

Pollinator PATHWAYS *New Hampshire*

Restoring Habitat, One Yard at a Time

December 7, 2021



*Our founder, **Marghi Bean** has migrated to Mexico with the monarchs and we don't expect her back until March...and so our final newsletter of the year is about you, our partners. We'd like to share your success stories because you have made a difference for pollinators and native plants this year.*

The longer nights and leaf-swirling days warn the natural world to hunker down. Even as our NH soil becomes impenetrable to garden trowel and spade, it teems with life below. For those of us who resisted raking, mowing, and blowing nature away, the organic matter we left in place is helping to insulate the soil and hold in heat. The seeds we brought home from seed exchanges, native seeds evolved to need the insulation of snow and the freeze-thaw cycles of winter, will be able to survive and germinate in the sun-warmed days next spring. By leaving the leaves we have helped ensure the viability of those seeds, as well as the lives of countless moths, butterflies, arthropods, frogs, snakes, salamanders and all of the essential actors in our eco-system.



*This year's events began with a bang. **Atkinson's** milkweed seed giveaway was a huge success. **Susie Newman** and members of the Atkinson Conservation Commission had collected and cold stratified enough seed for everyone who came to the event at Freshwater Farms.

***Exeter** hosted **Vicki Brown's** "Garden for Pollinators" workshop in February, then offered a Grab and Go milkweed seed ball kit at Main Street School. They worked with Lincoln Street School in supporting milkweed plantings for their award of a schoolyard action grant. Native plants were added to the library garden, which is cared for by the Friends of the Exeter Library.

***Durham, Chester** and **Kingston** held dandelion contests in April, helping to bring awareness to the need for early nectar plants.

*Also in April, **Kensington** held a very successful seed swap coordinated by Kensington Conservation's **Sydney Goddard**. Sydney was assisted by PPNH core members from Kingston.

***Dover** hosted two events at Riverside Gardens, sponsored by the Dover Open Lands Committee. The first was **Leslie Herd's** Pollineighbors event, held in celebration of National Pollinator Week. The second was with **Deborah Perkins** of First Light Wildlife Habitats. **Dover** is planning a series of workshops for next season.



***East Kingston** and the EK Public Library co-hosted Vicki's Pollinators 101 program in June. **Vicki Brown** presented several talks about pollinators throughout the state. In November, **Vicki** and **Evy Nathan** of **Kingston** offered an information booth at the SELT Trailfest.

In **Newton**, **Alicia Geilen** of the Conservation Commission is working on a management plan for a pollinator meadow at Busch Farm Conservation Area.

*The **Chester** Conservation Commission hosted **Donna Miller** from Petals in the Pines, who presented about plants useful to butterflies, and about the life cycle of the monarch. Also in **Chester**, an Eversource arborist contacted the Conservation Commission about installing a pollinator garden on Rt. 107. He suggested that the garden could meet the requirements of a Monarch way-station. They agreed, and work has begun.



* **Patty Laughlin** of Lorax Landscaping designed and installed a fabulous native plant garden extending all the way around the Epping library. **Epping** also plans to begin work on a pollinator garden at Miriam Jackson Park. The Epping Conservation Commission with **Barbara Willis** and **Evy Nathan** offered a pollinator information booth at the annual community fair.

*Volunteers in **Brentwood** made improvements to the pollinator garden at the library, and hosted PPNH for a virtual talk about the program.



***Fremont's** new Monarch Waystation was approved by Ellis School, and a native wildflower walk was led by **Evy Nathan** in July.

*Although we don't have an official liaison in **Sandown**, we have read about the Sandown Garden Club's phenomenal efforts with pollinator gardens this year.

*In **Amesbury, Ma.** Camp Kent featured a wildflower and woodland walk with campers led by PPNH.



*In **Kingston**, we began the year with the dandelion contest, followed by virtual and in-person talks in **Brentwood, Plaistow** and **New Hampton**. **Marghi** and **Evy** led wildflower walks in **Fremont** and **Kingston**, and we held an annual Kingston Library garden walk. For Kingston Days we set up an information booth and native plant sale.

Marghi and **Elizabeth Mello** gave a "Beautiful Bugs" talk for the library children's group. During Pollinator Week we set up a seed library at the Kingston Community Library, and offered grab and go pollinator crafts for children. In October **Patty Laughlin** gave a virtual presentation of "Putting Your Garden to Bed". Finally, we held a hugely successful seed swap/exchange in November, our best attended yet, with over 100 people stopping by to collect native wildflower seed.

Marghi Bean sent out six bi-monthly newsletters. The core group held 9 monthly meetings and our Facebook page www.facebook.com/pollinatorpathwaysnh has been active with posts and events.



And finally – the professionals!

*At **NH Audubon**, more demonstration gardens & a wildflower meadow were added. A half acre was prepared and seeded with a mixture that features native

perennials for full-season blooming. A Pollinator Garden Virtual tour was developed, which is available to the public here:

<https://www.nhaidubon.org/education/virtual-tours/>

A series of 9 webinars focused on pollinator conservation reached hundreds of individuals. The webinar series (and their recordings) can be found here:

: <https://www.nhaidubon.org/education/exploring-connections-series/>

***NH Fish and Game** partnered with schools and communities by developing pollinator habitat on public lands. These efforts were funded through a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant, and also the NH Schoolyard Habitat Program ([Schoolyard Habitat Grants | New Hampshire Fish and Game Department \(state.nh.us\)](#)). F&G is currently accepting applications for the NH Schoolyard Habitat program through January 2022. In addition F&G has been assisting NH DOT to develop a plan to enhance habitat for monarch and other pollinators along Rights-of-Way. UNH Cooperative Extension helped in launching a pilot milkweed pod drive with several drop off locations around the state. Between September 15 and October 31 over 400 people participated in this effort, resulting in 40 pounds of milkweed seed for planting!

Next year F&G will launch the NH Butterfly Monitoring Network, encouraging citizens to report their observation of butterflies through a variety of online platforms and participation in planned group surveys. To assist people with learning how to identify different species of butterfly, a series of training sessions will soon be offered.

F&G staff gave presentations, some of which are available for viewing at their site online.

Of course there's no way we can thank every town and every person who contributed to pollinator conservation efforts this year, but the vilified bugs and dwindling butterflies do thank you. The neglected flowers that have been called the four letter word, "weed", for years, thank you. The shrubs and grasses (and all of the insects who depend upon them) that weren't sprayed with poison, thank you!

May you and yours enjoy a happy and healthful holiday season, and may your spectacular efforts burst into bloom in 2022!

Evy Nathan, Marghi Bean, and the core members of Pollinator Pathways

Elizabeth Mello

Holly Ouellette

Melanie Dostie

Nadine Piazza