

Old Saybrook Conservation Circular

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Pollinator Gardens

Since its inception in Seattle in 2008, the Pollinator Pathway project has consistently gained momentum across the US. The purpose is to create pollinator-friendly habitats by helping bees, butterflies, hummingbirds and many other pollinators find the food and shelter they need throughout the year. These habitats, with primarily native plantings, should ideally be connected by no more than half a mile since that is the range of most native bees. The habitat effectively creates a corridor of properties where pollinators can thrive.

This project began in 2017 in Wilton, CT and since then, pathways have been established in over 85 towns in CT and NY and the list keeps growing.

Pollinators fertilize the plants in our yards, farms and orchards. Sadly, pollinator populations are in sharp decline because of pesticide use and loss of habitat. Bee populations, both native and honey bees, have seen a sharp declines. Monarch butterflies have declined by 94.6% in the last 20 years, according to the US Wildlife Federation.

If you want to help out pollinators here are some things you can do as a homeowner:



- 1) Include native plantings on your property. Use a variety of plants that bloom from early spring until late fall. Group the plantings rather than space them all apart. Night blooming plants support moths and bats.
- 2) Avoid modern hybrid flowers; they tend not to contain the nectar, fragrance, and pollen that pollinators look for.
- 3) Avoid using pesticides and herbicides on your property whenever possible.
- 4) Leaving some dead wood and fall leaves for the winter months will help the nesting native bees and the overwintering eggs of pollinating insects.
- 5) Put out overripe fruit like bananas or oranges to attract butterflies. Also a sponge of lightly salted water with sea salt is good for bringing in both butterflies and bees.

You can find a list of native plants and other great information at www.pollinator-pathway.org. You can also submit your property on this site and "Join the Pathway".

Bobcat Sightings in Old Saybrook

We are fortunate in the lower CT River area to have access to many miles of coastline and open spaces which offer the opportunity to observe wildlife. During the pandemic, many people have enjoyed these spaces and reported sighting of birds that included numerous species of song birds, owls and hawks, as well as ospreys and bald eagles. In addition to avian species, there have been several sightings of Bobcats, Fisher Cats, and in the past years, River Otters. Throughout the state, Black Bears and Moose have also been reported according to information on the DEEP website.

Last fall and again earlier this summer, Bobcats were seen in the South Cove area of town. As reported on the DEEP website (see link below to learn more), the Bobcat population has been rebounding since 1972 due to improvement of forest conditions and legal protection that prohibits hunting or trapping of Bobcats.

These are lovey animals that primarily eat squirrels and rabbits, however, they may also prey upon small domestic animals that are unsupervised. Bobcats are normally very skittish, but if you happen to see one, watch quietly and then report your sighting to the DEEP using the link included below.



DEEP Bobcat programs and information:

<https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Wildlife/Learn-About-Wildlife/Bobcats-in-Connecticut>

DEEP map on current Bobcat sightings:

<https://ctdeep.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=924a7664caac4b9ba54512233b7d5495>

Link to how to report a bobcat sighting to the DEEP:

<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/775f654283da4b-769146cdd3d39d0e1c?portalUrl=https://CTDEEP.maps.arcgis.com>

Repurposing Crafts

We hear “reduce, reuse, recycle” all the time. The idea behind this phrase is that we do these tasks in the order stated: first, reduce your consumption of goods; then, if you can’t avoid using something, at least reuse it multiple times (avoid single-use, disposable goods); as a last resort, recycle the materials by bringing them to a processing facility (i.e., transfer station). However, one step is often left out of this 3-action plan, and that is an intermediary step between reuse and recycle called “repurpose” (also known as upcycling).



Repurposing items that cannot be used for the same purpose as they were originally intended can save a lot of energy and resources required to recycle those same materials at a facility. Additionally, non-recyclable items can sometimes be repurposed, avoiding the worse consequence of

filling up landfills! Repurposing is often a way to get creative with items you already have, saving you money in purchasing items to fill the same purpose, adding value to your home, and providing entertainment for your kids or yourself in the process. Here are just a few thoughts for repurposing common household items:

- Plastic fruit containers make great seedling starter pots for your home garden.
- Plastic bread bag tabs can help you organize cords, or can be used as labels.
- Plastic bottles, glass jars/bottles, and aluminum cans can be converted to a variety of household items – piggy banks,

flower pots, bird feeders, pencil holders, candle holders, vases, chandeliers, robots, you name it!

- Jar lids and bottle caps can be made into wind chimes, tea lights, or decorative art.
- Broken dishes can be used as garden stones/patio pieces, edging for planting beds, puzzle piece ceramics, bird baths, and bird feeders.



If you’re finished using something for its intended purpose, or it is broken and no longer able to be used for that purpose, think twice before you recycle it, or worse, throw it away! A quick internet search with the keywords “repurpose” or “upcycle” and whatever item you’ve got may come up with some amazing and creative ideas for you to find new value in what was once considered “trash!” Here are a few webpages with ideas for repurposing:

- <https://feltmagnet.com/crafts/upcycling/>
- <https://twistedsifter.com/2012/06/creative-ways-to-repurpose-reuse-and-upcycle-old-things/>
- <https://www.familyhandyman.com/list/80-old-items-totally-fit-for-repurposing/>

You’d be surprised by how many things we throw away can be turned into something useful or decorative. Even larger household items, like furniture and old appliances, can be repurposed in creative, and often functional, ways. With the help of repurposing, one man’s trash truly can be another man’s treasure, and our environment can be a bit cleaner too!



There are an estimated 125 osprey nests along the lower Connecticut River from East Haddam to the mouth, including 25 on Great Island in Old Lyme.

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