









Reclaiming Natural Habitat in Cape St. Claire: Cultivating a *Native Species Pollinator & Bird Sanctuary*










A Visual Case Study of a Yard Transformed Into 10 Native Species Gardens

INTRODUCTION. Female butterflies and moths will deposit their eggs ONLY on specific host plants that are native to the region. Only such *native species* of flowers, shrubs, trees, vines, etc. enable the propagation of thousands of species of caterpillars, butterflies, moths, beetles, aphids, etc. that are the natural food supply for birds and other animals. Thus, native species plants sustain the entire local ecosystem. For example, raising a brood of Eastern Bluebirds requires 7,000 – 10,000 insects (including ~3000 – 4000 caterpillars). Butterflies and moths do NOT lay eggs on ornamental and non-native species plants (ex: Crepe Myrtle, Japanese Maple, etc.) sold in conventional nurseries; such plants are ecological dead ends. The following chart chronicles my yard’s transformation and illustrates how these gardens help reclaim a beautiful and whole natural habitat.










Definitions:
 1) **Pollinator** — a creature (ex: bee, butterfly, moth, hummingbird) that moves pollen grains from male to female flowers/ blossoms to pollenate.
 2) **“Host Plant Creature Species”** (column #4 in the chart below) — the species of butterflies, moths, beetles, bees, wasps, aphids, and other insects that use these host plants to lay their eggs; includes # of species and examples. [Column #3 lists those pollinators that EXCLUSIVELY use **only** that host plant species.]

| Native Host Plant & Wildlife Association Chart | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| 1. Native Host Plant | 2. Bloom Season | 3. Genus-Exclusive Pollinators (will lay eggs <i>only</i> on this genus plant) | 4. # of Host Plant Creature Species + examples | Bird Use (and other notes) |
| Garden #1: “Milkweed & More” Garden. (Replaced tall, ornamental, non-native grasses.) | | | | |
| Butterfly Milkweed <i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>  | Early Summer to Early Fall (June – September) | Monarch butterfly...  Queen butterfly: Milkweed Tussock moth...   | Host for 25+ creatures. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gray Hairstreak butterfly • Dogbane Tiger moth | Ruby-throated Hummingbirds... ...utilize the fiery orange blossoms as a highly accessible, high-sugar spring and summer nectar. -- Nesting Songbirds actively harvest the silky, fluffy white seed fibers (coma) from split autumn seed pods to line and insulate the interiors of their nests.  |
| “Fireworks” Goldenrod. <i>Solidago rugos.</i>  | Late Summer to Late Fall (August – October) | Goldenrod Flower moth:  | Host for 175+ creatures. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brown-hooded Owlet moth • Camouflaged Looper moth • Wavy-lined Emerald moth • various leaf beetles | American Goldfinches... ...and Native Sparrows depend heavily on the massive clusters of dense, tiny seeds that persist well into the winter.  |














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|--|--|--|--|--|
| <p>Black-Eyed Susan. <i>Rudbeckia hirta.</i></p>  | <p>Early Summer to First Frost (June – Oct)</p> | <p>None exclusively. (Primary specialists also utilize the <i>Aster</i> family, such as the Northern Crescent butterfly...)</p>  | <p>Host for 50+ creatures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silvery Checkerspot butterfly • Gorgone Checkerspot butterfly • Bordered Patch butterfly • Wavy-lined Emerald moth | <p>American Goldfinches, Chickadees...</p>  <p>...and Nuthatches depend on the rigid, cone-like black center heads, systematically pulling out seeds throughout late fall and winter.</p> |
| <p>Purple Coneflower. <i>Echinacea purpurea</i></p>  | <p>Mid-Summer to Early Fall (July – Sept)</p> | <p>None exclusively.</p> | <p>Host for 30+ creatures. Silvery Checkerspot butterfly...</p>  <p>--Ottoe Skipper butterfly, Wavy-lined Emerald moth, several other native moth species</p> | <p>American Goldfinches are the primary avian users, frequently seen balancing directly on top of the spiky, copper-colored central cones to pluck out individual seeds.</p> |
| <p>“October Skies” Aster. <i>Aster oblongifolius.</i></p>  | <p>Late Summer to Late Fall (Sept – Nov)</p> | <p>Pearl Crescent butterfly...</p>  <p>Aster Borer moth...</p>  | <p>Host for 150+ creatures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Painted Lady butterfly..  <p>Silvery Checkerspot butterfly, Aster Flowerhead caterpillar, various native moths</p> | <p>-- The Late-Season Hummingbird Lifeline: long after most other native wildflowers have completely gone to seed, it provides a critical, final sugar-octane refueling stop for late-migrating Ruby-throated Hummingbirds heading south.</p> <p>-- Essential Winter Seed Foraging: In mid-to-late winter, its massive flurries of spent blossoms turn into dense, fluffy seed clusters for birds.</p> |













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| Garden #2: Aronia Garden. (Replaced a section of lawn.) | | | | |
| <p>Black Chokeberry. <i>Aronia melanocarp</i></p>  | <p>Late Spring (May)</p> | <p>None exclusively. Its pollinators are specialists that overlap heavily with apples, hawthorns, and serviceberries.</p> | <p>Host for 45+ creatures. Striped Hairstreak butterfly...</p>  <p>Prunus Borer moth, Apple Sphinx moth</p> | <p>Late-Winter Avian Lifeline: The heavy clusters of glossy black berries ripen in autumn, but they are naturally bitter and astringent. However, after repeated winter freezing and thawing, the berries ferment, sweeten, and soften. They become a critical food source in January, February, and March for hungry Robins, Bluebirds, Northern Mockingbirds, and Hermit Thrushes when all other wild fruit has completely vanished</p> |
| <p>Planted 10 flowering plants in a 3-foot radius around the Black Chokeberry tree: Scarlet Bee Balm, Purple Coneflower, Orange Coneflower, “Fireworks” Goldenrod, Foxglove Beardtongue, Golden Alexander. See elsewhere for descriptions.</p> | | | | |
| Garden #3: Tulip Poplar Garden of Grass. (Added native grasses where none had previously existed, in the shade of a Tulip Poplar Tree.) | | | | |
| <p>Tulip Poplar Tree. <i>Liriodendron tulipifera.</i></p>  | <p>Late Spring to Early Summer (May – June)</p> | <p>Tuliptree Silkmoth...</p>  <p>Tuliptree Beauty moth</p> | <p>Host for 35+ creatures. • Eastern Tiger Swallowtail butterfly...</p>  <p>• Promethea Silkmoth</p> | <p>Hummingbirds feed heavily on the massive cup-shaped spring flowers; Goldfinches and Cardinals...</p>  <p>...consume the winter cone-seeds.</p> |
| <p>Pennsylvania Sedge. <i>Carex pensylvanica.</i></p>  | <p>Early Spring (April – May)</p> | <p>Sedge-specialist Skippers (such as the Dun Skipper, Mulberry Wing, and Northern Broken-Dash) and several Grass-miner moths...</p>  | <p>Host for 45+ creatures. Eyed Brown butterfly, Appalachian Brown butterfly, Little Wood Satyr, Tufted Sedge moth</p> | <p>Sparrows...</p>  <p>heavily rely on the early-maturing, carbohydrate-rich seed heads.</p> |













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| <p>Pretty Sedge. <i>Carex woodie.</i></p>  | <p>Early Spring (April – May)</p> | <p>Sedge-specialist Skippers (including the Two-spotted Skipper and Dion Skipper) along with specialized <i>Carex</i>-feeding moths.</p>  | <p>Host for 45+ creatures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eyed Brown butterfly, Little Wood Satyr butterfly, Mitchell's Satyr (rare) various native micro-moths. | <p>Ground-nesting and ground-foraging forest songbirds use the dense mats for protective shelter and seed foraging.</p> |
| <p>Inkberry/ Gallberry. <i>Ilex glabra.</i></p>  | <p>Late Spring to Early Summer (May – June)</p> | <p>Holly Blossom Cell Bee—a specialized native ground bee</p>  | <p>Host for 20+ creatures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Henry's Elfin butterfly..  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holly Azure butterfly Pawpaw Sphinx moth | <p>Cedar Waxwings,</p>  <p>Bluebirds, Robins, and Hermit Thrushes consume the smooth black inkberries during cold mid-winter thaws.</p> |
| <p align="center">Garden #4: Mailbox/ Driveway Garden. (Replaced tall ornamental non-native grasses and a clumping bamboo grove.)</p> | | | | |
| <p>Creeping Phlox. <i>Phlox subulate.</i></p>  | <p>Early Spring (April – May)</p> | <p>Phlox Moth..... endangered micro-moth; caterpillars feed exclusively on <i>Phlox</i> buds</p>  <p>Phlox Plant Bug.....</p>  | <p>Host for 15+ creatures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Olive Arches moth Spotted Straw Sun Moth Hitched Arches moth Purple-Lined Sallow moth | <p>Ruby-throated Hummingbirds...</p>  <p>...rely on this low evergreen blanket as a vital early-spring nectar source upon arriving from migration.</p> |
| <p>Dense Blazing Star. <i>Liatris spicata.</i></p>  | <p>Mid Summer to Early Fall (July – September)</p> | <p>Liatris Flower Moth...</p> <p>Glorious Flower Moth—larvae eat only <i>Liatris</i> seeds</p>  | <p>Host for 15+ creatures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liatris Borer Moth Wavy-lined Emerald moth Bleeding Flower moth  | <p>Hummingbirds frequent the tall pink spires for summer nectar; Goldfinches systematically strip the seed spikes in autumn.</p> |










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| <p>White Wood Aster <i>Eurybia divaricate.</i></p>  | <p>Late Summer to Early Fall (August – September)</p> | <p>Aster Mining Bees...</p>  | <p>Host for 150+ creatures. Pearl Crescent butterfly, Silvery Checkerspot butterfly, Harris' Checkerspot, Aster Flowerhead caterpillar...</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • various native moths | <p>Towhees.....</p>  <p>Juncos....</p>  <p>...and native sparrows scratch through the leaf litter beneath these shade-dwellers to consume winter seeds.</p> |
| <p>Elderberry. <i>Sambucus canadensis / nigra.</i></p>  | <p>Early to Mid Summer (June – July)</p> | <p>Elderberry Borer Beetle...</p>  <p>Elder Aphid</p> | <p>Host for 60+ creatures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imperial Moth...  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecropia moth | <p>One of the ultimate bird plants; Bluebirds, Catbirds, Grosbeaks..... and Tanagers.....</p>   <p>...relentlessly strip the massive purple berry clusters in July.</p> |
| <p>Garden #5: “Bird Berry” Patch. (Replaced Nandina “heavenly bamboo”—an invasive non-native with cyanide red berries that can kill Cedar Waxwing birds—with Winterberry Holly.)</p> | | | | |
| <p>Winterberry Holly. <i>Ilex verticillata.</i></p>  | <p>Late Spring (June)</p> | <p>Holly Blossom Cell Bee...</p> <p>...a specialized native ground bee</p>  | <p>Host for 20+ creatures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Henry's Elfin butterfly • Spring Azure butterfly • Harris' Three-Spot moth • Black-dotted Ruddy moth | <p>Crucial late-winter food factory: over 48 bird species—including Eastern Bluebirds, Cedar Waxwings, and Thrushes—rely on the persistent red berries during heavy freeze cycles. Small mammals like white-footed mice safely harvest kernels from dropped winter fruit.</p> |






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|--|---|--|---|---|
| Garden #6: Oak Tree Rain Garden. (Removed a 15-foot section of a 6-foot tall wooden fence; replaced it with a privacy “living fence” of shrubs, ferns, and flowers.) | | | | |
| <p>"May Breeze" and "Blue Moon" Woodland Phlox. <i>Phlox divaricate.</i></p>  | <p>Mid Spring (April – June)</p> | <p>Phlox Moth...</p>  <p>Phlox Plant Bug...</p>  | <p>Host for 15+ creatures. Clearwing Hummingbird Sphinx moth...</p>  <p>Olive Arches moth</p> | <p>Ruby-throated Hummingbirds...</p>  <p>frequently visit these fragrant blossoms for essential mid-spring nectar.</p> |
| <p>Fringed Bleeding Heart. <i>Dicentra eximia.</i></p>  | <p>Spring to First Frost (April – October)</p> | <p>None exclusively.</p> <p>Unusual, complex drooping flowers are designed for native Bumblebees for pollination.</p> | <p>Host for 6+ creatures. Clodius Parnassian butterfly....</p>  | <p>Ruby-throated Hummingbirds...</p>  <p>utilize this plant as a rare, continuous nectar lifeline from spring all the way until the winter frost.</p> |
| <p>Wild Ginger. <i>Asarum canadense.</i></p>  | <p>Early Spring (April – May)</p> | <p>Pipevine Swallowtail butterfly...</p>  <p>...occasional alternate host</p> | <p>Host for 5+ creatures. Fungus Gnat larvae</p>  <p>—primary ground-level pollinators</p> | <p>Ground-foraging birds like Wood Thrushes</p>  <p>pick through the dense, low-growing leaves to hunt for small snails and insects.</p> |








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| <p>Ostrich Fern. <i>Matteuccia struthiopteris.</i></p>  | <p>Non-Flowering (Foliage: April – Oct)</p> | <p>Ostrich Fern Borer micro- moth...</p> <p>...larvae bore exclusively into the crown of this fern</p>  | <p>Host for 10+ creatures. Fiddlehead Looper moth</p>  <p>Pink-shaded Fern moth..</p>  | <p>Provides crucial structural shade, thermal protection, and low-altitude nesting cover for common backyard songbirds.</p> |
| <p>Summersweet / Pepperbush. <i>Clethra alnifolia.</i></p>  | <p>Mid to Late Summer (July – August)</p> | <p>None exclusively.</p> <p>While a generalist pollinator magnet, its hosted larvae are wide-ranging forest moths</p> | <p>Host for 20+ creatures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blinded Sphinx moth • Imperial moth...  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 species of diverse native moths. | <p>Provides essential late-summer nectar for migrating Hummingbirds; the capsules provide winter seeds for resident songbirds.</p> |
| <p>Virginia Sweetspire <i>Itea virginica.</i></p>  | <p>Late Spring (May – June)</p> | <p>None exclusively.</p> <p>Its foliage serves as an excellent regional host for highly adaptable generalist moth larvae.</p> | <p>Host for 10+ creatures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Io moth  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecropia moth  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tulip-tree Beauty moth | <p>Provides highly dense, low-altitude thicket protection for nesting Wrens and Catbirds, alongside small autumn seed capsules.</p> |















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|---|--|--|---|---|
| <p>Oak Tree. <i>Quercus spp.</i></p> | <p>Mid Spring (April – May)</p> | <p>Edward's Hairstreak butterfly...</p>  <p>Horace's Duskywing butterfly...</p>  <p>And hundreds of Cynipid Gall Wasp species</p> | <p>Host for 950+ creatures (#1 in North America).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polyphemus moth  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luna moth  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imperial moth, Banded Hairstreak butterfly | <p>Blue Jays,</p>  <p>Woodpeckers and Wood Ducks rely on acorns as a foundational winter fat source; limbs and branches create vital bird “nesting forks.”</p> <p>Note: The Luna Moth (nocturnal) lives only about a week. Adults do not eat; they have no digestive system. They mate, then perish.</p> |












Garden #7: Backyard Corner Garden. (Replaced clumping bamboo grove.)

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| <p>Small-flowered Buttercup. <i>Ranunculus abortivus</i></p>  | <p>Early Spring (April – June)</p> | <p>Ranunculus Mining Bee...</p>  <p>...a highly specialized spring native bee that harvests pollen strictly from buttercups.</p> | <p>Host for 9+ creatures. Bristly Cutworm moth, Fringe-lobed Black moth, and several early-season woodland micro-moths.</p> | <p>Mourning Doves...</p>  <p>Bobwhites, and ground sparrows consume the small, prolific spring seeds.</p> |
| <p>Strawberry Bush. <i>Euonymus americanus.</i></p>  | <p>Late Spring (May – June)</p> | <p>None exclusively; its uniquely textured leaves and bright magenta fruits feed an array of multi-genus woodland species.</p> | <p>Host for 15+ creatures. American Ermine moth,</p>  <p>Spindle Ermine moth, Fall Webworm, and various native geometric loopers.</p> | <p>Mockingbirds...</p>  <p>and Wood Thrushes.....</p>  <p>...systematically seek out the bursting, scarlet-seeded 'hearts-a-burstin' autumn seed capsules.</p> |












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| <p>Cutleaf (Yellow) Coneflower. <i>Rudbeckia laciniata</i></p>  | <p>Mid Summer to Early Fall (July – September)</p> | <p>Coneflower Mining Bee...</p>  <p>...a specialist native bee that depends entirely on Rudbeckia pollen.</p> | <p>Host for 50+ creatures. Silvery Checkerspot butterfly, Gorgone Checkerspot, Wavy-lined Emerald moth, Common Pug moth</p>  | <p>American Goldfinches, Chickadees, and Nuthatches...</p>  <p>cling to the tall, dried seed heads all winter long to extract the seeds.</p> |
| <p>Swamp Milkweed. <i>Asclepias tuberosa</i></p>  | <p>Early Summer to Early Fall (June – September)</p> | <p>Monarch butterfly</p>  <p>Queen butterfly. Milkweed Tussock moth:</p>   | <p>Host for 25+ creatures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gray Hairstreak butterfly  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dogbane Tiger moth | <p>-- Ruby-throated Hummingbirds...</p> <p>utilize the fiery orange blossoms as a highly accessible, high-sugar spring and summer nectar.</p> <p>-- Nesting Songbirds actively harvest the silky, fluffy white seed fibers (coma) from split autumn seed pods to line and insulate the interiors of their nests.</p>  |
| <p>American Trumpet Vine. <i>Campsis radicans</i></p>  | <p>Summer (June – August)</p> | <p>Trumpet Vine Sphinx moth...</p> <p>...an ecological specialist whose caterpillars rely directly on this vine's foliage.</p>  | <p>Host for 8+ creatures. Trumpet Creeper Leafroller, and broad generalist garden loopers...</p>  | <p>Ruby-throated Hummingbirds</p> <p>are the primary pollinators; they vigorously defend and swarm these orange tubes for nectar.</p>  |












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|---|--|---|--|---|
| Garden #8: Paw Paw Grove. (Replaced a grove of 3 clumping bamboo with a grove of 4 Paw Paw Trees.) | | | | |
| <p>Pawpaw Tree. <i>Asimina triloba</i></p>  | <p>Mid Spring (April – May)</p> | <p>Zebra Swallowtail butterfly.....</p>  <p>Pawpaw Sphinx moth...</p>  | <p>Host for 20+ creatures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pawpaw Peduncle Borer moth...  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asimina webworm moth | <p>Opossums, Raccoons, Foxes, and squirrels.....</p> <p>seek out the heavy, custard-like tropical fruits when they drop to the ground in autumn.</p>  |
| Garden #9: Berry Patch and Flower Garden. (Replaced a section of lawn.) | | | | |
| <p>Scarlet Bee Balm. <i>Monarda didyma.</i></p>  | <p>Mid to Late Summer (July – August)</p> | <p>Beebalm Sweat Bee— Endangered native bee</p>  | <p>Host for 12+ creatures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hermit Sphinx moth • Orange Mint moth • Raspberry Pyrausta moth • Gray Marvel moth | <p>High-priority hummingbird magnet; Ruby-throated Hummingbirds fiercely fight over and swarm the blazing scarlet flowers to feed on its exceptional nectar supply.</p> |
| <p>Wild Bergamot. <i>Monarda fistulosa.</i></p>  | <p>Mid to Late Summer (July – Sept)</p> | <p>Beebalm Sweat Bee</p>  | <p>Host for 12+ creatures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hermit Sphinx moth  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orange Mint moth • Raspberry Pyrausta moth • Sphinx chersis  | <p>--- Ruby-throated Hummingbirds are major avian visitors; they tap the long, lavender tubular flowers for essential high-sugar summer nectar.</p> <p>--- Nesting Songbirds selectively shred and gather the fine, dried fibrous bark from the mature winter stalks to weave structure into their nests.</p> |
















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| <p>Bluecrop Blueberry <i>Vaccinium corymbosum.</i></p>  | <p>Mid Spring (May)</p> | <p>Blueberry Bee: <i>Andrena Brennae</i> Bee:</p>   | <p>Host for 310+ creatures. Pink-edged Sulphur butterfly, Henry's Elfin butterfly, Huckleberry Sphinx moth, Blueberry Leaf-tier moth</p>   | <p>Frugivorous Songbirds (such as Baltimore Orioles.....</p>  <p>...Cedar Waxwings, Bluebirds, and Catbirds) aggressively target the heavy clusters of large, sweet blue fruits as soon as they ripen in mid-summer.</p> |
| <p>Duke Blueberry. <i>Vaccinium corymbosum.</i></p> | <p>Early to Mid Spring (April – May)</p> | <p>(See above)</p> | <p>(Same as above)</p> | <p>Early-Season Songbirds swarm this variety specifically because it ripens its heavy berry loads several weeks earlier than other highbush cultivars, filling a critical summer food gap.</p> |
| <p>Chester Thornless Blackberry. <i>Rubus</i></p>  | <p>Late Spring to Early Summer (May – June)</p> | <p>None exclusively.</p> | <p>Host for 12 creatures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Striped Hairstreak butterfly • Blackberry Looper  <p>moth...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • | <p>Backyard Songbirds, including Northern Cardinals, Catbirds, and Thrasher...</p>  <p>...consume the sweet black drupelets continuously through the summer.</p> |
| <p>Triple Crown Blackberry. <i>Rubus</i></p>  | <p>Late Spring to Early Summer (May-June)</p> | <p>None exclusively.</p> | <p>Host for 12 creatures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Same as above) • Tufted Apple Bud moth  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackberry Leafminer | <p>Migrating Songbirds rely on the late-persisting berries along the trailing canes to quickly pack on essential flight fat before starting their southbound autumn migrations.</p> |

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| <p align="center">Foxglove Beardtongue. <i>Penstemon digitalis.</i></p>  | <p>Late Spring to Mid Summer (May – July)</p> | <p>Beardtongue Scraper Bee.</p>  <p>Highly specialized mason bee uses mud, clay, etc. to build protective walls inside their nests</p> | <p>Host for 12+ creatures. Baltimore Checkerspot butterfly</p>  <p>Common Buckeye butterfly, Saunders' Sallow moth, Chalcedon Checkerspot</p> | <p>--- Ruby-throated Hummingbirds seek out the upright, prominent white tubular flower structures from May to July, using their long bills to drain the deep nectar reserves. --- Overwintering Finches (such as American Goldfinches) use their small beaks to pry open the rigid, upright brown seed capsules to extract the tiny winter seeds when snow blankets the ground.</p> |
| <p>Golden Alexander. <i>Zizia aurea.</i></p>  | <p>Late Spring to Early Summer (May – June)</p> | <p>Golden Alexander Mining Bee</p>  | <p>Host for 10+ creatures. Black Swallowtail butterfly...</p>  <p>Ozark Swallowtail butterfly, Rigid Sunflower Borer moth</p> | <p>Ground-Feeding Songbirds, such as Eastern Towhees, Juncos, and native Sparrows...</p>  <p>...hop directly beneath the early spring yellow canopies to clean up the prolific falling seed clusters.</p> |
| <p>Wild (Virginia) Strawberry. <i>Fragaria virginiana.</i></p>  | <p>Mid Spring to Early Summer (April – June)</p> | <p>Highly beneficial to host insects</p> | <p>Host for 70+ creatures.</p> <p>Grizzled Skipper butterfly...</p>  | <p>Ground-Foraging Wildlife, including American Robins, Eastern Bluebirds, Box Turtles...</p>  <p>...Chipmunks, and White-footed Mice...</p>  <p>...devour the small, intensely sweet red fruits the moment they ripen right along the soil line.</p> |

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|--|---|---|---|---|
| Garden #10: A “Discovered” Sassafras Grove with Black Cherry Trees and Vines. (I now foster the growth of these vines & understory trees that I had been previously removing along the property line. Virginia Creeper vines now grow freely over an old chain link fence.) | | | | |
| <p>Sassafras Tree. <i>Sassafras albidum.</i></p>  | <p>Early Spring (March – May)</p> | <p>—Promethea Silkmoth</p>  <p>—Spicebush Swallowtail</p>  | <p>Host for 55+ creatures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eastern Tiger Swallowtail • Palamedes Swallowtail • Imperial moth • Io moth • Cecropia moth | <p>Catbirds, Kingbirds, Great Crested Flycatchers...</p> <p>and Pileated Woodpeckers...</p> <p>...highly prize the high-fat blue fruits in late summer.</p>   |
| <p>Black Cherry Tree. <i>Prunus serotina.</i></p>  | <p>Late Spring (May)</p> | <p>Cherry Gall Azure butterfly</p>  <p>Wild Cherry Sphinx moth</p>  | <p>Host for 490+ creatures (#2 in North America).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eastern Tiger Swallowtail butterfly... <p>Promethea Silkmoth, Cecropia moth, and Viceroy butterfly...</p>   | <p>An absolute bird magnet; over 80 species of regional birds, including Baltimore Orioles and Cedar Waxwings...</p> <p>...eat the summer cherries.</p>  |
| <p>Virginia Creeper. <i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia.</i></p>  | <p>Late Spring to Mid Summer (May – July)</p> | <p>Virginia Creeper Sphinx moth...</p>  <p>Eight-Spotted Forester moth...</p>  | <p>Host for 40+ creatures.</p> <p>Pandorus Sphinx moth, Achemon Sphinx moth, Lettered Sphinx moth, Wood-Nymph moth, Grape Leafroller moth.</p> | <p>Robins, Bluebirds, Nuthatches, and Flickers...</p> <p>...depend heavily on the dark blue winter berries to survive freezing temperatures.</p>  |

Native Host Plant & Wildlife Association Chart

| 1. Native Host Plant | 2. Bloom Season | 3. Genus-Exclusive Pollinators (will lay eggs <i>only</i> on this genus plant) | 4. # of Host Plant Creature Species + examples | Bird Use (and other notes) |
|----------------------|-----------------|---|--|-------------------------------|
|----------------------|-----------------|---|--|-------------------------------|

“Rabbitat” and Bird Apartment (Brush Pile).

(Design. After tree pruning: Crisscrossed and stacked cut limbs—like Lincoln logs— and placed pruned branches with leaves on top.)

Wildlife Uses of a Brush Pile:

- **Bird Protection:** Songbirds like Carolina wrens, eastern towhees, and gray catbirds use the dense inner branches to safely escape hawks, outdoor cats, and harsh storms.
- **Overwintering Shelter:** Hibernating insects, including beneficial native bees, beetles, and the caterpillars of butterflies like the Baltimore Checkerspot, use the leaf litter underneath the pile to survive the winter.
- **Small Mammal Nesting:** **Eastern cottontails**, woodland voles, and white-footed mice build nests inside the lower levels, safe from larger predators.
- **Amphibian Moisture:** Inland from the shore, American toads, gray treefrogs, and red-backed salamanders use the cool, damp microclimate under the logs to keep their skin moist during dry summer months.
- **Reptile Foraging:** Harmless garter snakes use the pile to hunt for insects and rodents, while eastern box turtles seek refuge in the shade.
- **Insect Feeding Grounds:** As the wood rots, it attracts wood-boring beetles and grubs, creating a high-protein buffet for woodpeckers.



“Mosquito-Eating Bird” Houses & Birdbath

2 bird houses (and 1 bird bath)



To attract native mosquito-eating birds, I installed two bird houses with the goal of attracting (using 1 ½” diameter entrance holes):

1. Eastern Bluebird.....



2. Tree Swallow...



1. An adult **Eastern Bluebird** can consume up to **2,000 insects per day**, and an active nesting family can clear **thousands of bugs** from a yard each week to feed their rapidly growing chicks. Because they hunt using a "drop-hunting" technique by scanning pastures from low fence posts or branches, they swoop down to scoop up ground-dwelling pests like caterpillars, beetles, crickets, and grasshoppers— while frequently darting mid-air to snatch up adult **mosquitoes**, gnats, and flying moths.

2. **Tree Swallow.** A single adult Tree Swallow can consume up to **2,000 insects per day**, and an active nesting family can devour **10,000 to 15,000 insects daily**. Because they hunt "on the wing" by sweeping and diving through the air, they vacuum up massive quantities of adult flying **mosquitoes**, gnats, and midges.

Addendum

Reclaiming Natural Habitat in Cape St. Claire: Cultivating a *Native Species Pollinator & Bird Sanctuary*

A Visual Case Study of a Yard Transformed Into 10 Native Species Gardens

...by Father Jim Bors

INTRODUCTION. *I. Discovery.* A few years ago, I learned that female butterflies and moths will deposit their eggs ONLY on specific host plants that are native to the region. Only such **native species** of flowers, shrubs, trees, vines, etc. enable the propagation of thousands of species of caterpillars, butterflies, moths, beetles, aphids, etc. that are the natural food supply for birds and other animals. Thus, native species plants sustain the entire local ecosystem. For example, raising a brood of Eastern Bluebirds requires 7,000 – 10,000 insects (including ~3000 – 4000 caterpillars). Butterflies and moths do NOT lay eggs on ornamental and non-native species plants (ex: Crepe Myrtle, Japanese Maple, etc.) sold in conventional nurseries; such plants are ecological dead ends.

II. Fascination. I became fascinated with this natural, interdependent system of integrity, order, and beauty that hinges on native species plants. A “switch” flipped on in my mind that led me down a path of action to do my part to help maintain our local, delicate web of life near the beautiful Chesapeake Bay.

III. Action. Such passion led me to create **10 Native Species Gardens**, transforming my front and back yards into a **Pollinator & Bird Sanctuary**. Goals:

- **Native & Beautiful.** Replace non-native plants and sections of lawn with beautiful gardens, having 3-seasons of native blooming flowers.
- **Natural & Life-Giving.** Plant only native species plants.
- **Bountiful.** Provide 4 seasons of wildlife sustenance from the blossoms, fruit, and seeds of native flowers, shrubs, and trees (“nature’s bird feeders”).
- **Healthy and Delicious.** Grow native berries for my family’s pleasure and to share with the animals.
- **Low Maintenance.** Spend minimal time maintaining native species since they grow naturally in the wild here.
- **Watershed Habitat.** Provide year-round shelter, natural food, and water for birds, butterflies, and bees.
- **Ecological and Economical.** Reuse the fall leaves as natural leaf mulch; install a “no maintenance” Worm Tower composting tube; use rain barrels.

IV. Results. The following chart chronicles my yard’s transformation and illustrates how these gardens help reclaim a beautiful and whole natural habitat.

---Definitions: 1) **Pollinator** — a creature (ex: bee, butterfly, moth, hummingbird) that moves pollen grains from male to female flowers/ blossoms to pollenate.

2) **“Host Plant Creature Species”** (column #4 in the chart below) — the species of butterflies, moths, beetles, bees, wasps, aphids, and other insects that use these host plants to lay their eggs; includes # of species and examples. [Column #3 lists those pollinators that EXCLUSIVELY use **only** that host plant species.]