

Here are some resources to learn more about Native Plants and their role in conserving our environment.

May 10 – LTC Mother's Day Wildflower Walk

Mark your calendar for Little Traverse Conservancy's Mother's Day Wildflower Walk on May 10, led by Amy Lipson - Little Traverse Conservancy. Get more information about this and other LTC events here: <https://landtrust.org/events-template/mothers-day-wildflower-walk/>

¹ Bring Nature Home, Douglas Tallamay page 9

May 11- Arbor Day Celebration and Petoskey Garden Club 90th anniversary

Celebrate Arbor Day at Arlington Park in Petoskey from 11:00- 1:00 PM and get a free native shrub-Serviceberry for Mother's Day.

May 29-June 2 – Aldo Leopold Festival

Les Cheneaux welcomes you to celebrate the legacy of Aldo Leopold — one of America's most influential naturalists — during **our festival, May 29th – June 2nd, 2024**. Activities include paddling excursions, orchid and wildflower tours, birding trips, presentations, and many other nature-based activities. Experience the woods and water that formed Leopold's early impressions of the natural world as we honor the mark he made on conservation and the environment.

Get more information here: <https://www.aldoleopoldfestival.org/>

June 1 – Otsego Conservation Native Plant Nursery Opens

Otsego Conservation District Native Plant Nursery opens for the season. Get more information here: <http://www.otsegocd.org/native-plant-nursery.html>

June 13

Wild Ones gathering at Gruler Gardens – 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. See and learn about native plants for your garden. This is a Wild Ones chapter event and is open to members, friends, and anyone interested in native plants. Details to follow.

June 15

Gruler Gardens first native plant sale of the 2024 season. Get more information here <https://www.grulergardens.com/nativeplants>

Books

Bringing Nature Home by Douglas Tallamay

Natures Best Hope by Douglas Tallamlay

Landscaping with Native Plants of Michigan by Lynn M. Steiner

Websites

<https://wildones.org>

www.otsegocd.org

<https://gardenforwildlife.com>

