



# REWILD YOUR LAND RESOURCE GUIDE

*a guide for suburban rewilders*



# 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 RE- WILDING SUBURBAN LAND

While suburban landscapes do support some wildlife, only certain species of plants and animals can actually thrive. This creates an ecological imbalance, which further separates humans from Nature.

A rewilding mindset lets us see ourselves as part of Nature, not outside or above it. Rewilding “pockets” of suburbia 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](#).)

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

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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.)

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

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

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

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

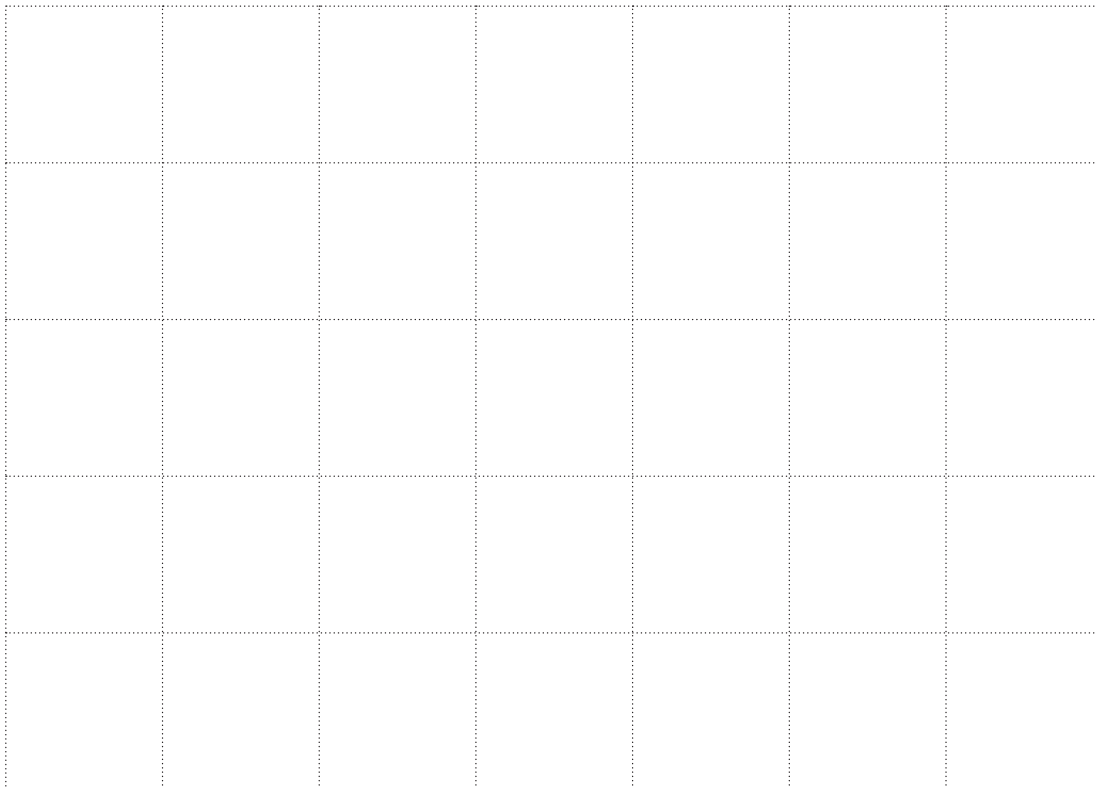
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# GET TO KNOW YOUR LAND

## Part 2: Land observation

Sketch a rough plan of your site. 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.





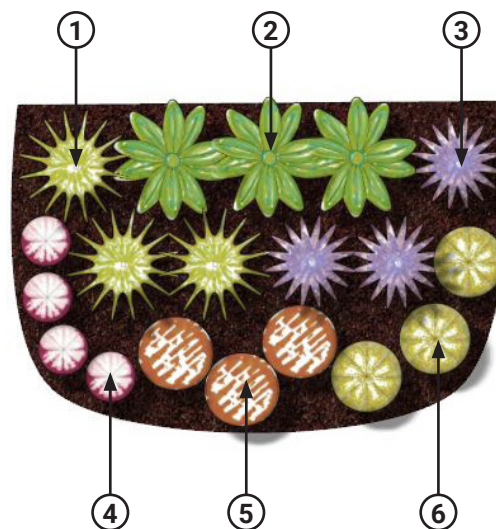
# DESIGN FOR FULL SUN

Can't plant directly into the ground?  
Refer to RNJCC's  
Urban Rewilders guide!

3D VIEW



PLAN VIEW



PLANTING LIST

	Image	Scientific Name	Common Name	Bloom	Light	Height	Spread
1		Solidago rugosa	Wrinkleleaf Goldenrod	Late summer through fall	Full sun to part shade	3'	2'
2		Panicum virgatum	Switchgrass	Late summer	Full sun to part shade	3' - 10'	2' - 5'
3		Echinacea purpurea	Purple Coneflower	Summer	Full sun	3' - 4'	2' - 3'
4		Aquilegia canadensis	Wild Columbine	Spring	Full sun to part shade	2'	2'
5		Asclepias tuberosa	Butterfly Weed	Early to mid summer	Full sun	3'	2' - 3'
6		Zizia aurea	Golden Alexander	Spring	Full sun to part shade	3'	2' - 3'

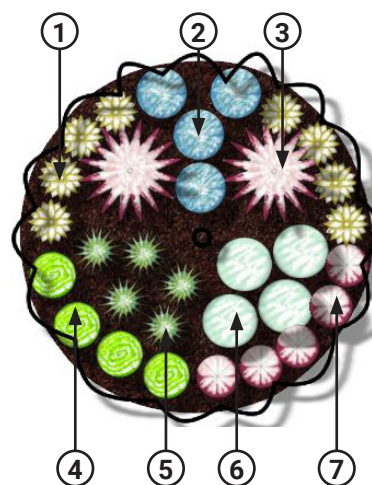
# DESIGN FOR PART SHADE

Can't plant directly into the ground?  
Refer to RNJCC's  
Urban Rewilders guide!

3D VIEW



PLAN VIEW



PLANTING LIST

	Image	Scientific Name	Common Name	Bloom	Light	Height	Spread
1		<i>Solidago flexicaulis</i>	Zigzag Goldenrod	Late summer to fall	Park shade to shade	3' - 4'	3'
2		<i>Mertensia virginica</i>	Virginia Bluebells	Spring	Shade	1'	1'
3		<i>Kalmia latifolia</i>	Mountain Laurel	Spring	Part shade to shade	6' - 8'	4' - 6'
4		<i>Tiarella cordifolia</i>	Foamflower	Spring	Part shade to shade	1'	1'
5		<i>Dryopteris marginalis</i>	Marginal Wood Fern	Evergreen	Part shade to shade	2'	1'
6		<i>Eurybia divericata</i>	White Wood Aster	Fall	Part shade to shade	3'	3'
7		<i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>	Wild Columbine	Spring	Sun to part shade	2'	2'



# 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.

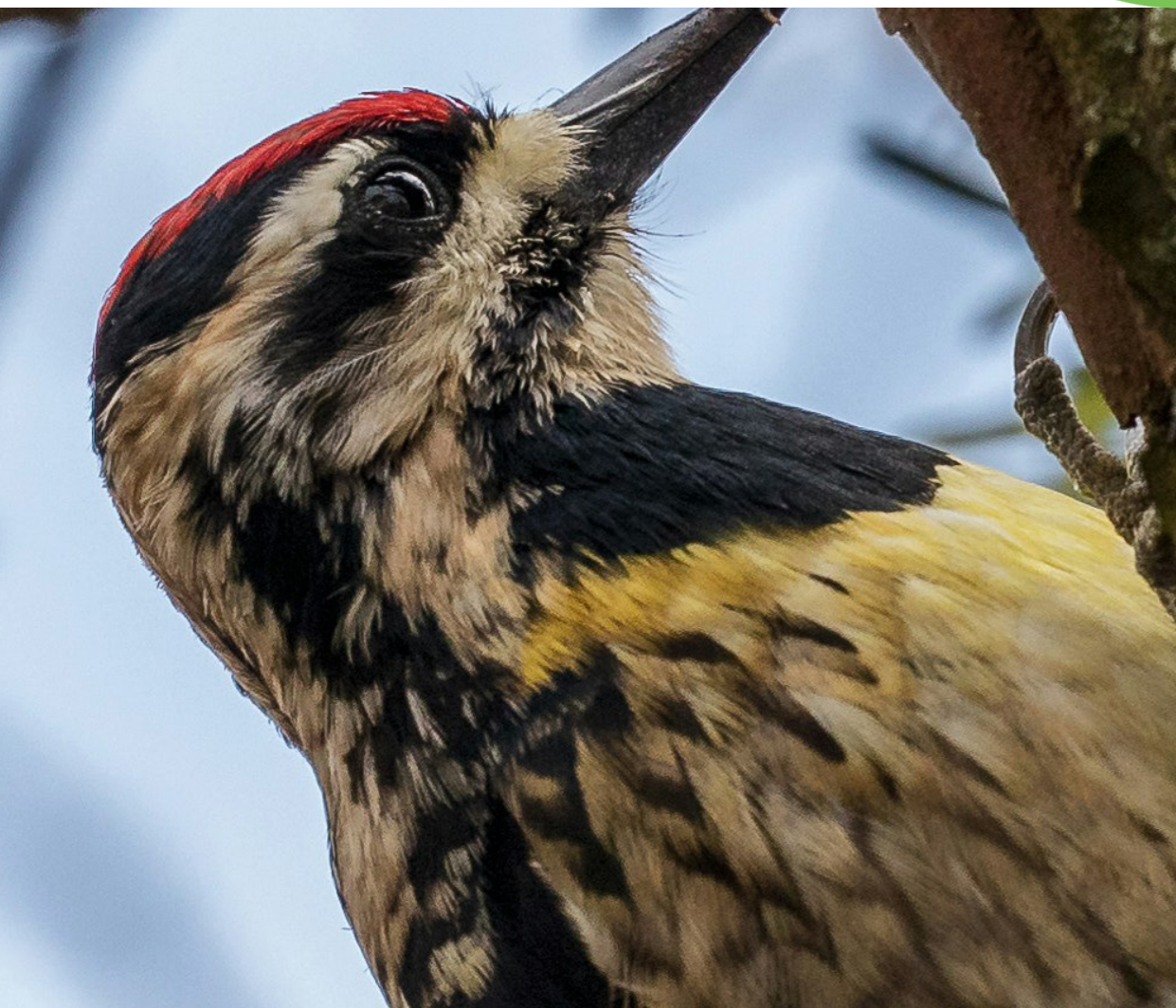
*Optional: spent flowers may be cut off to encourage more blooms!*







## **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

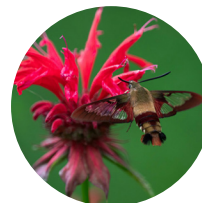
Insects are an incredibly diverse group of animals, and one of the most important roles they play are pollinators for our wildflowers and farm crops



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

Suburban areas support some wildlife species, but continuous development makes it difficult for them to thrive. Here are three NJ wildlife species of interest specifically to suburban lands.



## EASTERN TIGER SALAMANDER

*Ambystoma tigrinum tigrinum*

**Wildlife Summary:** This endangered species of salamander breeds during winter in ponds and ditches. They often cross roadways to get to these breeding grounds and can blend in easily to their surrounds due to the “tiger” striping. Overall, habitat loss and restricted access to breeding grounds have decreased their population

**Habitat:** Found in upland wetlands. Found in the pineland ecosystems of South Jersey while calling the upland forests of Central Jersey home.

**Range:** Southern & Central New Jersey

**Human/Wildlife Conflict:** During the eastern tiger salamander’s breeding season, they often must cross roadways to access preferred breeding locations. This puts the salamander in the direct path of cars and bikes in more populated areas

**Ecological Benefit:** They help create rich soils and prey on various insect species

**Personifying Fact:** With a predictable breeding season in late winter, organizations in populated areas known for tiger salamanders have begun “[Salamander Road Crossing](#)” nights to help the amphibians migrate safely



## RED FOX

*Vulpes vulpes*

**Wildlife Summary:** Red fox is a widespread canine species found throughout New Jersey. Foxes are found state-wide because they can adapt to any environment. They are most active in spring: denning and raising their young (a.k.a. kits)

**Habitat:** Found across various habitats from urban to rural but more often in suburban and rural forested and wetland ecosystems

**Range:** Statewide in New Jersey

**Human/Wildlife Conflict:** Red foxes are blamed for loss of livestock – mainly for breaking into chicken coops

**Ecological Benefit:** Pest control in suburban and rural areas. Natural predator of dozens of other species

**Personifying Fact:** Foxes are popular in children’s stories as well as numerous cultures’ mythology and folklore



## LITTLE BROWN BAT

*Myotis lucifugus*

**Wildlife Summary:** Newly added to the threatened species list, Little Brown Bats are smaller relatives of Big Brown Bats, but just as capable at foraging for insects

**Habitat:** Open areas within grassland, meadows, coastal marshes, wetlands, and various other ecosystems where insects are plentiful

**Range:** Statewide in New Jersey

**Human/Wildlife Conflict:** Bats can make their way into the attics and top floors of houses and buildings. Typically, people call exterminators to rid of the bats

**Ecological Benefit:** Little brown bats can eat over 1,000 mosquitoes each night and their guano (droppings) are used in agricultural fertilizer

**Personifying Fact:** Bats are far from most people’s favorite animal but are extremely beneficial towards pest control in a changing climate. This species of bat also responds well to bat boxes: [learn how to build one!](#)



# 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 suburban rewilding projects:

## FACTS:

Monarchs are the only butterfly species in North America to migrate south and do so in cycles – with New Jersey being an important stopping point

## LINK:

[Learn more about Monarchs](#)



## MONARCH BUTTERFLY

*Danaus plexippus*

## HABITAT ELEMENTS:

Planting various milkweed species in planters or within a garden bed can attract and support Monarchs. If you plant milkweed – Monarchs will come! See information on wildflower bed designs and patio planters within this guide

## FACTS:

The favorite meal of the Garter Snake is the earthworm – which is an invasive species in North America originally introduced by the colonists

## LINK:

[Ideas for garden water features](#)



## GARTER SNAKE

*Thamnophis sirtalis*

## HABITAT ELEMENTS:

Garter snakes help promote healthy soil within the ecosystems they inhabit. Leaving sticks and leaves in fall or creating a compost pile in a portion of property can help encourage the snakes to visit. Commonly, garter snakes are known to burrow in gardens and flower beds to hunt for insects. Installing a water feature can benefit not just Garter Snakes, but dozens of wildlife species

## FACTS:

The state bird of New Jersey, American Goldfinches will only breed and lay eggs if the seed supply that spring will support their offspring



## AMERICAN GOLDFINCH

*Carduelis tristis*

## HABITAT ELEMENTS:

Planting native seed-producing flowers will ensure a productive breeding season for nearby goldfinches. Native species they enjoy are Black-eyed Susans and Purple Coneflower. Those who feed birds can provide thistle and sunflower seed. See information on wildflower bed designs and patio planters within this guide

## 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.



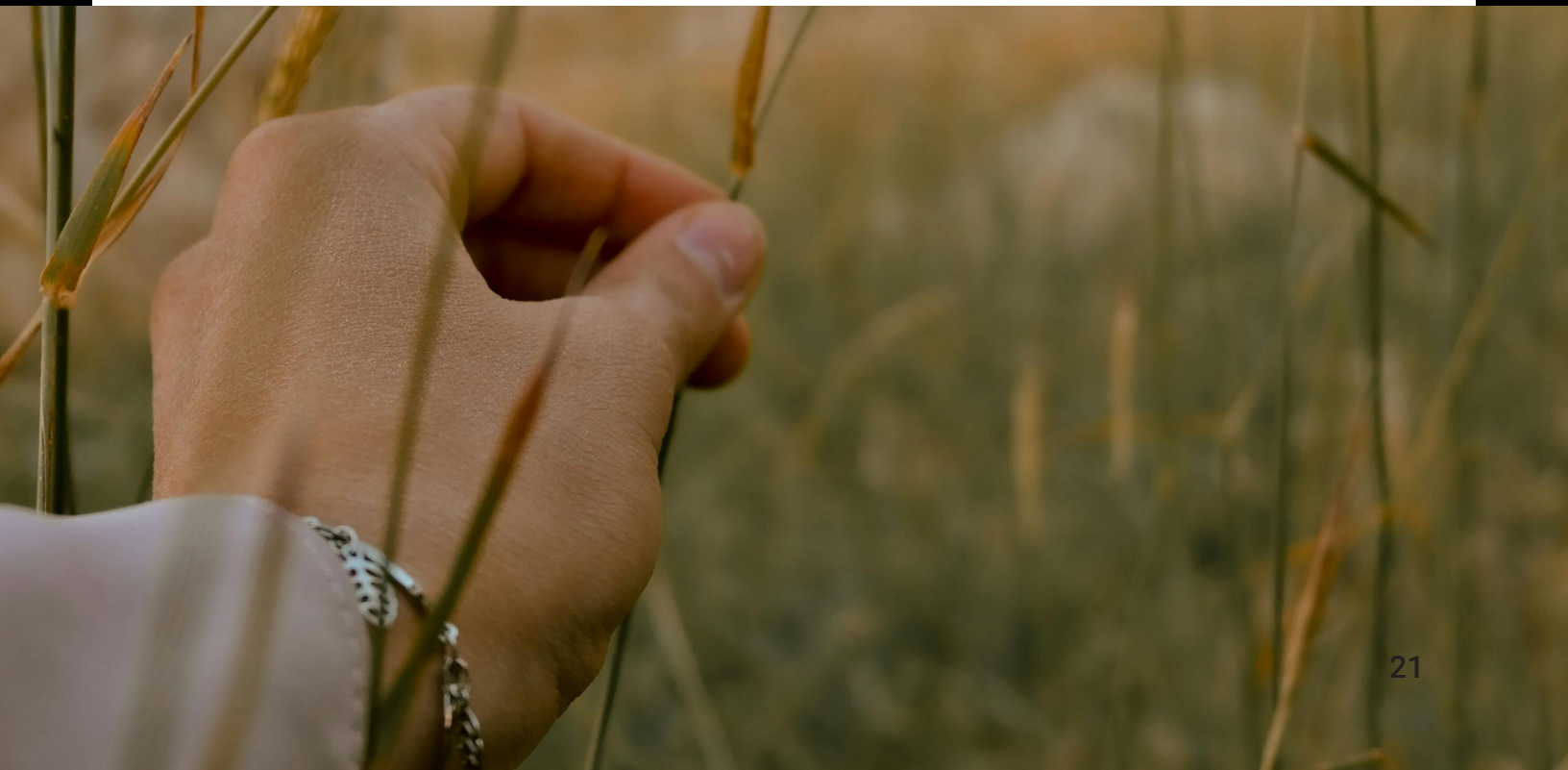


## 5. REWILDING YOURSELF



# 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?

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What did you learn from the process?

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

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What have you observed so far in your rewilded pocket?

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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?"

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

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## ABOUT THE DESIGNERS

Need design help? Check out  
the Rewild NJ Network at  
[rewildnjcc.org](http://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.

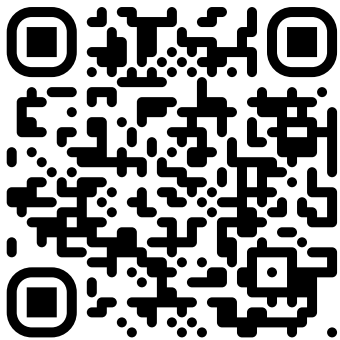
## ABOUT THE REWILD NJ NETWORK

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](https://RewildNJCC.org)

Email: [rewildnjcc@gmail.com](mailto:rewildnjcc@gmail.com)

Social media: [@RewildNJCC](#)

