

REWILD YOUR LAND RESOURCE GUIDE

a guide for rural rewilders



Version 1, 2025

A MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDER



Citizens of New Jersey,

Upon hearing the word rewilding or community rewilding, many people immediately think of native plants, protecting wildlife, preserving land, and conservation actions. While all of these assumptions are true, I am here to tell you that community rewilding is so much more.

I am an authentic person. I find myself feeling limited, trapped, bored, isolated, and controlled by many things in our modern world. As a form of personal rebellion, I have turned to rewilding- exploring with my sense of humanity and my connection to local nature.

In our modern world we experience unrelenting influence from change, globalization, and technology. It sometimes feels like we have no control at all. These factors have dominated how we live and how we relate to the world around us. We are being robbed of our sovereignty, and in that, our resilience and self-sufficiency.

Highly developed, highly populated, and highly impacted by modern factors, New Jersey is the perfect place for community rewilding because its land and people are most at risk for losing the spirit that makes it wild. New Jersey is a highly developed landscape for key reasons. The land of New Jersey is broken up like a giant puzzle of many zoned and planned pieces. Many agencies and organizations work every day to conserve, preserve, and steward the nature and communities of New Jersey, however, what is needed is more citizens participating in magnifying these efforts. If we focus on all the residential pieces of the New Jersey Puzzle, the land spaces that citizens control, what a difference we could make if every one of those pieces boosted biodiversity, connected habitats, enhanced local resources, and worked to help people be more resilient and self-sufficient. We have to ask ourselves- Why can't New Jersey be known as wild? How do we bring the wild back to New Jersey's land and people?

Community Rewilding is the revolution that we need. Community Rewilding is completely redefining environmentalism because it can link our connection to nature with our empowerment. This is not a cause, it is a physical, social, and spiritual transformation of our daily lives. This is an action that we can directly control and feel real gratification and benefit from. If we rewild our land and ourselves, we will directly see the change that we are creating. Community Rewilding is more than planting native plants- it is a revolutionary act of hope that is meant to restore nature and transform our lives. It represents what I am looking for in my life- and what I know many of you are looking for as well.

I look forward to what Rewild NJ will bring to my life and the lives of others.

Join me in rewilding the 21st Century. Let's get a little wild New Jersey!

Francesca Mundrick
Founder & Executive Director
Rewild New Jersey Community Cooperative (RNJCC)





1. INTRODUCTION TO REWILDING



WHAT IS COMMUNITY REWILDING?

Community Rewilding is the reconnection of people with local environments. Community Rewilding is a revolutionary act of hope that counterbalances the complex modern challenges that we face. The practice of rewilding both land and people, Community Rewilding, promotes local resilience and self-sufficiency by restoring nature and transforming people.

This movement has emerged due to a need to reimagine our approach to environmentalism by linking our connection to nature to empowerment in the modern world.



BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY REWILDING

- Enhance biodiversity
- Create habitat connectivity
- Restore local environments and ecosystem services
- Coexist with wildlife
- Empower local people

REWILD YOUR LAND, REWILD YOURSELF

The action “Rewild Your Land, Rewild Yourself” is Community Rewilding in practice. This is a physical, social, and spiritual transformation for local nature and people.

KEY PRINCIPLES FOR REWILDING YOUR LAND

- **Transform** your property physically in small or large areas by including native plants, pollinator pathways, groundcover, native trees, leaf litter, water features, habitat elements, and more
- **Decrease or eliminate** your use of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers
- **Coexist** with wildlife by welcoming them onto your property and working against exclusion of nature and fear of wildlife
- **Respect and value** the life of all beings, not just humans
- **Cultivate** a Homestead, Permaculture, Community Garden, or Urban Farm
- **Support** real environmental change by counterbalancing global habitat & biodiversity losses at the local level
- **Beautify** your community and State
- **Improve** the health of yourself, your family, and your local community through rewilding
- **Rewild** New Jersey as one part of a whole

A WIN FOR WILDLIFE – A WIN FOR US

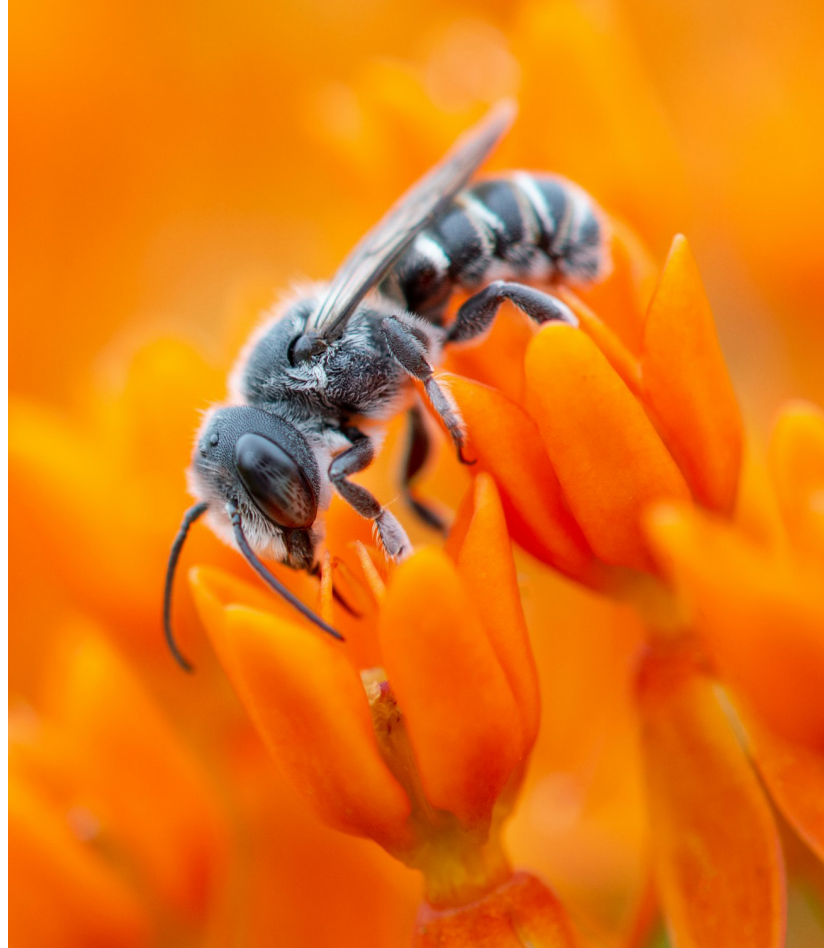
The net gain of biodiversity through nature forward practices at any scale, in Urban, Suburban, or Rural communities, is considered Rewilding Land. Rewilding Your Land is the physical transformation of your property space into a welcoming environment for nature that enhances local biodiversity and creates a scenario where maximum ecosystem services and environmental benefits are achieved. We can rewild New Jersey by weaving a tapestry of wilded spaces over our highly developed landscape.



THE IMPORTANCE OF REWILDING RURAL LAND

Rural landscapes are less developed and offer much more opportunity for us to rebuild our connection with Nature. Many native plants and animals are not only present but also thriving here, unlike in suburban and urban areas. Even so, ecological imbalances still prevail and landscapes typically center humans only.

A rewilding mindset lets us see ourselves as part of Nature, not outside or above it. Rewilding areas of rural land lets us be responsible land stewards and build ecosystem bridges where we can feel the oneness with Nature.



BENEFITS OF REWILDING WITH NATIVE PLANTS

- Native flowers provide essential nectar and pollen for countless species of birds and insects
- Native plant leaves provide food for hundreds of caterpillar species
- Native plants can protect food crops by attracting natural predators to the garden
- As they grow, plants purify the air from pollution
- Native plants have more developed root systems and help both aerate and hold soil together, preventing water runoff and erosion
- Once established, native plants require less overall maintenance, saving us both time and money





2. WORKSHEETS FOR REWILDING



GET TO KNOW YOUR LAND

Part 1: Land history and surrounding environment

A watershed is an area of land where all rainfall and melting snow flows into the same body of water, usually a creek or river. What is your watershed? (You can look this up [HERE](#).)

An ecoregion is an area of land with similar geology, soil, and climate conditions. What is your ecoregion? (You can look this up [HERE](#).)

What do you know about the land's history? What was it used for before you lived there? (You can ask family members or check records with your municipality.)

Are there any known polluted sites nearby such as superfund sites, brownfields, etc. (You can look this up [HERE](#).)

What native plants are already established in your land and surrounding areas?

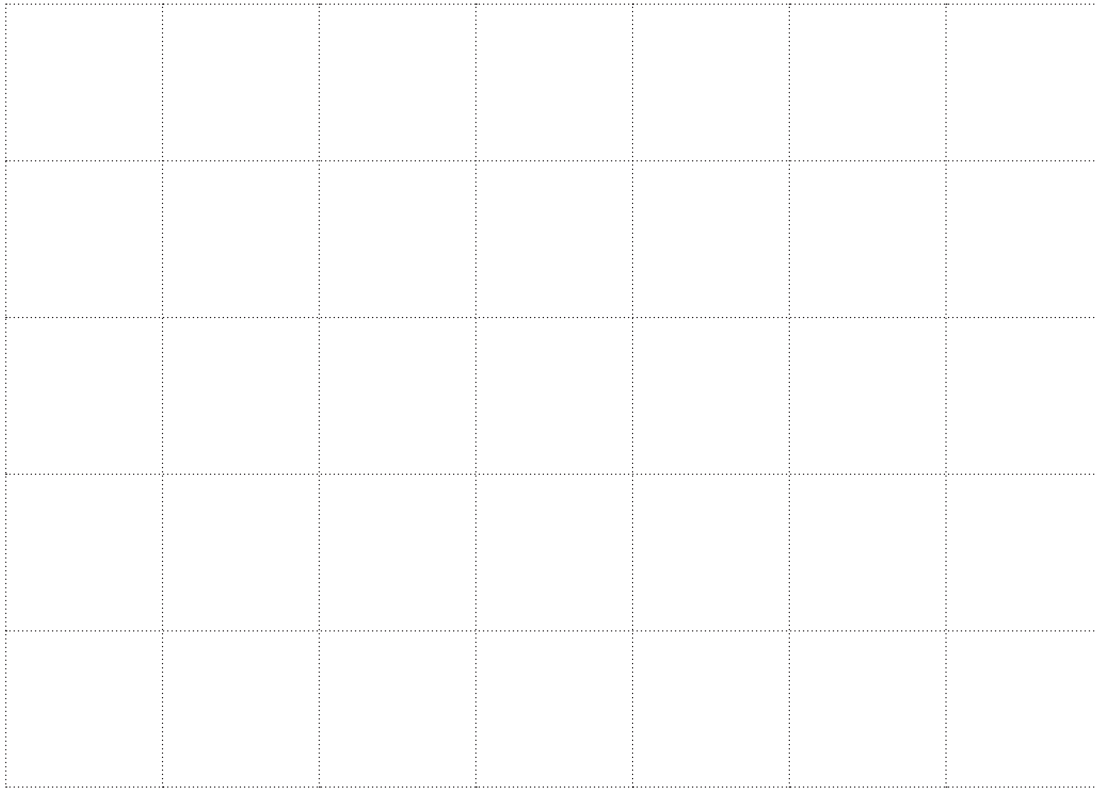
What native wildlife are already present in the area you live?

What indigenous communities inhabited this land originally? (You can look this up [HERE](#).)

GET TO KNOW YOUR LAND

Part 2: Land observation

Sketch a rough plan of the general area of the site you'll be rewilding. Include any major components, such as buildings, ponds, creeks, or large trees. Don't worry about scale and precision! This is an exercise in observation and getting to know your land on a more micro scale.



In the sketch above, mark up areas that receive full sun vs. areas that are always in the shade. You can use different color highlighters, color pencils, etc.

Using a new color pen/pencil, draw some lines with arrows that show the directions rainwater flows when there's a downpour.

Using yet another color, outline or hatch any areas where the soil tends to always be damp vs. areas where it dries up fast.

Lastly, place dots or stars (or other symbols) in the areas where you've noticed the most wildlife present.



3. DESIGNS FOR REWILDING



BEFORE YOU START

Step 1:

Mark out the shape and measure size of your garden bed. You can adapt these plans to your garden's size by adding or subtracting plants.

Step 2:

Remove turf grass with a shovel, as well as any weeds. Loosen garden soil by turning it over with a shovel and add composted topsoil as needed to fill in the bed.

Step 3:

Lay out the plants in their pots according to the garden plans.

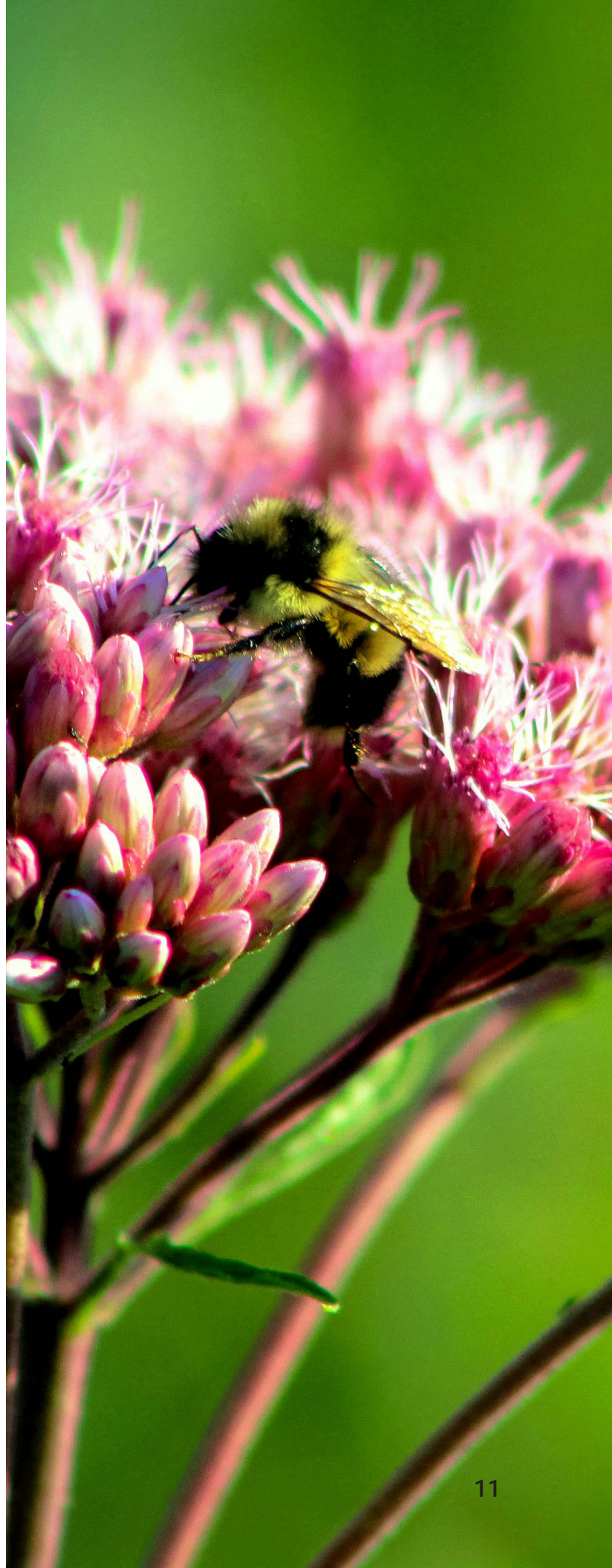
WHERE TO GET NATIVE PLANTS

From a Nursery Near You:

- [Native Plant Society of NJ database](#)
- [Jersey-Friendly Yards database](#)

From Your Community:

Find a local seed/seedling swap in your area. If one doesn't exist, organize one! It's a wonderful way to build community with fellow rewilders.

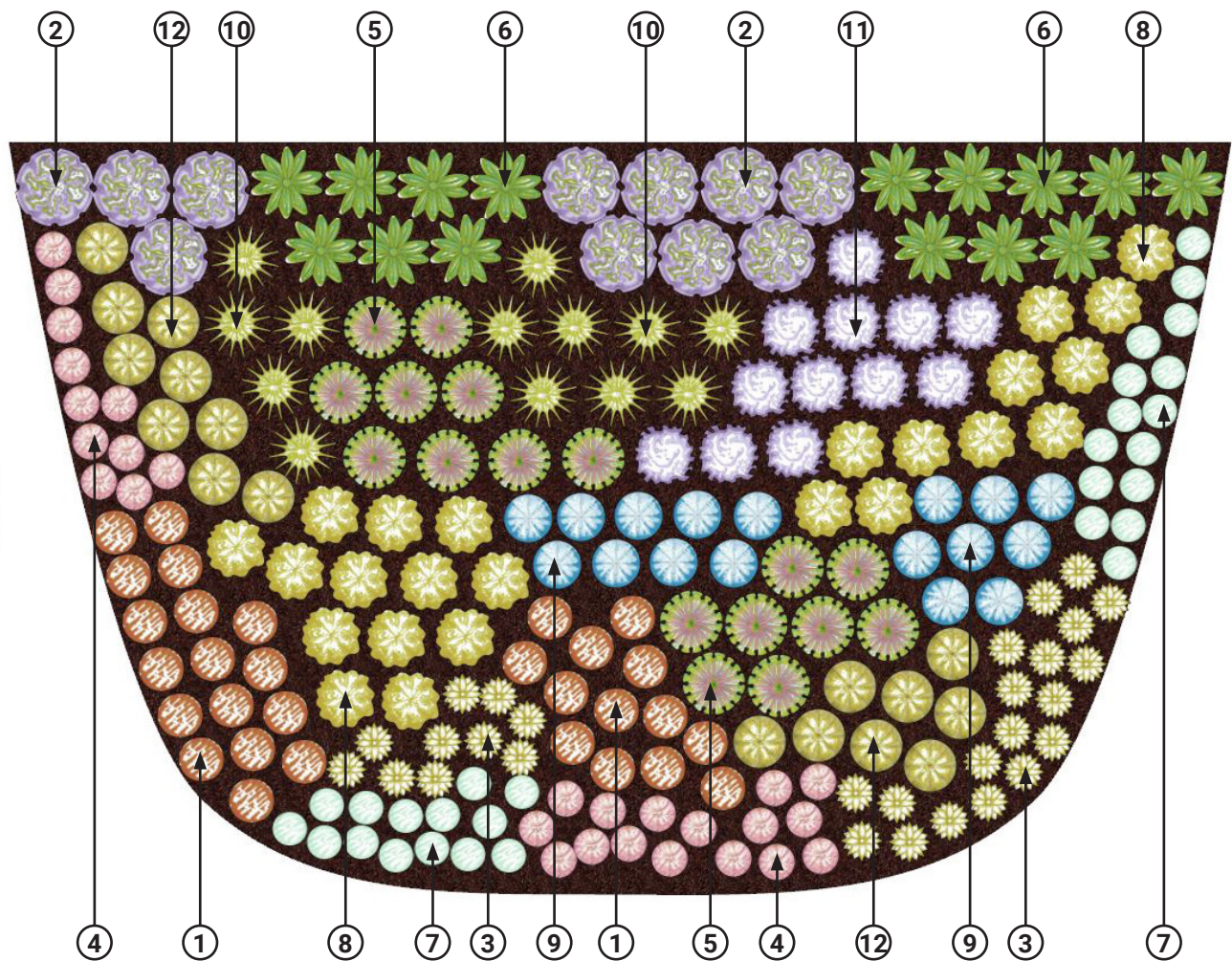


THE DESIGN

3D VIEW















PLAN VIEW



THE DESIGN

PLANTING LIST

	Image	Scientific Name	Common Name	Bloom	Light	Height	Spread
1		Asclepias tuberosa	Butterfly Weed	Early to mid summer	Full sun	3'	2' - 3'
2		Baptisia australis	Blue False Indigo	Early to mid summer	Full sun	3' - 4'	3'
3		Coreopsis lanceolata	Lanceleaf Tickseed	Spring to summer	Full sun	2'	2'
4		Liatris spicata	Blazing Star	Summer	Full sun	3' - 4'	2' - 3'
5		Monarda fistulosa	Wild Bergamot	Spring to summer	Full sun	2'	2'
6		Panicum virgatum	Switchgrass	Summer to Fall	Full sun to part shade	3' - 10'	2' - 5'
7		Penstemon digitalis	Foxglove Beardtongue	Spring	Full sun	4'	2'
8		Rudbeckia fulgida	Orange Coneflower	Summer to fall	Full sun	3'	2'
9		Schizachyrium scoparium	Little Bluestem	Summer	Full sun to part shade	3'	2'
10		Solidago speciosa	Showy Goldenrod	Summer to fall	Full sun	4'	2'
11		Symphyotrichum novibelgii	New York Aster	Summer to fall	Full sun	4' - 5'	3'
12		Zizia aurea	Golden Alexander	Spring	Full sun to part shade	3'	2' - 3'

REWILDING AGRICULTURAL LAND

Cultivated farmland is essential to the wellbeing of modern human society. Beyond literally feeding us, farms protect land from being over-developed. Their rural locations also mean they host a much wider range of “wildlife” than suburban or urban areas. Below are a few regenerative farming strategies that can double up as ways to rewild pockets of agricultural land. There are many practical benefits to increasing biodiversity on farms, all leading up to increased production yields and climate change resilience.



NATIVE PLANT HEDGEROWS AND CORRIDORS

These can be combinations of native trees, shrubs, and flowering perennials, planted in rows along borders or as part of crop plantings. They offer numerous benefits, such as:

- encourage the proliferation of pollinators, which benefit crop production
- help stabilize soil, increase soil biodiversity, and water retention
- provide shelter to small animals and encourage larger animals like deer to use the corridors to move through, rather than the planted crops
- attract carnivores and predators due to increased small animal presence



RIPARIAN FOREST BUFFERS

Riparian forest buffers are areas where land meets a body of water (river, lake, stream, wetland etc.) They are naturally more biodiverse, attracting specific plants and animals. Rewilding them can have profound positive impact to both the land and water going through:

- help stabilize the soil. More plants, particularly deep-rooted trees, shrubs, and perennials help hold the soil and prevent erosion.
- allow the soil to absorb, hold, and release larger amounts of groundwater. During droughts, nearby plants have more access to groundwater. During downpours on the other hand, the soil is able to absorb and release water more slowly, preventing runoff and rapid flooding.
- increase biodiversity, including pollinators and pest predators
- help filter farm waste runoff, preventing it from going downstream



SILVOPASTURE

Silvopasture is the incorporation of trees and shrubs into pasture and livestock grazing rotation. In addition to increased biodiversity, the benefits of silvopasture include:

- provide shade for animals in the summer
- provide windbreak and cold protection to animals in the winter
- potential extra animal food source and/or income source depending on the species of plants and shrubs chosen
- pastures can be seeded with cooler season forage plants which are more nutritious to livestock

SEASONAL MAINTENANCE

Fall

Keep seed heads and stems in place until early spring. If cleanup is necessary, trim stems down to 8" tall.

Winter

Keep seed heads and stems in place until early spring.

Native plants can withstand cold winters - no sheltering required!

Spring

Remove weeds as well as last year's growth. Lightly fertilize with natural ingredients such as compost or fish emulsion. Water plants once a week.

Summer

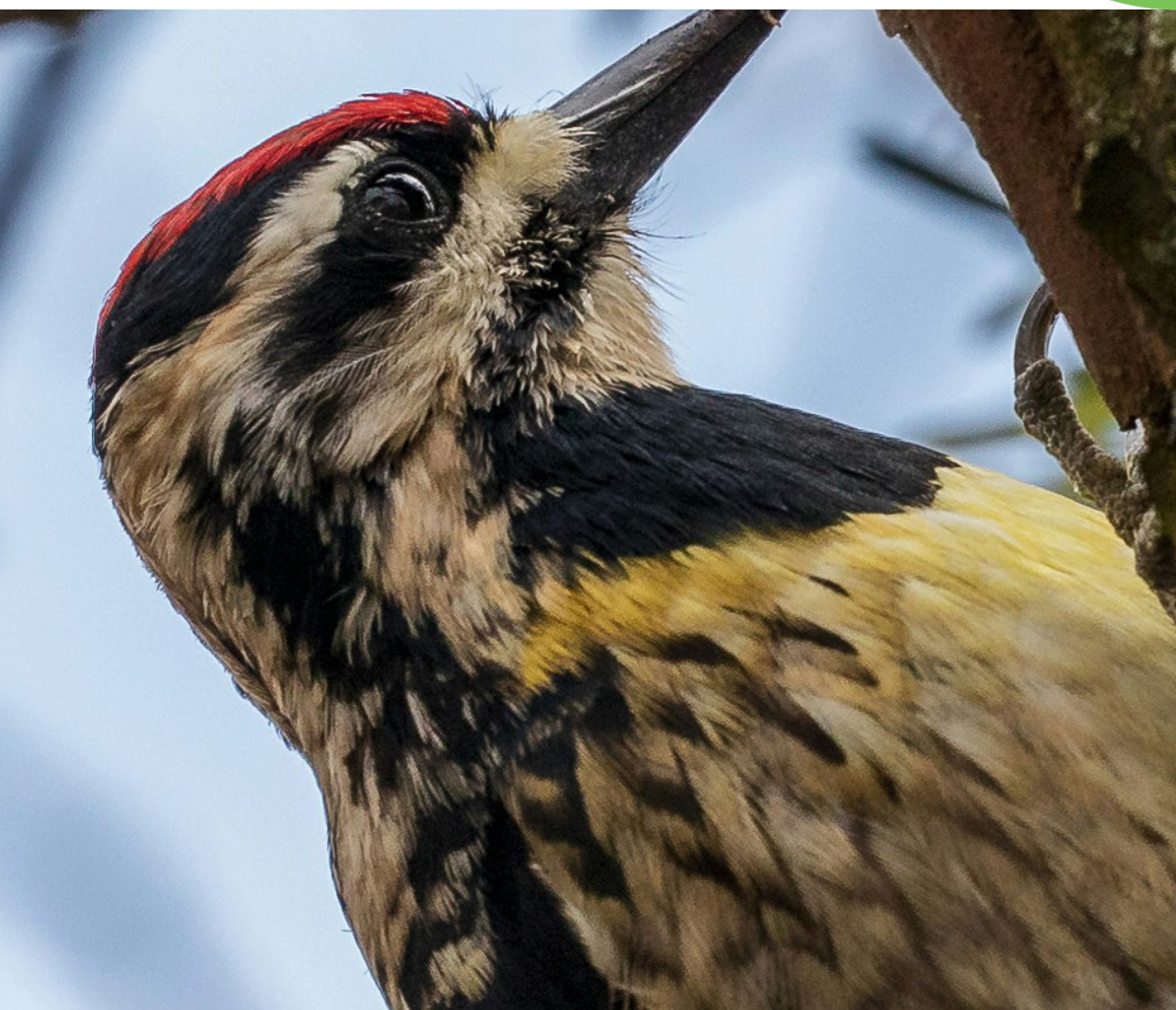
Water plants once or twice a week depending on rain conditions.

Optional: spent flowers may be cut off to encourage more blooms!





4. REWILDING FOR WILDLIFE



OUR WILDLIFE NEIGHBORS

Rewilding your homes, yards, and gardens supports many types of wildlife. Here is just a small fraction of the wonderful animals supported by growing native plants.

INSECTS

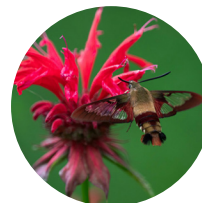
Insects are an incredibly diverse group of animals, and one of the most important roles they play are pollinators for our wildflowers and farm crops



Common Bumblebee
Bombus impatiens



Black Swallowtail Butterfly
Papilio polyxenes



Hummingbird Clearwing Moth
Hemaris thysbe

INVERTEBRATES

Some invertebrates play an important role in the environment as decomposers, while others are effective predators, keep pest populations in balance



Yellow Garden Spider
Argiope aurantia



American Giant Millipede
Narceus americanus



Common Shiny Woodlouse
Oniscus asellus

SONGBIRDS

Many species of birds rely on insects found in the garden to feed to their chicks, while others last through the winter eating wild seeds and fruits found on the plants



Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Archilochus colubris



American Goldfinch
Spinus tristis



Cedar Waxwing
Bombycilla cedrorum

AMPHIBIANS/REPTILES

Many amphibians and reptiles are predators, keeping invertebrate populations in balance on the ground floor



Fowler's Toad
Anaxyrus fowleri



Eastern Box Turtle
Terrapene carolina



Common Garter Snake
Thamnophis sirtalis

SMALL MAMMALS

These furry garden visitors often eat seeds and berries, but will also eat pests including slugs and ticks



Eastern Chipmunk
Tamias striatus



Virginia Opossum
Didelphis virginiana



Northern Short-tailed Shrew
Blarina brevicauda

CO-EXISTENCE WITH WILDLIFE

Rural areas support larger wildlife species, including predators. Here are three NJ wildlife species of interest specifically to rural lands.



AMERICAN BLACK BEAR

Ursus americanus

Wildlife Summary: Black bears are the only bear species east of the Rocky Mountains. New Jersey reports sightings of black bear in all 21 counties. They are more commonly found in North Jersey and can also be seen in the Pinelands National Reserve when populations are high

Habitat: From forests to suburban and even urban ecosystems, black bears naturally reside in higher altitude dense forests but due to habitat loss have begun roaming human habitats in North Jersey regularly

Range: Statewide across New Jersey

Human/Wildlife Conflict: Conflicts arise when bears are found foraging in people's backyards, urban parks, or from trash cans and dumpsters

Ecological Benefit: Apex native omnivore that will eat invasive flora and fauna

Personifying Fact: Black bear attacks on humans are historically low in New Jersey. Bears are interested in easy food sources and the best way to live with bears is to make these sources less accessible



NORTHERN PINE SNAKE

Pituophis melanoleucus melanoleucus

Wildlife Summary: Pine snakes are some of the largest native snakes found in New Jersey – reaching six feet long. They exclusively are found in the Pine Barrens and are a threatened species due to a decline in habitat

Habitat: Pineland habitats with dense shrubs and abundant prey

Range: Southern New Jersey

Human/Wildlife Conflict: Habitat loss and rodent pesticide have hampered the growth of this species' population

Ecological Benefit: This larger snake can prey on rodents as well as carving out habitat for other snake species in the pinelands

Personifying Fact: Snakes get a bad rap but are critical to ecosystems around the world – especially in the pinelands of New Jersey. These large snakes are a unique sighting when spotted in the wild



BOBCAT

Lynx rufus

Wildlife Summary: New Jersey is home to one species of native feline – the bobcat. Bobcats have called New Jersey home for thousands of years and are making a slow comeback in the Garden State. Bobcats are nearly invisible in their preferred habitat of dense forest

Habitat: Dense forest in both the Highlands Mountain region in North Jersey and the southern portion of the pinelands in Cumberland and Cape May counties

Range: Northern & Southern New Jersey

Human/Wildlife Conflict: Habitat loss has forced bobcats into sharing space with humans and occasionally taking the blame for livestock losses in North Jersey

Ecological Benefit: Apex predator in New Jersey with key food chain role

Personifying Fact: The only wild cat species in the Garden State, bobcat have been spotted more often in the last decade across the state – piquing public interest

REWILDING FOR WILDLIFE

In order to thrive, animals need habitat where they can find food, water, shelter, and where they can raise their young. Here are some rewilding strategies to include in rural rewilding projects:

FACTS:

Red Fox are the most wide-spread fox species on Earth but are often blamed for livestock and pet predation – leading to needless extermination

LINK:

[How to predator-proof a chicken coop](#)



RED FOX

Vulpes vulpes

HABITAT ELEMENTS:

Fox make their homes in forest, wetlands, and meadow habitats while being extremely adaptable. Letting nature reclaim a portion or section of property can allow foxes to reclaim the habitat. Benefits include reduction in rodent populations. Chicken coops can be made fox proof

FACTS:

Little Brown Bats eat over 1,000 mosquitoes a night

LINK:

[How to create bat-friendly habitat](#)



LITTLE BROWN BAT

Myotis lucifugus

HABITAT ELEMENTS:

Native plants allow for insects to flourish. You can also install bat boxes for both little and brown bat species as well as several migratory species that visit New Jersey

FACTS:

Rat snakes are one of the few New Jersey snake species that can climb high into trees to hunt birds and raid nests

LINK:

[How to build a snake hibernaculum](#)



EASTERN RAT SNAKE

Pantherophis alleghaniensis

HABITAT ELEMENTS:

Snakes hibernate each fall and do so naturally in downed trees and abandoned animal dens. Habitat can also be created by installing a hibernaculum

A NOTE ABOUT LAWNS

As humans, we are very good at adapting landscapes to meet our needs. The problem with this is that we often forget about the important needs of our ecosystems in the process. The traditional american turf grass lawn provides zero habitat for our native pollinators and other wildlife. It is estimated as much as 40 million acres are covered with turf grass in the Continental United States. If we all take action to reduce the size of our turf lawns and add native plants back into our landscapes, we can begin to repair the ecosystems that belong here.

What Can You Do?

- Limit the size of your lawn to the space you need for recreation.
- Rewild areas where lawn is not necessary. Include paths, so that you can move through your rewilded space.
- Switch to electric-powered landscaping tools. A-gas powered lawnmower can emit [as much pollution](#) in 1 hour as driving a car 45 miles!

A NOTE ABOUT DEER

Deer are native wildlife to our region. They are adapted to eat native plants and that is okay. Unfortunately due to human impacts, deer populations have grown extremely high. In order to keep a native plant garden, you may need to take measures to protect some of your plants. Try enclosing your garden bed with wire mesh fencing, but leaving some plants outside of the protected area to share. Additionally, there are deer-resistant native plants available including many of the grasses, ferns, and goldenrods.



5. REWILDING YOURSELF



RECLAIM YOUR WILDNESS

- **Observe Nature.** Spend time on your property, getting to know wildlife species, behaviors, and interactions. Understand how you mutually support one another. Feel oneness with them.
- **Cultivate.** Make sure that the resources you use can regenerate and give back. For example, grow food crops in ways that support pollinators. The pollinators will in turn support your crop yields.
- **Learn Resilience and Self-Sufficiency Skills.** Empower yourself with new skills like composting, growing crops, foraging, ethical hunting and fishing, canning, herbalism, and more.
- **Reawaken Your Inner Child.** Allow yourself to feel joy often. Get silly, play games, laugh at jokes. If you have children, let them be your guide in this.
- **Practice Gratitude and Slow Down.** Appreciate all the life on our property and local lands. Take your shoes off often to help you feel grounded. Spend more time in nature, both alone and together with friends and family.
- **Connect with Your Ancestry.** Learn about your own ancestry, familial generational knowledge, history, and lineage. How does your ancestry tie you in with the larger story of humanity? How can reconnecting with your ancestry increase your resilience and self-sustaining skills? Learn heritage skills, such as growing heirloom vegetables, herbs, or spices, cooking seasonally, making clothes, preserving food, learning languages, preserving cultural practices and traditions, and more.



6. REWILDING REFLECTIONS



AFTER THE INSTALL

Reflections and observations

How satisfied are you with the process of installing your garden?

What did you learn from the process?

What would you do differently if you could do it all over again?

What have you observed so far in your rewilded pocket?

If a neighbor asked you about your rewilded pocket, how would you talk to them and encourage them to try it?
What's your "elevator pitch?"

How will you engage your local community to help promote rewilding?

ABOUT THE DESIGNERS

Need design help? Check out
the Rewild NJ Network at
rewildnjcc.org



Christine Black
[Grow Native Gardens](#)

Christine Black is a native plant garden designer located in NJ. She fell in love with her family's gardens as a child; and continues to believe gardens can be magical places when we plant for nature. Christine is on a mission to share her knowledge of native plants and connect people with their land through her business, Grow Native Gardens LLC as well as her work with Rewild NJ.



Jason Goldman
[Flower to the People](#)

Jason Goldman is a Naturalist and Garden Designer. Growing up in New Jersey, he has always had an appreciation for the natural world. With a degree in Ecology from Rutgers and a passion for educating others, Jason strives to empower others and help them become more environmentally conscious.



Lili Trenkova
[Lili Trenkova Design](#)

Lili is a certified permaculture designer, a landscape designer, and an interior designer with backgrounds as varied as theater, architecture, food service, and community organizing. Their design practice combines two decades of design experience with a lifelong study of ecology.



Joe Moore
[South Jersey Wildlife Tours](#)

Joe grew up in Camden County New Jersey with the woods right out his back door! Immersing himself in nature at such a young age paved the way for his later work in conservation and wildlife management for several non-profits. Today, Joe is the owner and Lead Naturalist for South Jersey Wildlife Tours – an eco-tourism company that specializes in taking everyday folks, groups, and students out into the wilds of South Jersey while promoting wild spaces for people as well as our flora and fauna.

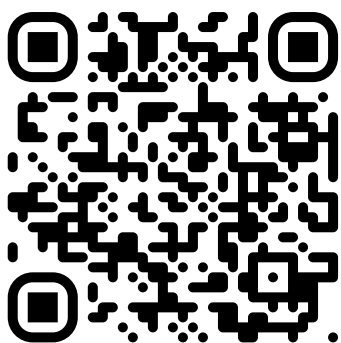
ABOUT THE REWILD NJ NETWORK

The Rewild NJ Network is a community of grassroots business owners and organizations located throughout the State of New Jersey. Network Members offer opportunities, services, and resources to support citizens and organizations acting for community rewilding.

CONNECT WITH RNJCC

Taking Action for Community Rewilding?
Are you Rewilding Your Land and Yourself?
Using Movement Resources?

We want to capture the action, results, and successes of our Movement Members.
Submit the [form linked here](#) to share your journey with us today!



ABOUT RNJCC

Rewild New Jersey Community Cooperative (RNJCC) is a platform building a grassroots movement for state-wide community rewilding. RNJCC offers resources that support citizens & organizations acting for community rewilding in New Jersey.

Web: RewildNJCC.org

Email: rewildnjcc@gmail.com

Social media: [@RewildNJCC](#)

