

Wildflowers in the Neighborhood



The Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Lynn is going wild! -- with wildflowers that is. With the help of the Swampscott Conservancy, church members planted 136 seedlings of native Canada Windflower (*Anemone canadensis*), Eastern Red Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*), and Wild Geranium (*Geranium maculatum*) in a wooded area on the church's property.

Suzanne Hale, Conservancy member and native plant enthusiast, assisted in the selection and placement of the plants. Jeannette McGinn and Jim Olivetti, church members, organized the May 1st event, which brought 14 people out, trowels in hand, ready to start planting. With everyone wearing masks and socially distancing, the seedlings were gently transplanted from pot to soil, ready to root and grow in their new woodland home.

What are native plants? Native plants are those that occur naturally in the region in which they evolved as opposed to exotic species brought in from other countries. Compare our Northeast Trumpet honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*) that attracts butterflies, hummingbirds, and other pollinators, and with invasive Oriental Bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) that smothers and strangles shrubs and trees.

Why plant natives? The simple answer is that they protect biodiversity – in short, they benefit the birds and bees. Native wildlife typically only feeds on plants native to the area. The proliferation of exotic non-native plants creates in essence an ecological desert for many birds and pollinating insects. Another reason is that the trees, shrubs, and flowers native to an area are hardier and generally require less water and care than more exotic plants.

To discover New England native plants that will thrive in your garden, visit the Native Plant Trust (formally Garden in the Woods) website at [Native Plant Trust](#). For more info on invasives, visit the Conservancy's short videos on YouTube entitled "Nature Notes on Invasive Plants" [Swampscott Conservancy - YouTube](#). And don't forget to mark your calendars for the Conservancy's annual Native Plant Sale scheduled for 10:00 am on June 13 at the Swampscott Farmer's Market.