

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

April is National Native Plant Month

Native plants have formed symbiotic relationships with native wildlife over thousands of years, and therefore offer the most sustainable habitat. A plant is considered native if it has occurred naturally in a particular region, ecosystem, or habitat without human introduction.

Native plants help the environment the most when planted in places that match their growing requirements. They will thrive in the soils, moisture and weather of your region. That means less supplemental watering, which can be wasteful, and pest problems that require toxic chemicals. Native plants also assist in managing rain water runoff and maintain healthy soil as their root systems are deep and keep soil from being compacted.

Source: <https://www.nwf.org/Garden-for-wildlife/about/native-plants>



Black Swallowtail on native Bee Balm (*Monarda fistulosa*) or Bergamot at Cohen Woodlands. Photo by Katherine M. Kosiba

Learn About Native Keystone Plants for Wildlife Featuring Doug Tallamy

Keystone plants are natives that are essential to our ecosystems because they support 90% of the caterpillar species that enable our terrestrial birds to reproduce, as well as all of our specialist native bee species. YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5cXccWx030> (1:16:18 min)

Use the **Native Plant Finder** offered by the National Wildlife Federation to make wise choices when adding more natives to your garden and landscape.

Enter your zip code at <https://www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder/> to discover the best native plants, attract butterflies and moths, and support birds and other fauna is an indispensable tool, based on the research of Dr. Douglas Tallamy, University of Delaware and in partnership with the United States Forest Service.

See native plants in a garden setting

- Colchester Garden Club's Butterfly Pollinator Garden at Ruby and Elizabeth Cohen Woodlands at 96 McDonald Road <https://www.colchesterct.gov/parks-facilities/pages/ruby-and-elizabeth-cohen-woodlands>
- Pollinator Garden at Raymond Brook Preserve on Kinney Road supported by the Hebron Pollinator Pathway team.
- Native Plant Collection at Connecticut College <https://www.conncoll.edu/the-arboretum/plant-collections/the-native-plant-collection/> includes link to printable self-tour guide.

More Resources

- Enhancing Your Backyard Habitat for Wildlife by CT DEEP Wildlife Biologist Peter Picone. https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/wildlife/pdf_files/habitat/EnhancingBackyardHabitatpdf.pdf (28 pages)
- Bring more birds to your yard with native plants selected from the Audubon Native Plant Database: <https://www.audubon.org/native-plants>
- Read about featured native plants at Mt Cuba Native Plant Finder <https://mtcubacenter.org/native-plant-finder/> then scroll down
- Alternative Plant Resources (UConn) <https://cipwg.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/244/2016/01/Alternative-Resources-handout-2015.pdf>

Wildlife needs a healthy habitat to thrive

Consider taking a self-assessment of your property then certify your yard as a Wildlife Habitat with the National Wildlife Federation and help keep Colchester certified as a NWF community wildlife habitat in 2023.

Components include: Water, Cover, Places to Raise Young, and following Sustainable Gardening practices

Certification Cost: \$20 application fee

Complete online application

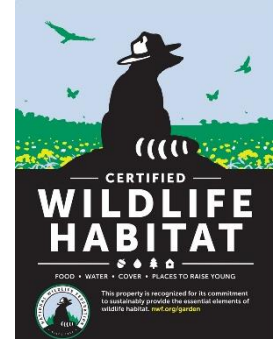
<https://www.nwf.org/certifiedwildlifehabitat>

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



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/>

This page is provided by the Colchester Garden Club, a partner organization of the Community Wildlife Habitat of Colchester

*Certified Wildlife Habitat Sign at Cohen Woodlands
Photo by Katherine M. Kosiba*

