

BRINGING NATURE HOME

SAVING THE WORLD ONE YARD AT A TIME!!



Those of us of “a certain age” 😊

- Remember when you had to get off the highway just to clean the “bug juice” off your windshield so you could see?
- Remember when people had screening for the front of their cars to keep the butterflies and insects out of the engine?
- Remember when you could look up during migration and see thousands of birds flying south?
- Remember when you could step out in July and there’d be butterflies all over your yard? When tons of moths were around outside lights?
- What else do you remember??

My first garden...circa 1976 (it's what everyone planted☹)

- Daylilys
- English Ivy
- Forsythia
- Peonies
- Iris
- Roses
- Boxwoods
- Hostas





What's a yard for anyway??

- Just something to look at
- A boundary between the street and front door.
- A place for kids to play
- A place for the pool/patio
- A status symbol
- Others?



How did the modern yard come to be?

- Domains of the rich
- A lawn said you were wealthy and powerful
- People wanted to emulate that.
- Remember when clover used to be a routine part of seed mixtures?



What goes into a big lawn?

- Water
- Chemicals
- Fumes and noise from mowers, weed eaters, trimmers
- Time
- Money



Nature...going, going, gone.

- We have to give up the idea that humans live in houses and cars and workplaces and nature is somewhere else.
- Connections matter! Bridges of land to other safe habitats.
- Three choices:
 - 1) We can keep squeezing natural world into smaller and smaller spaces until they can't survive and go extinct.
 - 2) Humans could disappear and let world go back to natural state.
 - 3) We could learn to share land with other species of plants & animals.

The Need for Vitamin “N”



- Just 15 minutes a day in a peaceful outdoor place , you will be less stressed, calmer, happier.
- Plant a tree outside a classroom and kids score better on tests.
- Plant a tree outside a hospital window and people heal better.
- Sure you can go hike somewhere. But usually it's in middle of day when few animals are stirring. You aren't there at night, on rainy days, etc.
- Wouldn't you enjoy having your land do something more beautiful and purposeful

What if.....?????

What if every time you stepped out your door it was an adventure!!



Words of Wisdom

If suburbia was land with forests and meadows water would sparkle, birds would sing, and human spirits would soar!





JOIN MY MEMBERSHIP

Home To Help you Grow Virtual Yard Tour: Bringing it Home Events



Wild Ones Greater Cincinnati Chapter

We are glad you are here!

Greater Cincinnati Wild Ones has been a local chapter of [Wild Ones Natural Landscapers, Ltd.](#), a not-for-profit environmental education and advocacy organization, since 1999. Wild Ones educates people on the importance of native plants, for the health of the environment and everything living in it. Wild Ones' goal is to get more native plants in the ground in all landscapes – homes, businesses, schools, and along roadways. Wild Ones promotes environmentally sound landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restoration and establishment of native plant communities. In Cincinnati, we have supported this mission for over 20 years. *We build living landscapes one yard at a time.*

To join the **Wild Ones Greater Cincinnati Chapter**, click the *join our chapter* [button](#) at the bottom of this page. For questions about the Cincinnati Chapter and to volunteer, email cincinnatiwildones@gmail.com. Join our [mailing list](#), found at the bottom of the right column of this page, for Cincinnati Chapter News and Events!

Contact Us

Contact us at Cincinnatiwildones@gmail.com

Upcoming Events

- **["Free National Webinar: What Is Wild and Why It Matters" presented by Rick Darke](#)**
Hosted by Wild Ones National
Apr 28th, 11:00 am - 1:00 pm
- **Free National Webinar- September 2026**
Hosted by Wild Ones National

Support



3 types of plants

- Helpful
- Neutral
- Harmful



What's a native??



- Evolved here. If Daniel Boone saw it, it probably was a native.
- As you drive around the vast majority of what you see around you is not a native.
- Term can mean different things. For instance, seaside goldenrod is native to U.S. but not to Ky. Other plants are native to western U.S. but not east.
- Natives are generally less maintenance. Require less water, spraying, fertilizers.

What happens when we plant our yards with plants from other countries?

- Remember that purpose of a plant is to be eaten. It took millions of years for plants/animals to evolve . Just decades to undo it all.
- Some spread and do irreparable harm to nearby ecosystems (Callery pears, wintercreeper, privet, burning bush, honeysuckle)
- Caterpillars have dropped an alarming 22% in just last 20 years.
- Caterpillars can only digest certain leaves. Oaks support more than 1000 species. Maples over 300. Ginkos, Japanese maples? Essentially none!
- Estimates are that about 80% of what's planted in US is from Asia.

What is an invasive species?

- Typically a non-native species that jumps boundaries and spreads into natural areas where it negatively impacts the ecosystem.
- Apples and broccoli are not native but not invasive!
- Sometimes it takes years for plants to “go rogue”. Honeysuckle is prime example.



You can be part of making a difference!!

Homegrown National Park (check out on FB)

- What if half the lawn of every yard was native plants? (You don't have to eliminate turf...how about just shrinking it?)
- Would equal 20 million new acres of land
- Bigger than Yellowstone, Everglades, Grand Teton, Great Smoky Mountains and many more all rolled into one!

"If you have a backyard, this book is for you."

—Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods*

Bringing Nature Home



UPDATED AND EXPANDED

**How You Can
Sustain Wildlife
with Native Plants**

Douglas W. Tallamy

With a Foreword by Rick Darke

What inhibits the change to natives?

- That foreign plants are somehow nicer, more beautiful....better. (What's funny is in other countries US plants prized...and have become invasive)
- Worry it will be unsightly
- Fear of insect and wildlife
- What will the neighbors think???





Culture change IS possible

- Remember when everyone smoked everywhere ??
- Remember when you thought a really tan person looked healthy?
- Remember when driving drunk was shrugged off?



Who here feeds, watches birds?



You can't love birds and hate insects!

- A few nibbled leaves are a small price to pay for the joy of birdsong and butterflies!



Blending my passions.

I write books related to juvenile justice and child welfare but in my latest novel, *Sleight of Hand*, I incorporated my love of nature and native plants into the narrative by having one of the main characters be someone who runs a landscape company specializing in native plants.

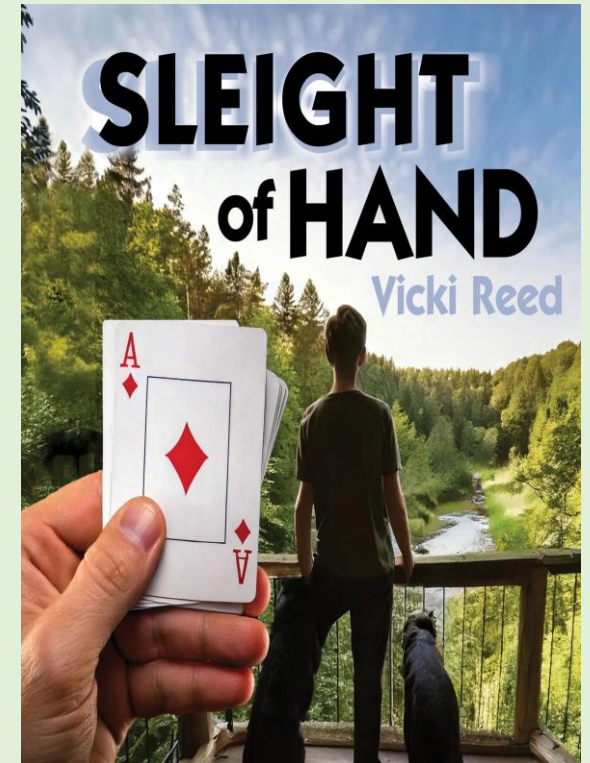
Here's an excerpt on this next slide.



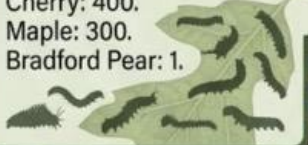
What do baby birds eat??

During my talks, I include a story that always makes an impact. Everyone loves chickadees and many people put out sunflower seeds in feeders for them. The truth is the babies can't eat seeds. They need insects to grow and survive. Insects are supplied by native plants. For instance, a native oak has hundreds of different caterpillars feeding on its leaves. Those Asian plants everyone is so fond of have almost none. A breeding pair of chickadees feeds 350-570 caterpillars a day to their young. Doing the higher math, it means it takes about 6,000-9,000 caterpillars to raise one clutch. The parents only fly so far and no further looking for food. Saddest thing I ever saw was a nest of dead chickadee babies covered in sunflower seeds. The desperate parents tried to feed them the only food they could find while the babies starved to death, no more able to eat the seeds than people can eat grass. This story hits folks in the heart.

I glance at my wrist. In just a bit, I'll be leaving to look at the



CANOPY —
500+ caterpillar species.
No other tree comes close.
Cherry: 400.
Maple: 300.
Bradford Pear: 1.



RIGHT NOW —
Larvae feeding
inside first leaf buds.
Too small to see.
Already working.



ONE NEST =
6,000-9,000
caterpillars needed
before chicks fly.
All from this tree.



YOUR FEEDER —
5% of diet.
The oak: 95%.



DELIVERY —
Robin, chickadee,
warbler, vireo, tanager
all fed by one tree.

LEAF LITTER —
Feeds soil.
Soil feeds roots.
Roots feed tree.
Tree feeds caterpillars.
Caterpillars feed birds.



Guardians of Nature

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**ONE OAK. FIVE HUNDRED SPECIES.
THE ENGINE IS ALREADY RUNNING.**

Your oak tree is feeding more caterpillars... See more

Bed preparation

- Working with the land rather than against it.
- No dig. Working with the soil
- No till methods
- A little at a time or “go big or go home”?



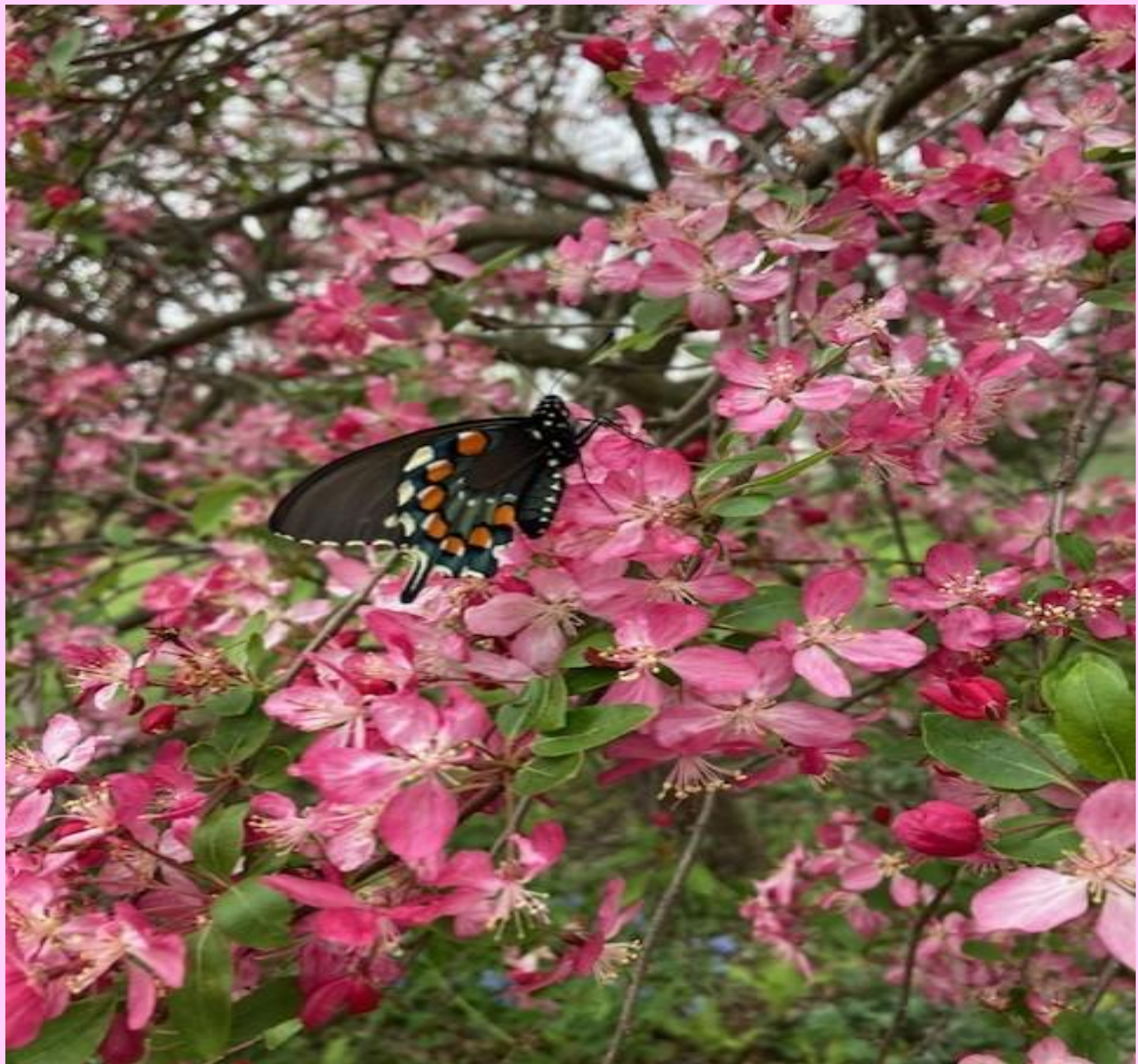
















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How far to go? You decide!

- Whole hog (trees, shrubs and flowers)
- Trees only (plant an oak!)
- Shrubs only
- Trees and shrubs
- Flowers (especially patio dwellers)

You don't have to give up a lawn if you don't want to...just consider shrinking it. Have your grass to throw a ball but do something more beautiful and purposeful.

Maybe tiptoe in....





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Suburban Wildlife Habitat Design

Turning a Quarter-Acre Into a Certified Habitat



Easy garden



Remove invasives

- Wintercreeper: hand pull small amounts when ground moist or weedeat on a warm day in fall/winter then apply roundup OR cover with plastic/leaves/chips/whatever and wait a year or two
- Callery pear, honeysuckle, burning bush, etc.: cut stump method



Bird and insect friendly lawns

- Avoid any insecticide. On lawns if have a bad infestation mow lawn first and spread granular insecticide.
- White clover is great for bees and there's a new trend to plant entire yard in clover. Attractively green and hardly ever needs mowing.
- Don't use lawn spray services! Ever seen a baby bird staggering around after mamma robin pulls worms from treated yard? Want to see fireflies in June?



Leaves mean leave!

Trees shed leaves for reasons. One is to cover their roots and provide food and moisture.

Leaves are vital for fireflies, bees, butterflies, and more....

Mulch leaves into turf for a smart lawn. Put mower on highest setting. You'll see some leaf residue that within days will be gone, sifting down through turf and providing weed control and essential nutrients.

Decomposing leaves cover up bare spots between turf where it's a greaty opening for weed seeds to germinate. Studies show a 100% decrease in dandelions and crabgrass after adopting this practice for 3 years.

Think of all the time and energy saved by not bagging and hauling around. Or you can bag every other time and use them as mulch in beds and veggie gardens.

Soft landings

- At the least provide “soft landings”. Ever glimpsed a caterpillar dangling from a branch? They’re on their way down. But if hit turf grass chances of survival are slim.
- Leave a skirt of leaves unraked beneath your trees. Next step (if you go further) is to plant this area with low shrubs and perennial plants that are forest-adapted to grow among leaves so you can give your leaf blower a break.

DARKNESS IS HABITAT

Turn off outside lights.



If you need lights for security,
use a motion detector or
a fixture that shines downward.

A sometimes unpopular: Keep cats indoors.

- House cats kill up to 4 billion birds per year in United States alone





Safe Gardens · [Follow](#)



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ALERT: Your yard cleanup could wipe out an entire generation of native pollinato... See more



**FACT: 80% of native bees die from early yard cleanup
Wait 6 weeks - Save 1000s of pollinators**



   1.1K

48 comments 813 shares

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Preventing bird strikes

- Window decals
- Bar of soap



Let's talk bees!



- To provide nectar and pollen from early spring through fall choose plants that bloom during different times of year. Bees especially love blue, white, yellow, mauve, and violet flowers.
- Provide a large range of bloom sizes and shapes.
- Tubular flowers allow bees to alight and enter the bloom. Open flowers provide resources to bees and other beneficial insects.
- 70% of native bee species nest in the ground. Many like undisturbed land so leaving a few small patches of bare earth (like behind a shed) provides them a home.

Mosquito bucket

- **Creating a mosquito bucket is an effective and eco-friendly way to control mosquito populations in your yard.**
- **Materials Needed**
- **5-gallon bucket:** A standard bucket works well; a dark-colored one is preferable to attract mosquitoes.
- **Water:** Use rainwater or let tap water sit for 24-48 hours to allow chlorine to evaporate.
- **Organic matter:** A handful of leaves, grass clippings, or hay to create a fermenting scent that attracts mosquitoes.
- **Mosquito dunks:** These contain *Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis* (Bti), which kills mosquito larvae without harming other wildlife.
- **Optional:** A lid with holes, wire mesh, or a sturdy stick to prevent pets or wildlife from falling in.
- Adding some rotting logs and rocks



1. **Prepare the Bucket:** Fill the bucket about halfway with water. If using tap water, let it sit for a day or two to allow chlorine to dissipate.

2.2

3. **Add Organic Matter:** Toss in a handful of organic materials like leaves or grass clippings. This will start to ferment and produce a scent that attracts female mosquitoes.

4.2

5. **Introduce Mosquito Dunks:** After a few days, when the mixture starts to ferment, add a mosquito dunk. Break it into quarters if necessary, and drop it into the bucket. This will help kill any mosquito larvae that hatch.

6.2

7. **Cover the Bucket:** To prevent pets or wildlife from drinking the water, cover the bucket with a lid that has holes or secure wire mesh over the top.

8.2

9. **Placement:** Position the bucket in a sunny spot to keep it warm, which will accelerate the fermentation process. Ensure it's in an area where mosquitoes are prevalent.

10.2

11. **Maintenance:** Check the bucket regularly, adding fresh water as needed to maintain the level. Replace the mosquito dunk every 30 days or as recommended.

12.2

Deer and the landscape: natives evolved with deer so some plants developed defenses

- Deer resistant native plants:
- Bee balm, butterfly milkweed, anise hyssop, Purple coneflower, ferns, asters, little bluestem and northern sea oats grasses. (plant in groups for best effect)
- Shrubs: Spicebush, American holly, sumac, beautyberry, bayberry
- Some oaks and red maple

Place vulnerable plants near house or high-traffic areas.

Use physical barriers (wire cages) on small trees. Use commercial repellents like “liquid fence”.



As we near spring, questions about when and how to cut back perennials and dea... See more

SPRING

Cut back dead flower stalks leaving stem stubble of varying height, 8 to 24 inches, to provide nest cavities.



Female bees find cut or naturally occurring open stems, start a nest, then lay an egg on the pollen balls. Larvae eat the pollen.



SUMMER

New growth of the perennial hides the stem stubble.



Bee larvae develop in cut dead stems during the growing season.



FALL



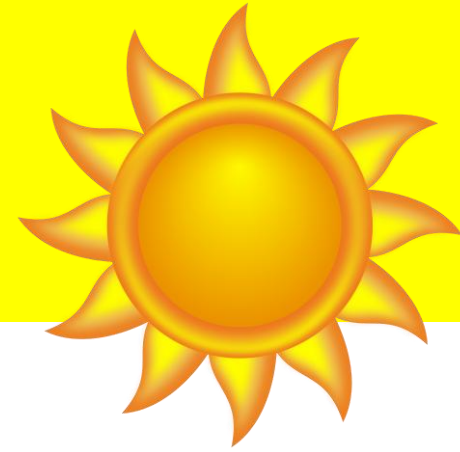
WINTER



Bees hibernate in stems during the winter



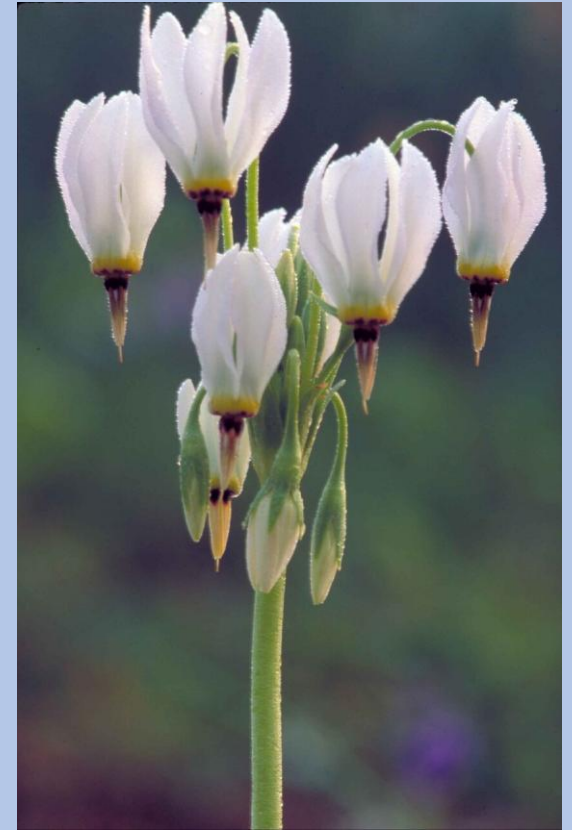
My top ten flowers for sun



- Purple coneflower
- Asters (essential for fall)
- Mountain mint (swarmed by pollinators!)
- Black eyes Susans
- Cardinal flower (hummingbirds...sun if moist enough)
- False blue indigo (so showy)
- Hyssop (covered by pollinators)
- Swamp milkweed (and common but less showy)
- Joe Pye Weed

My top wildflowers for spring

- Virginia bluebells
- Golden ragwort (in right conditions can be prolific)
- Celandine poppy
- Jacobs ladder
- Solomon's seal
- Wild Ginger (for ground insects)
- Phlox
- Shooting stars



Top Trees

- Oak (the most for caterpillars)
- Yellowwood tree (gorgeous when in bloom)
- Dogwood
- Serviceberry (birds can't eat berries fast enough)
- Redbud
- American plum
- Red maple
- Hackberry and cherries (not great landscape trees but important for early bees and other insects)

Top shrubs

- Pawpaw (who can sing the song???)
- Virginia sweetspire
- American holly
- Spicebush (can't believe this isn't in everyone's yard!)
- Ninebark. (color, berries)
- Button bush
- Red twig dogwood
- Clethra summersweet



Vines

- Pipevine (if you'd like hundreds of beautiful blue butterflies all summer all over your neighborhood!)
- Trumpet vine
- Trumpet honeysuckle
- Crossvine



Brush Piles

Planning for all
Seasons!



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