

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

Have you heard about the Homegrown National Park?

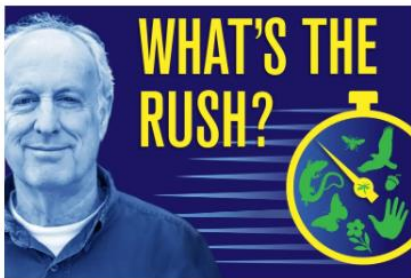
Homegrown National Park (HNP) is a grassroots movement (and a non-profit organization) that encourages people to plant native plants and remove invasive plants in their yards and communities. The goal is to restore biodiversity and create wildlife habitats.

“83% of land in the U.S. is privately owned. If we planted native on 50% of private land we would restore biodiversity...and we can do it starting NOW. We greatly encourage municipalities and public places to participate, but right NOW, each of us can take an ACTION.” – Doug Tallamy

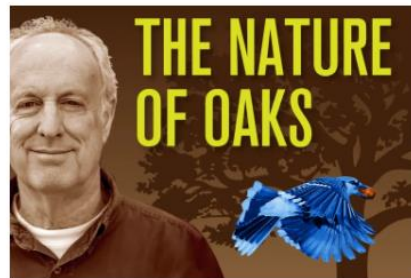
For full article about how you can get started:
<https://www.homegrownnationalpark.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/SHRINKTHELAWN.pdf>

Learn More....Watch Doug Talks!

<https://homegrownnationalpark.org/recorded-talks/>



No Time to Waste: The biodiversity crisis is urgent, but the solution is in your hands



Biodiversity Superstars: Learn why oaks matter more than you might think.



Bug Out: Discover the little things that run your world and how to give them a hand.

Also check out additional videos on a variety of topics with Doug Tallamy <https://homegrownnationalpark.org/videos/>

- ***What's the Rush?*** Doug Tallamy, Co-Founder Homegrown National Park®
Doug Tallamy presents the grassroots science-based solution to the biodiversity crisis and explains why it's so urgent in a April 6th virtual event.
- Why is Reducing the Area of Lawn Important?
- How do I convert my lawn to natives (even if I'm not a gardener)?
- How Do Keystone Plants Regenerate Biodiversity?
- Are cultivars of native plants ecologically as effective as straight species they are derived from?
- What Is the Best Way to Get Rid of Invasive Plants?
- Here's the BEST WAY TO KILL MOSQUITOS - INSTEAD OF FOGGING!

Why Natives?

A native plant is a species that naturally occurs within a specific ecosystem (without human intervention) and shares an evolutionary history with the other species in that area. These relationships make them crucial for the health and productivity of that ecosystem. Without them, ecosystem services collapse, threatening the systems our communities depend on to survive.

Reasons to Plant Native

Helping our landscapes to provide essential ecological services

To sustain life on earth, our landscapes must provide essential ecological services. These actions will help our landscapes provide these services in the following specific ways:

Support Wildlife Food Webs

- Planting dense layers of native plants, especially keystone plants, to provide food, shelter, and reproduction sites for wildlife
- Shrinking the lawn to make space for native plantings and to minimize the habitat disruption and destruction caused by mowing and edging
- Removing invasive plants that outcompete native plants and removing introduced plants that take up critical space
- Protecting wildlife by turning off lights, marking glass to prevent bird strikes, and avoiding toxins that kill wildlife or interfere with their reproduction
- Allowing native plants to set seed to increase biodiversity and provide food for wildlife
- Protecting pupation and nesting sites

Support Pollinators

- Planting for an all-season sequence of blooms
- Planting the specific host plants needed by native pollen specialist bees, wasps, caterpillars, and other specialists
- Leaving pithy and hollow stems to provide nesting sites for stem-nesting native bees and deadwood for cavity-nesting bees
- Leaving areas of bare ground for ground-nesting bees
- Monitoring blooms and pausing mowing to allow pollinators and other insects to feed
- Using nontoxic lawn and yard maintenance methods that don't poison our pollinators
- Opposing community-wide mosquito spraying
- Not purchasing plants treated with neonicotinoids and other pesticides

Protect and Manage the Watershed

- Replacing lawn with dense layers of plants, along with rain gardens where needed, to help keep water on the property
- Avoiding the use of fertilizer and using nontoxic pest and weed control methods to prevent toxins from entering the watershed
- Reducing mowing to reduce the volume of exhaust particles infiltrating the watershed
- Properly disposing of home and garden chemicals, pet poop, and other toxins to prevent contamination of the watershed
- Mulching new plantings with homegrown materials to conserve water
- Changing water habits to reduce water usage

Build Soil and Sequester Carbon

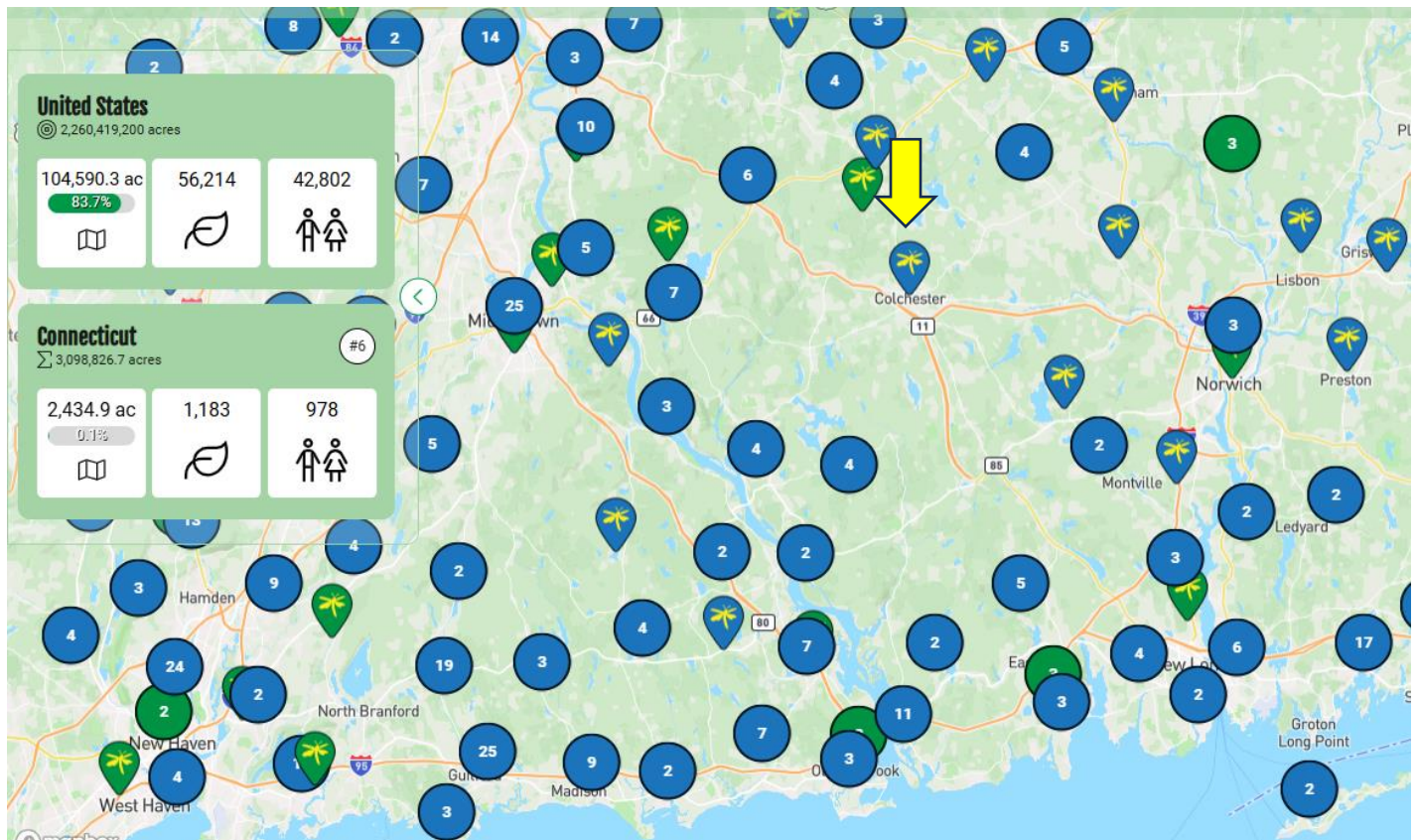
- Leaving stumps, snags, and branches on site to store carbon
- Leaving leaf litter to reduce runoff and retain soil moisture
- Planting dense layers of plants to build and protect soil structure and prevent erosion
- Reducing the volume of emissions by leaving leaf litter instead of using power leaf blowers
- Choosing nontoxic yard maintenance methods to prevent toxins from building up in the soil
- Reducing energy usage and carbon emissions by reducing mowing and turning off the lights
- Sequestering and storing carbon by planting trees and other plants—lots of trees and plants!

The Simple Solution: Accessible and Measurable

HNP is grassroots call-to-action. The biodiversity crisis is clear problem with a science-based solution: **Add native plants and remove invasive ones everywhere that we live, work, learn, pray, and play.**

The HNP Biodiversity Map is an interactive, community-based visual tool that tracks the total area occupied by native plants of participating individuals or entities. The Map provides a dynamic visual. Everyone is encouraged to join, set a planting goal, and share their planting site(s). This can range from a single native plant in a container on a porch or rooftop to a substantial meadow, forest, or prairie. [Get on the Biodiversity Map!](https://homegrownnationalpark.org/map/) <https://homegrownnationalpark.org/map/>

Below is the current HNP map for Colchester and surrounding areas. **The sole firefly icon is a single resident who has signed up on the HNP map committing a portion of their property to the planting of native plants for biodiversity.**



However, there are many people in Colchester removing invasives and planting natives. **This includes 116 property owners** who certified their properties as NWF wildlife habitats providing food, water, places to raise young, cover from predators, and participating in sustainable gardening practices, including the removal of invasives **helping Colchester to become and stay certified as a Community Wildlife Habitat through the National Wildlife Federation since 2010.**

Have your conservation efforts be counted

- **Sign up through Homegrown National Parks biodiversity map (free)**
- **Certify your property as a National Wildlife Federation wildlife habitat (fee) Learn more....**



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>



Add a sign to your certified garden or property

Creating a wildlife habitat garden to attract birds, butterflies, and other neighborhood wildlife is fun, rewarding, and makes a big difference. It's easier than you might think. Here is what your wildlife garden should include:



Food: Native plants provide food eaten by a variety of wildlife. Feeders can supplement natural food sources.



Places to Raise Young: Wildlife need resources to reproduce, and to protect and nourish their young.



Water: All animals need water to survive, and some need it for bathing or breeding as well.



Sustainable Practices: Maintain your yard or garden in natural ways to ensure soil, air, and water stay healthy and clean.



Cover: Wildlife need places to take shelter from bad weather and places to hide from predators or hunt for prey.

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. **Use code **GFW40** to get a Classic Sign or flag for just \$18 when you certify! That is 40% off the sign price!**

For Parents:



GREENHOUR™

Powered by L.L.Bean

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/>



Help children learn, play, grow through gardening.

See activities at <https://kidsgardening.org/>



by Homegrown National Park®

Announcing the launch of a brand-new series of short videos created for kids in grades K-2 by WonderGrove Kids, in collaboration with Homegrown National Park! These engaging and educational videos focus on the importance of creating habitats for birds, making it easy and fun for young children to learn how they can help nature right in their own yards. <https://homegrownnationalpark.org/hnp-kids/>

WonderGrove Kids is renowned for providing parents and teachers with a comprehensive selection of instructional animations that prepare children for the daily challenges of life. What a great opportunity to inspire the next generation of environmental stewards!



Winter wildlife photos by Stan Malcolm <https://www.flickr.com/photos/stanmalcolm/albums>
To view more photos by Stan Malcolm <https://www.performance-vision.com/airline/index.htm>

More For Parents:



Visit Cohen Woodlands, Colchester's StoryWalk and the Children's StoryWalk Pollinator Garden

Ruby and Elizabeth Cohen Woodlands is a 206 acre open space park with so much to offer to view and get close to nature and wildlife – two ponds, large fields, three hiking trails, picnic tables and demonstration gardens developed and maintained by members of the Colchester Garden Club with plants supporting pollinators through the seasons.

For a map of the park and brochure about the pollinator garden:
<https://www.colchesterct.gov/parks-facilities/pages/ruby-and-elizabeth-cohen-woodlands>.

To learn more about the Colchester StoryWalk, see brochure:
<https://www.colchesterct.gov/parks-facilities/files/storywalk-brochure>

The Children's StoryWalk Pollinator Garden is a community service project of the Colchester Garden Club.