

Colchester is certified as a **Community Wildlife Habitat** through the National Wildlife Federation since 2010; the first community in CT with this certification

Bluebirds and Backyard Habitats

Wednesday, May 24, 6:00 pm

Co-Sponsored by The Colchester Garden Club, Colchester Land Trust and Friends of Cragin Memorial Library.

This program is in support of the Community Wildlife Habitat of Colchester and its annual recertification with the National Wildlife Federation

Habitat destruction is the biggest threat to bird species around the world, including here in Connecticut. One of the best things you can do for birds is create a backyard habitat that provides the resources birds need. One species in particular that has benefited from backyard habitats is the Eastern Bluebird, with bluebird boxes providing much needed nesting habitats. CT Audubon Society's RTP Estuary Center's Conservation & Education Coordinator Joe Attwater will teach you how you can attract bluebirds, as well as sparrows, warblers, and more to your backyard, and which bird species are likely to visit you in Connecticut this time of year.



Cragin Memorial Library | 8 Linwood Ave. | Colchester, CT
860-537-5752 | www.craginlibrary.org

- About Eastern Blue Birds
<https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Wildlife/Fact-Sheets/Eastern-Bluebird>
- Managing Habitat for Eastern Bluebirds:
<https://extension.psu.edu/managing-habitat-for-eastern-bluebirds>
- Attracting Blue Birds to Your Property
<https://extension.missouri.edu/publications/g9429>

Garden for Wildlife Tip - WATER

For more information:

- Video: <https://youtu.be/6OnlrAyp3Y0> (5:59 min)
- National Wildlife Federation - Water:
<https://www.nwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife/Water>
- Blog: <https://nri.tamu.edu/blog/tag/backyard> then select "Providing Water for Backyard Wildlife"



Photo by Melissa Deacon



Simple Steps to Create a Native Plant Garden in Your Yard

Like us, birds need food, water, and shelter. You can transform your yard into a bird sanctuary that also saves resources such as water and combats climate change. The secret to success lies in choosing locally native plants, which brim with nutritious insects, berries, nectar, and seed to give birds vital food and refuge. Use the steps below to create and maintain a bird-friendly habitat that attracts colorful birds and sweet melodies. If you don't have a yard, you can grow native plants in containers on a patio or balcony.

- 1 Select a site that's practical to convert into a garden and allows room to expand. Consider:**
 - Do you have full sun? Partial sun? Shade? Is the soil rocky, loamy, sandy, clay, or gravel? Does it drain well? Is your site flat or hilly? Near water? What's the elevation?
 - Learn what's optimal from your local native plant society (see sidebar).
- 2 Plant in the spring or fall months and on cooler days.**
 - Follow planting instructions carefully and get tips on mulching around plants.
 - Water only as needed when young plants are adapting to their new habitat.
- 3 Prepare your garden well to save headaches later.**
 - You may need to dig up lawn, remove invasive plants, and add organic compost to the soil. An easy method is to lay down newspaper at least six sheets deep, with plenty of overlap; wet it down; cover it with 4 to 6 inches of mulch, and let it sit until you are ready to plant. Use deep edging to keep out lawn grass.

- 4 Plan for a variety of shapes, sizes, and kinds of plants to give vertical structure to your garden.**
 - Cluster the same plant species together.
 - Design for color palettes and seasonal blooms.
 - Add habitat features like hollowed boulders that catch rainwater for birds to drink and bathe in.
- 5 Steward your native plant garden with tender loving care.**
 - Pull up noxious and invasive weeds.
 - Enhance with brush piles that shelter birds and other wildlife, too.
 - Leave dead trees and branches.
- 6 Focus on plants that support high variety and quantity of bird food.**
 - Red tubular flowers such as columbine, jewelweed, and bee balm serve up nectar for hummingbirds.
 - Native sunflowers, asters, and coneflowers produce seeds for songbirds.
 - Bushes with berries ripen at different times, so include a seasonal variety to sustain birds: dogwood and spicebush; cedar and holly trees.

The Impact of Native Plants

557

Number of butterflies and moths native oak trees support. Non-native ginkgo trees host just five.

Water-wise, drought-tolerant native plants reduce water use, especially critical in drought-stricken, arid parts of our country.

1,200

U.S. crops that depend on pollinators to grow. Native plants are essential for pollinators like birds, bees, butterflies, and bats.

96

Percentage of land birds that feed insects to chicks. Native plants are nature's bounty.

80 million

Number of pounds of pesticides homeowners apply to the 40 million acres of lawns in the U.S. each year. Native plants, on the other hand, support a vibrant balance of predator and prey insects and thrive without pesticides.

Your native garden joins a collective effort to give back to birds and plant hope for their future.

Spend more time with birds and less time with noisy lawn mowers that pollute the air and water.

800 million

Estimated number of gallons of gas Americans burn in lawn mowers annually. This produces significant amounts of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases that drive climate change.

MORE INFORMATION:

Audubon's Plants for Birds program:
audubon.org/plantsforbirds

Search our native plants database:
audubon.org/nativeplants

Find local native plant resources:
audubon.org/native-plants-resources

Buy *Bringing Nature Home* by Doug Tallamy:
bringingnaturehome.net

 **Audubon**

Community Wildlife Habitat of Colchester Certified through the National Wildlife Federation

Do you care about Wildlife locally to help Colchester remain certified as a Community Wildlife Habitat by certifying your own property through the National Wildlife Federation?

Cost: \$20 application fee complete online application <https://www.nwf.org/certifiedwildlifehabitat> or to request a paper application, email colchestergardenclub@yahoo.com



Colchester Garden Club is a partner organization in the Community Wildlife Habitat of Colchester initiative

Components of a Wildlife Habitat:

Food, Water, Cover, Place to Raise Young, Sustainable Practices

To learn more: <https://www.nwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife/Create>

Benefits to NWF Wildlife Habitat Certification

When you certify you will become a member of the National Wildlife Federation's Garden for Wildlife™ community and receive the following benefits:

- Personalized certificate
- A one-year membership in the National Wildlife Federation and subscription to *National Wildlife*® magazine
- 10% off the National Wildlife Federation catalog merchandise, including nesting boxes, feeders, birdbaths, and other items to enhance your wildlife garden
- Subscription to monthly Garden for Wildlife e-newsletter with gardening tips, wildlife stories, and other resources
- Exclusive option to purchase attractive garden signs designating your garden as a Certified Wildlife Habitat® with the National Wildlife Federation

For Parents: Encourage your children to spend time outdoors in nature every day; the National Wildlife Federation's **Green Hour has an abundance of activity suggestions. <https://thegreenhour.org/>**



(Photo by Ryan Deacon)

Children's Garden adjacent to
Colchester StoryWalk
at Ruby and Elizabeth Cohen Woodlands
96 McDonald Road, Colchester



Garden created and maintained by the
Colchester Garden Club