NEWTON CONSERVATORS

NEWSLETTER

Newton's land trust working to preserve open space since 1961

SUMMER ISSUE NEWTONCONSERVATORS.ORG • SUMMER 2021

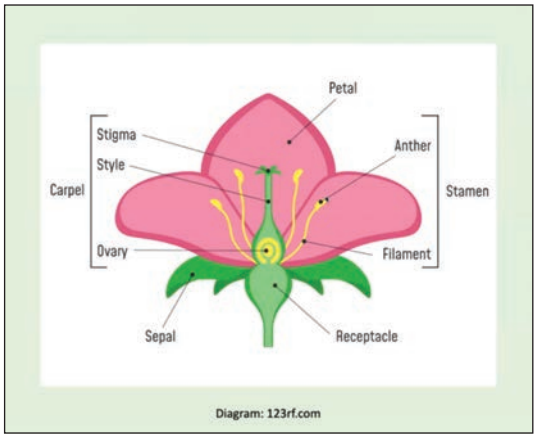
60 YEARS 1961 2021 OPEN SPACE ADVOCACY

NEWTON CONSERVATORS

Helping Pollinators: A New Pollinator Toolkit and Demonstration Garden

A sample of plants in a pollinator garden

We owe the beauty and diversity of our environment to the services provided by pollinators. They are critical to our life: three quarters of the world's flowering plants and over a third of the world's food crops depend on pollinators to reproduce.



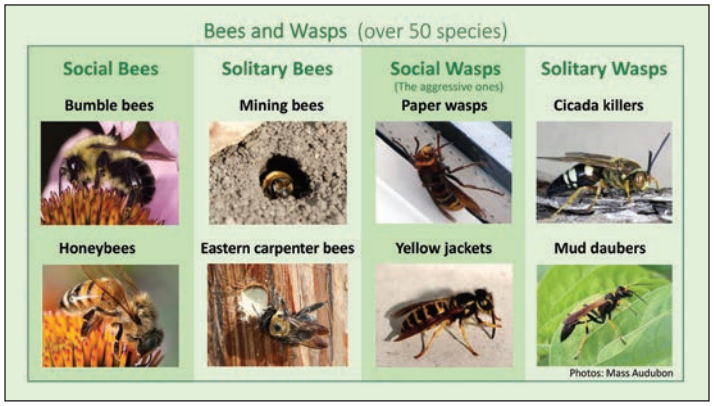
For a reward of nectar or pollen from flowers, pollinators (mostly insects) provide those plants with something they lack: mobility. In most cases, pollinators transfer pollen from the male anthers of one flower to the female stigma of another flower of the same species, thus facilitating the production of seed and creating genetic diversity.

Who are the major pollinators in Massachusetts?

- Bees and wasps
- Butterflies and moths
- Hummingbirds
- Flies and mosquitos
- Beetles, ants, and slugs

(Many types of bats are pollinators, but those in Massachusetts do not provide that service.)

Continued on page 2



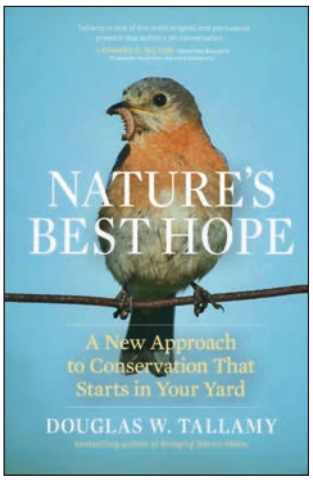
Native bumblebees are our primary pollinators, and they are at risk in our region. Three of the ten species are at risk of disappearing from the state over the next ten years if we don't do something to stop the trend. Forty of the 100 species of butterflies native to Massachusetts also have been listed by the state as being of "conservation concern."

Monarch butterfly on swamp milkweed plant

There are many reasons for the decline of pollinators: loss of their habitat, the use of pesticides and herbicides, the declining number of the native plants that provide their food, and competition for nectar from honeybees, which are not native to the United States. In addition, there is concern that as climate change causes plants to bloom earlier (or later), the nectar and pollen on which they depend may not be available when pollinators need it.

Bumblebee on Asclepias tuberosa plant

Noted entomologist Douglas Tallamy, the author



of *Nature's Best Hope*, has suggested that we all work together to fight pollinator decline. He asks "individual homeowners, property owners, land managers, farmers, and anyone with some soil to plant in…to start a new habitat by planting native plants and removing most invasive plants." He explains, "In the past, we have asked one thing of our gardens: that they be pretty. Now they have to support life, sequester carbon, feed pollinators, and manage water."

In that spirit, City Councilor Alicia Bowman convened a citywide Pollinator Working Group, and the two of us took on the assignment of creating a Pollinator Toolkit to help people who would like to grow native plants that will attract pollinators.

Although Newton's yards contain many beautiful trees, shrubs, and plants, only a small percentage of them are the native plants that evolved as food sources for native pollinators, and we hope to help change that situation.

Once we assembled the pieces of the Pollinator Toolkit, Newton North senior Veer Gadodia (with some help from his younger sister, Diya) volunteered his time to implement it on the Newton Conservators' website. We are very grateful for Veer's help.

You can check out the toolkit here: https://newtonconservators.org/pollinator-toolkit.

Chart from Pollinator Toolkit

Pollinator-Friendly Perennials for Part Sun/Part Shade Gardens

Latin Name	Common Name	Height	Bloom / Fruit	Bees	Butterflies	Humming birds	Moths/Other Insects	Soil Type
Viola pedata or sororia	Bird's foot or common violet	4-8"	Spring	✓			✓	Dry
Fragaria virginiana	Wild strawberry	2-5"	Spring	✓	✓		✓	Dry/Avg
Polygonatum pubescens	Downy solomon's seal	8-16"	Spring	✓			✓	Avg
Zizia aptera	Heartleaf alexander	1-2'	Late spring	✓	✓		✓	Avg
Penstemon hirsutis	Hairy beardtongue	12-18"	Late spring	✓	✓	✓	✓	All
Baptisia tinctoria	Yellow wild indigo	3-4'	Early summer	✓	✓			Dry/Avg
Spiraea tomentosa	Rosy meadowsweet	2-5'	Summer	✓	✓		✓	Avg/Wet
Verbena hastata	Blue vervain	2-4'	Summer	✓			✓	Avg/Wet
Solidago flexicaulis	Zigzag goldenrod	2-3'	Summer-Fall	✓	✓	✓	✓	Dry/Avg
Rudbeckia laciniata	Cutleaf coneflower	3-4'	Summer-Fall	✓	✓			Avg/Wet
Agastache foeniculum	Anise hyssop	3-5'	Summer-Fall	✓	✓			Dry/Avg
Lobelia cardinalis	Cardinal flower	2-3'	Mid-summer-Early fall	✓	✓	✓	✓	Wet
Monarda fistulosa	Wild bergamot	24-42"	Late summer	✓	✓	✓		Avg
Chelone glabra	White turtlehead	18-30"	Late summer-Fall	✓		✓		Wet
Symphyotrichum cordifolium	Blue wood aster	2-3'	Late summer-Fall	✓	✓	✓	✓	Dry/Avg

As you can see in the sample chart on p. 2, the Pollinator Toolkit contains charts of pollinator plants for mostly sunny, part sun/part shade, and mostly shady gardens. There are lists of perennials, shrubs, trees, and vines. When you click on the name of a plant, a photo appears.

In addition, the Toolkit lists sources for buying native plants in our area, tips for starting your garden, and information for helping your garden support pollinators all year long. There are also useful books and websites.

While working on the Pollinator Toolkit, we realized that it would be helpful for people to see a working example. Wonderfully, the Mayor's office and the Parks, Recreation & Culture department granted permission for us to create a demonstration pollinator garden at City Hall—just on your left as you turn into City Hall from Homer Street. A generous grant from Newton Conservators enabled us to buy plants for the garden. Thank you to all who made this garden possible.

New demonstration pollinator garden at Newton City Hall

We were able to plant the garden at the end of May — with help from Katherine Howard and Donna Sirutis. You can see ongoing updates on Newton Conservators' Facebook page and on the new Facebook page for the Newton Community Pollinator Project. If you have questions, please send them to us at pollinators@newtonconservators.org.

Please stop by to see what's going on in the demonstration garden. And have fun using the Toolkit as you work on your own pollinator gardens! Our gardens and container plantings can be both beautiful and life sustaining to the pollinators on which our environment depends. ◆

Beth Wilkinson and Mark Feldhusen

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP OR JOIN TODAY!

YES, count me in! I want to be a nature steward and help Newton Conservators protect and preserve the natural areas in our community.

Please renew/accept my tax-deductible membership at the level checked below:

- ☐ $250 Directors' Circle
- ☐ $125 Patron
- ☐ $100 Donor
- ☐ $75 Sustaining Member
- ☐ $50 Family Membership
- ☐ $35 Individual Membership
- ☐ $15 Student Membership
- ☐ Additional Contribution $_____

Want to make an even bigger impact? Help us support these special funds:

Woodcock Meadow $_____ Trails Fund $_____
Ordway Endowment Fund $_____
Land Stewardship Areas (Dexter Rd., Bracebridge Rd.) $_____ Other $_____

Memberships run for the calendar year. All new members receive *Walking Trails in Newton's Parks and Conservation Lands.*

NAME _____ EMAIL _____

ADDRESS _____ ZIP _____

☐ I would like to volunteer! *Please email me.*

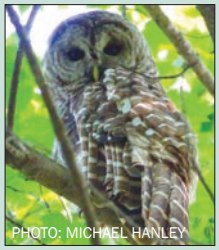
Please make checks payable to Newton Conservators, Inc. and send to P.O. Box 590011, Newton Centre, MA 02459, or visit newtonconservators.org/membership/ to renew or join online. *Consider including Newton Conservators in your estate planning. Contact us at president@NewtonConservators.org.*

President's Message

Kindness Stone

A painted "kindness stone" last spring at Dolan Pond had the encouraging message, "This too shall pass." Little did we know the pandemic would last so long and have such dreadful consequences. As the leaves have filled out the trees, the masks have been falling off our faces — revealing wide smiles. Casual conversations have shifted from *weather* to *whether* you have gotten vaccinated! In the near freezing weather of February and March, the warmth of the breath held in by a mask was welcome comfort. As the ponds melted, the trill of the toads singing, the wake behind swimming muskrats, and sunbathing painted turtles fascinated young visitors while their parents said that visiting our open spaces every day helped get them through the pandemic. Spring plants, shrubs, and trees seemed to burst out with much more vigor this year.

Birding each morning this spring was a special treat when we witnessed the season unfold slowly over the weeks. The return of our local avian residents like catbirds, orioles, swifts, and swallows was eagerly awaited and noted, but some felt the numbers of migrating warblers and thrushes were down a bit. But when you spend time out in nature, there are often surprises, like a beautiful Barred Owl or an ephemeral floral display found along a path at Dolan Pond with the quote from Thoreau scratched nearby, *"Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads."*



Barred Owl

Flower Heart

In place of the usual series of walks, our spring webinar series had greater attendance than ever, covering such topics as vernal pools, Cold Spring Park, spring birding, and pollinator gardens. In case you missed any of them, they will be available in the near future on our Newton Conservators' video channel. Moreover, we expect to have both in-person walks and online webinars this fall!

In other news, the Pony Truss Trail portion of the Riverside Greenway opened officially this month, and orienteering courses are now available at four of our open spaces. Newton Conservators celebrates its 60th anniversary this year with an in-person dinner meeting and lecture at Post 440 on Wednesday October 27 — finally a return to some semblance of normality!

Garlic Mustard

We are grateful for this newsletter's articles by some of our most dedicated volunteers. For BU Professor Richard Primack, the Webster Woods/Hammond Pond area has always been somewhat of a laboratory. He details some of the changes in the trails there due to the recent increased usage during Covid. Retired Brandeis ecologist Eric Olson cogently explains why invasive plants should be controlled. And if you are inspired and moved to action, we are opening up our invasive removal sessions once again to public participation under the newer Covid guidelines.

Sweat Bee

Smile Stone

As a counterpoint to undesirable invasive plants, Beth Wilkinson and Mark Feldhusen's article on a new Pollinator Toolkit is must reading for all those Newton gardeners who ask, "What native varieties should I be planting?" Putting words into action, they also describe a newly installed native plant pollinator garden at Newton City Hall with grant support from the Newton Conservators.

Perhaps you will be inspired to search out invasives in your own yard and put in some native pollinator plants. With vaccination widely available now, you can fully enjoy the restored freedoms and activities we so sorely missed over this trying Covid period and show off your smile in our open spaces!

All the best,

Ted Kuklinski

Ted Kuklinski
President, Newton Conservators

Newton Trails During the Pandemic

Richard B. Primack is a long-time Newton resident and a biology professor at Boston University. He can be reached at primack@bu.edu.

During the first three months of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, there was a huge increase in the number of walkers (and cyclists) in Newton's natural areas. Many new visitors were families with young children and groups of teenagers. As a result, city officials posted signs about social distancing, one-way paths, playground equipment closures, and prohibitions against bicycles in certain areas. Some of these new practices remain in place, even now that the majority of Newton residents have been vaccinated. In the second year of the pandemic, the number of people using our open spaces is considerably greater than before the pandemic.

A sign in Auburndale Park gives directions and a notice about social distancing.

In some areas, such as portions of Cold Spring Park and along the Charles River, trails have always been wide enough for people to stay six feet apart when passing each other. In other conservation areas, such as Webster Conservation Area and DCR's Hammond Reservation, however, many trails were quite narrow. During the pandemic, people adapted to the new spacing requirements by stepping off the paths to let others pass. Unfortunately, this resulted in many trails getting widened and muddy. In some places, what were formerly narrow, leaf-covered, forest trails have been transformed into 3- to 10-foot-wide cleared tracks. Many trails have become severely eroded, exposing rocks and tree roots. People riding bicycles along the trails have contributed to this trail damage, as bicycle tires disturb the soil, allowing it to wash away during rainstorms.

Exposed tree roots and rocks where the soil has been eroded.

While the erosion of trails is an unintentional consequence of use, the proliferation of structures built for fun from dead branches and tree trunks is more deliberately altering Newton's open spaces. Some lean-to structures have been built against living trees and large stones; other structures are free-standing. One such structure on the ridge above Hammond Pond is quite substantial with walls and a roof.

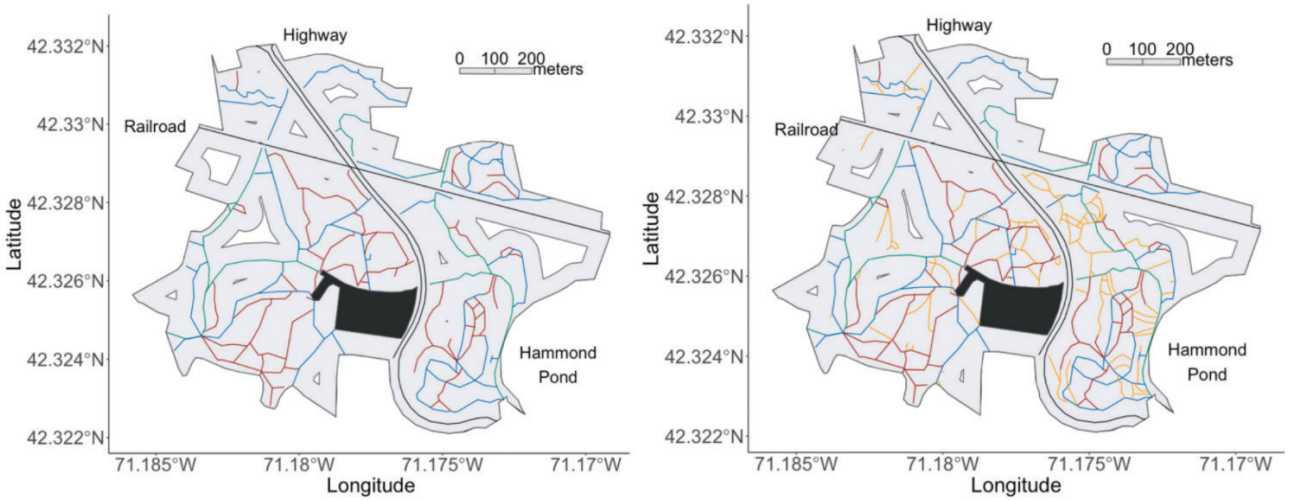


Fig. 1. Maps of Webster Woods, Newton, MA. Shown here at left with the addition of new trails as of 2019 (red) and at right with the addition of new trails as of 2020 (orange) from Biological Conservation "New Social trails made during increase fragmentation of an urban protected area," courtesy of Richard B Primack and Carina Terry

Continued on page 6

…Newton Trails During the Pandemic continued from page 5

A lean-to structure is seen in Auburndale Park.

The construction of such structures is contrary to the good land stewardship "leave no trace" practice intended to protect natural areas, wildlife habitat, and passive recreation experiences.

New social trails

Especially during the first few months of the pandemic, hikers and mountain bikers created many new paths, perhaps as a way to avoid crowded existing trails and to explore and experience new areas. These types of new trails are sometimes called "social trails," as they are made by visitors rather than officially designed by the managers of the property.

A newly created path in the Hammond Woods runs through a patch of wildflowers.

Social trails are considered problematic in natural areas because they damage sensitive vegetation, increase erosion, and fragment wildlife habitat, in the process reducing the total area of habitat, altering environmental conditions of light and humidity, and inhibiting the movement of species. People and dogs walking on social trails can disturb birds and other wildlife, particularly during times of reproduction, leading to the decline or loss of sensitive species. Social trails can also provide entry points for invasive species.

Great increase in trail formation

Prior to the pandemic, the Webster/Hammond area was already extensively fragmented. Hammond Pond Parkway and the Riverside Green Line divided the Woods into four separate sections. A network of dirt roads and trails within each quadrant left few areas of habitat that was farther than 50 yards from any road or trail. Due to its irregular shape, the boundary of the Webster Woods—without the highway, railroad, and the Boston College property—is 3.5 miles. The combined outlines of the parkway, railroad, and Boston College property add another 1.9 miles of boundary.

This sign in Webster Woods emphasizes protecting natural areas.

In 1972, when I completed my inventory of the flora of the Webster/Hammond area, dirt roads and trails had a total length of 5.2 miles. Between 1972 and 2019, an additional 3.3 miles of social trails had been added by hikers and bicyclists, bringing the total length of dirt roads and trails in the Woods to 8.5 miles. During the first four months of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, 3.0 miles of new social trails were created by hikers and bikers, an increase of 36% in the length of trails in the area. In these few months, almost as many new social trails were created as had been created during the previous 48 years. This is truly incredible! This recent fragmentation substantially reduced the amount of interior habitat in the woods. Now, almost every spot in the woods is within 50 yards of a trail, road, or boundary, and it is hard to find an isolated place in the woods where you can sit quietly and be by yourself.

As the pandemic restrictions began to ease in July 2020 and when signs prohibiting biking in the woods were posted, the level of mountain biking in the Webster Woods did significantly diminish. By the end of 2020, the number of walkers and bicyclists in the woods appeared to be far below the peak March-June levels, though still considerably above pre-pandemic levels, and no additional social trails were created. The second wave of COVID-19 restrictions

Signage prohibiting bicycles.

in December 2020 did not appear to result in an increase in visitors to the Woods, possibly due to the colder weather dampening some people's willingness to walk and bike outside.

Efforts to restore the damage

With the arrival of autumn and winter 2020, a layer of fallen leaves and snow covered the woodland floor and obscured the new trails. City officials began closing access to some of the new trails with fallen branches. The hope was that many of the new trails created in 2020 would disappear and no longer be used. However, as the spring of 2021 arrived, it was apparent that many of these social trails persisted. Many of these new trails are still being used by hikers, especially where they extend the trail system into previously inaccessible areas and provide convenient short cuts between older trails.

The Newton Conservation Commission has implemented management strategies to close certain new social trails that are perceived to be particularly damaging because they have increased erosion on steep slopes or because they cross wetlands or other sensitive habitats. Actions being taken include blocking entry points with fallen tree branches and rock walls, and posting signs saying trails are closed. Other Newton residents are also stepping up to help restore the park. During the fall, Ethan Faulkner, an Eagle Scout, "erased" one extensive new social trail and a badly eroded connector trail and created a new appropriately located connector trail. Full recovery of the closed trails will likely take at least several years via the re-sprouting of low shrubs where they have been damaged; active plant restoration is not needed at these sites.

The Conservation Commission is allowing certain social trails to remain where they improve visitor flow and access. The Commission will continue to work to close others in an effort to restore the health of the woodland ecosystem. In any case, the Webster Woods will bear the legacy of the pandemic for many years and perhaps decades to come. ◆

Why Do We Care About Invasive Plants?

Every time I am asked to teach about this topic, I start with a clarification of what land stewards mean by "invasive plants," and — more importantly — what they do *not* mean. People coming to this topic for the first time may confound "invasive" with "weeds" or with "non-natives," and wonder if by invasive plant control I want to herbicide all the dandelions? (Spoiler alert: no.)

American meadow goldenrods have invaded Europe, seriously harming biodiversity there.

Japanese knotweed can strongly dominate the forest understory.

Clarification is definitely in order, because more so than any other group of organisms, plant species have been crossing the seas for centuries, first as stow-away seeds in the ballast of sailing ships but often carried deliberately. Common plant names illustrate this exchange: Norway Maples shade our sidewalks, and Chinese Elm, Japanese Knotweed, and European Beech are all found locally. Users of a field guide will often see the term "alien" in a wildflower description or read that a tree was "introduced." Did you know apples originated in the mountains of Kazakhstan? Or that most species of rhododendron are from Asia? A few plants from the Americas have gone the other way; for example, goldenrod has become a problem weed in Europe, while corn is a vital crop around the world.

The coastal location and early settlement in Massachusetts by Europeans ensure that we have been at the receiving end of many plant introductions, both accidental and deliberate. In fact, a survey published by our State Botanist in 2011 found that of a grand total 2,712 species of plants growing wild in the Commonwealth, 898 species (that's about a third!) were non-native. Fortunately, most of these relative newcomers have simply settled in alongside our native plants with no obvious negative effects. They include a few personal favorites, like Queen Anne's Lace, also known as wild carrot (smell the roots sometime!) and the colorful blue roadside chicory.

Table II. Native vs. Introduced Taxa

	1999 number of taxa	1999 percent of total flora	2011 number of total taxa	2011 percent of total flora	2011 Number of established taxa	2011 percent of established flora
Native Taxa	1,770	57%	1,814	55%	1,814	67%
Introduced, established	1,349*	43%*	898	27%	898	33%
Introduced, Waifs			581	18%	-	-
Total	3,119		3,293		2,712	

*Waifs were not distinguished from established introductions in 1999 *Checklist*

One third of the plants currently found in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts did not occur here prior to European settlement. This graphic is from "The Vascular Plants of Massachusetts" by Melissa Dow Cullina, Bryan Connolly, Bruce Sorrie, and Paul Somers.

"ESTABLISHED"=REPRODUCING ON THEIR OWN.
"WAIFS"=SEEN ONCE OR OCCASIONALLY.

The non-native Queen Anne's Lace flowers attract a variety of insects, and its leaves serve as food for native black swallowtail butterfly caterpillars.

Given this sheer number of plants moved hither and yon, inevitably a few species become wildly successful in their new land. Exactly why this happens is usually unknown in any particular case, but it's likely these plants have left behind one or more highly specialized insect or fungus or other natural enemy that keeps them under strict control back in their native land. Liberated from natural checks, invasive plants have the ability to dominate the growing space in a favored habitat to such an extent that they exclude most other plant species, even other non-natives. The result is a monotonous single-species stand. Such total exclusion of all other plants is perhaps the most conspicuous way an invasive plant causes harm to our local environment.

Is that sufficient reason to chop, dig up, and in some rare cases, use herbicide, to kill these plants? A town conservation agent once told me, "Eric, most walkers on the trails of suburban parks really don't care what plants they're looking at. They just want to see green." This may indeed be true for most visitors, but it's certainly not true for all. Through years of effort, in part by lovers of wild nature like Newton Conservators' members and others, Newton has designated certain areas in town to be left in a natural state. By "natural" these conservationists meant a place where a good diversity of New England's native flora could persist, and even thrive. Standing by while a few non-native plants come to dominate these places is clearly incompatible with a central

Almost no insect nibbling is ever found on knotweed foliage.

reason our nature parks were created in the first place.

And there's more: Over millions of years, our native butterflies, moths, and other herbivorous insects have been engaged in an exquisite "arms race" with our native trees, shrubs, and smaller plants. Plants cannot run away from animals eager to eat them, so they discourage herbivores with chemical defenses, like tannins in oak leaves and bitter alkaloids in tomato foliage. In response, insects have evolved detoxifying enzymes. The plants then add more odd compounds to their foliage, and on it goes.

As a result of these back-and-forth counter-adaptations, most insect species become highly selective, and will only lay eggs on those plants that their larvae can eat. These tight relationships of insects with their host plants are ancient, and not quick to change. What is the link to our invasive plant story? It's this: many of the wildly successful non-native plants must have chemical mixtures in their leaves that our native insects cannot detoxify, because we so rarely see much evidence of insect feeding on them. Keep a watch during your walks in nature. I think you'll find that native insects are only rarely found feeding on invasive or really most any other non-native plants.

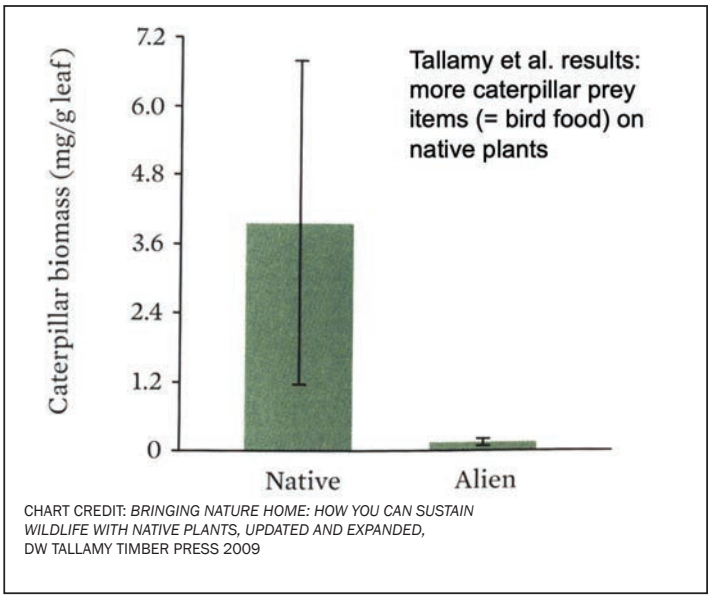


CHART CREDIT: *BRINGING NATURE HOME: HOW YOU CAN SUSTAIN WILDLIFE WITH NATIVE PLANTS, UPDATED AND EXPANDED,* DW TALLAMY TIMBER PRESS 2009

Professor Doug Tallamy and students have documented strong differences between native vs non-native plants. Most non-native plants will be a food desert from the perspective of a songbird searching for insects to feed her nestlings.

The consequences of these low insect numbers ripple upward through our forest food webs. For example, in one experiment, frogs placed for a couple days in marshes dominated by Japanese Knotweed lost weight, while others placed in nearby native plant marshes gained weight. Birds and butterflies are more abundant in suburban estates where the landowners plant native plants, versus estates dominated by non-native plants. Searching for caterpillars consistently turns up more species and greater numbers on native versus non-native plants. The data are overwhelming in support of the claim that our forests and other habitats — including the property around are homes — are richer with insects and bird life when they host a rich diversity of native plants.

Japanese honeysuckle

To be clear again though: overall, the movement of plants about the globe has produced incalculable value for humanity that far outweighs the harm caused by a few invasives. Even the invasives have their good points! Surely, we all can appreciate the colorful displays of Asiatic Bittersweet fruits and the sweet scent of Japanese Honeysuckle. It's no wonder 19th century nursery managers added these attractive species to the horticultural trade here in the US.

The Environmental Science Club after a knotweed cleanup.

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…Why Do We Care About Invasive Plants? continued from page 9

Unfortunately, these two plants along with a handful of others have a tendency to invade our natural areas, in some settings becoming oppressively dominant. Land stewards intervene whenever a non-native plant is so successful that it overwhelms our native flora because a) we like seeing our local flora and b) native wildlife depends on native flora. Pushing back against invasive non-native plants is not a sign of anti-immigrant bias; it's simply weeding those collectively owned, delightfully unruly gardens we call parks. Like wild-area gardeners, groups like the Conservators' invasive plant task force serve to ensure our local forested parks stay diverse, from the plant community right up the food chain to butterflies and songbirds. ◆

Eric Olson is recently retired from Brandeis University, where he taught Field Biology and other courses for many years.

Do You Use Amazon for Purchases for your Home or Business?

amazonsmile

As explained in past newsletters, Amazon Smile is a program through which Amazon donates 0.5% of most purchases (yes, $5 of every $1000) to a nonprofit (501c3) organization of your choice (the Newton Conservators, we hope!).

How does one use Amazon Smile? Instead of going to Amazon.com, you go to Smile.amazon.com. On your first visit, you will be asked to choose a nonprofit organization to receive the bonus donation. Enter "Newton Conservators," and you are ready to go. The rest of your shopping proceeds exactly the same as if you had logged in to Amazon.com initially.

Even with relatively few members using the program so far, the rewards have grown. For the first quarter we participated in 2014, we received $22.32. In 2018, we received $171.04, and it has now grown to $100 per quarter.

If you have any further questions about the program, check the FAQ page: *http://smile.amazon.com/about*.

MISSION
Newton Conservators, Inc.

The Newton Conservators promotes the protection and preservation of natural areas, including parks, playgrounds, forests and streams, which are open or may be converted to open space for the enjoyment and benefit of the people of Newton. It further aims to disseminate information about these and other environmental matters.

A primary goal is to foster the acquisition of land, buildings and other facilities to be used for the encouragement of scientific, educational, recreational, literary and other public pursuits that will promote good citizenship and the general welfare of the people of our community.

The Newton Conservators was formed as a not-for-profit organization 60 years ago in June 1961.

The Newton Conservators' Newsletter© is published four times each year by the Newton Conservators, Inc., in June, September, December, and March. Deadlines for these issues are the second Friday of the month before the issue is published.

We welcome material related to our mission from any source. Send proposed articles or letters by email in MS Word or rich text format to articles@newtonconservators.org. Digitized photographs, maps and diagrams are also welcome.

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Thanks to the following contributors to this edition of the Newsletter: Beth Wilkinson & Mark Feldhusen, Richard Primack, Eric Olson and Katherine Howard.

➔ Invasive Plant Alerts ➔

Black Swallow-wort

Summer is prime time to finish pulling Garlic Mustard, before its seeds spread further. It is also a critical time to dig up or cut back the **Black Swallow-wort (BSW)** that has invaded Newton neighborhoods and public spaces.

Have you seen this vine popping up everywhere? Greenish bluish leaves, somewhat glossy, in pairs opposite to each other, little purple flowers, forming long seed pods? It loves to climb but also will mass on the ground if it has nothing to climb on. This is **Black Swallow-wort**, an invader from Europe in the milkweed family. Monarch butterflies mistake it for our native milkweed and lay their eggs on it — but the Monarch larvae die. Each seed pod releases hundreds more seeds on white fluffy fibers, carried by the wind to start new infestations.

Dig **Black Swallow-wort** out, or at least cut it back and get all the seed pods off — and put them in your trash not into yard waste! Here is a flyer with more details: https://newtonconservators.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/swallowwort_flyer.pdf

You can find detailed information, about this and the other major plants invading Newton, at the new Newton Conservators Invasive Plant section of the website (under Resources). Click here to reach the Gallery of invasive species: https://newtonconservators.org/black-swallow-wort/

Can you help us pull?

Our invasive plant pulls have continued all spring, but were not publicized widely to comply with cover restrictions. Now we welcome broad participation and will promote our remaining scheduled sessions, shown below. We will post these as Events on our website, and schedule more sessions for the late summer and fall. For more information contact Katherine Howard at katherineh998@gmail.com. Thank you!

- **June 12, Saturday, 9:30:** ..... Hemlock Gorge (meet at Ellis St. lot)
- **June 19, Saturday, 9:30-11:30:** .... Dolan Pond, Knotweed (meet at Webster Park entrance)
- **July 10, Saturday, 1-3:** ..... CSP, BSW (Kiosk at Beacon St. entrance)
- **July 11, Sunday 1-3:** ..... Crystal Lake, BSW, Bittersweet (pocket park opposite 1401 Centre St.)
- **July 17, Saturday, 9:30:** ..... Hemlock Gorge, BSW (meet at Ellis St. lot)
- **July 18, Sunday, 1-3:** ..... Hemlock Gorge, BSW (meet at Ellis St. lot)

A new Invasive Species in Newton?

Autumn Olive

Autumn Olive *(elaeagnus umbellata)*, a small shrubby tree, was recently found in one of our parks. It is on Mass Audubon's top-ten list, but was thought to be not prevalent in Newton. It has narrow tapered leaves with silvery undersides, an overall silvery appearance, creamy fragrant flowers, and red berries in fall. If you see it here, please contact Katherine Howard at katherineh998@gmail.com. Thank you!

NEWTON CONSERVATORS, INC.
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Rose-breasted Grosbeak
photo by Haynes Miller

Go Green! ...and all the other colors of the rainbow. You can view this newsletter at newtonconservators.org/newsletters. To elect not to receive a paper copy of the newsletter, update your membership profile at newtonconservators.org/membership