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Grow Native massachusetts

Every garden matters ~ Every landscape counts®



August 2026 Newsletter

We All Go Wild for Wildflowers... But Look Before You Sow!



At an environmental community event I attended last April, a garden club table was handing out free “butterfly garden” seed packets, part of a give-away from a large seed company. Other attendees were delighted to get this freebie, but when I saw the species list on the packet, I realized that these future seed-sowers were being led down the proverbial garden path.

Wildflower seed mixes are often marketed as a simple one-stop-shop way to support pollinators and restore ecological health.

With bright packaging, images of bees and butterflies, and compelling labels like “northeast wildflowers”, “pollinator friendly,” “non-GMO,” or “neonicotinoid free,” they can seem like an easy, reliable choice. But ecological gardeners should approach these mixes with care.

Commercially available blends are often designed first and foremost to put on a show for people, not create ecologically valuable habitat for pollinators.

How can you tell? [Read more our on website.](#)

More Upcoming Programs You Won't Want to Miss...

WORKSHOP

Understanding Microclimates and Soils in the Garden

Instructors: Marie Chieppo, Trevor Smith, [CFS Regenerative Design Studios](#)

When: August 6 | 10:00 - 11:30am

Where: Sagamore Beach, MA (exact location provided with registration)

Fee: Member \$45/ Non-member \$55/
Workshop Sponsor \$100



This in-person workshop will explore a landscape replete with native plants across a variety of microclimates on site- from dry, sunny areas to more sheltered, moisture-rich spaces. We'll talk deep roots, seasonal timing, ecological value, and work with actual soil samples to show how to work with what you have to create a glorious garden.

[Learn More & Sign Up](#)



NATIVE PLANT POP-UP MARKETS

[Pop-Up at Beverly's Garden](#)

[Party](#)

When: August 8 | 12:00 - 5:00pm

Where: Beverly Common, 31 Dane St,
Beverly, MA

[Pop-Up at Devens Farmers](#)

[Market](#)

When: August 25 | 11:30am - 2:30pm

Where: Corner of Elm & Jackson Streets,
Devens, MA

Get native plants from local growers, and bring them all your plant and garden questions! We will be joined by growers from our native nursery network, including [Checkerspot Farm](#), [Red Trillium Gardens](#), and [Hilltop Natives](#). They start much of their stock from seed (often local ecotype), and curate their inventory with an eye toward species of particular value to pollinators, caterpillars, and other threatened wildlife. All of them are passionate advocates for native plants and creating habitat in our gardens. Come get some great, locally grown native plants!

[View Our Full 2026 Pop-Up Market Schedule](#)

GATHERING IN THE FIELD

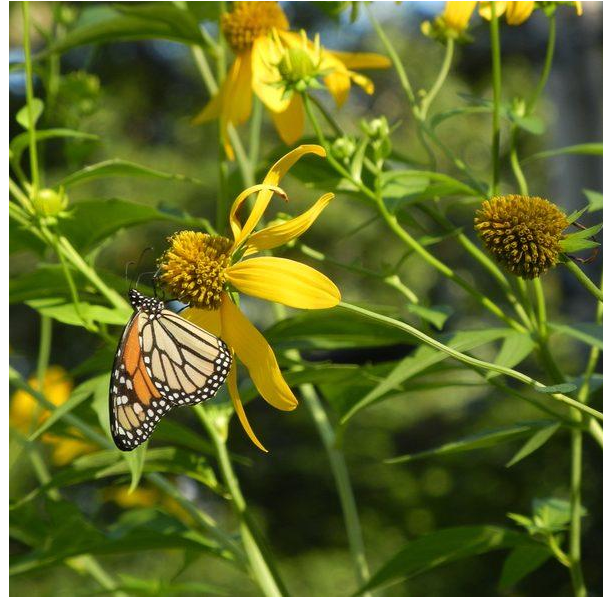
[A ReWilding Project in Lenox](#)

*At the Home Garden of a Grow Native
Board Member*

When: August 20 | 1:00 - 3:00pm

Where: Lenox, MA. (Address details
shared with registered participants)

Fee: Free for members of Grow Native
MA



**MEMBERS ONLY ~ [Become a
Member](#)**

Join us in Western Massachusetts for a firsthand look at a multi-year rewilding project in progress, where the landowner will discuss its transformation—from what the property once was, to what it is today, and their vision for its future. **Spaces go fast, so sign-up now!**

Reserve Your Spot

**For even more great programs, check out our
[Upcoming Partner Events](#) listings!**

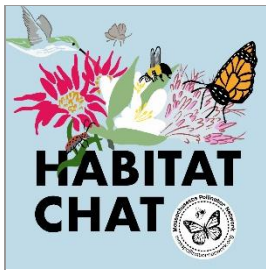
You visit this interactive calendar anytime to catch up on what's going on around the state (and beyond!). You can also [SUBMIT](#) any native plant, ecological landscaping, or habitat creation/restoration events that are not already listed.

Bulletin Board



Check Out Our 2025 Annual Report

We are expanding our reach with a growing staff, and are grateful for the dedicated support that makes this possible. Take a look back at [highlights from 2025](#), including the integration of the Massachusetts Pollinator Network and their popular monthly programs.



Enter the Chat: Habitat Chat!

The Massachusetts Pollinator Network hosts monthly drop-in, informal meetings for participants from across the state to learn about topics relevant to our work, share projects, ask questions, and exchange knowledge, ideas, and updates. [Register HERE.](#)



Grow Native Mass Sticker Design Contest

Help us create a fun new sticker to give out at community events! Submit a design for a 3" round sticker using the phrase "Plant a Habitat" to hpruiksma@grownativemass.org. Your creation could appear on water bottles and laptops across the Commonwealth and beyond!

NEW deadline August 28. Please, no AI-generated art.

Photo of the Month



Sunflower Mining Bee

Photo credit: [Spencer Hardy](#), CC-BY-NC via iNaturalist.

August is prime time for our native perennial sunflowers, so we are seizing the moment to highlight this powerhouse group of plants. *Helianthus* species are some of the most important [host plants](#) among herbaceous genera, both for caterpillars and for pollen-specialist bees. One of these specialists is *Andrena helianthi*, a mining bee that is a [narrow oligolege](#) on *Helianthus*; it only collects pollen from sunflowers and can't sustain its populations without it. Having a strict association like this is uncommon however, most of the specialist bees that use *Helianthus* also collect from closely related genera like asters and goldenrod. Most gardeners are familiar with the cultivated annual sunflower, which has its origins in the western prairies and thrives in full sun. The perennial species native to New England, like *Helianthus divaricatus* and *H. decapetalus* (one of which is likely pictured above, it's hard to tell without seeing the leaves) are adapted to open woodlands and forest edges, and are a vibrant addition to any garden where they can have room to spread.

Header Photo: *Helenium autumnale* (Helen's flower/sneezeweed). © [oligirouard](#) via iNaturalist.

Donate / Become a Member



We inspire people to action across Massachusetts, on behalf of native plants and the diversity of life they support.

We are passionate about our mission. Please join with us to make it a reality.
