

REWILD YOUR LAND RESOURCE GUIDE

a guide for urban 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 URBAN LAND

Urban landscapes hardly support any wildlife let alone native species of plants, insects, and animals.

A window box with native plants can help add much needed biodiversity to an urban landscape. It can serve as a pit-stop to migratory birds and insect pollinators. Not to mention, it will beautify your neighborhood and infuse a feeling of wildness, reminding everyone of our oneness with Nature. By using perennial plants, you only have to worry about planting once; with proper care, the plants will come back year after year!



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?

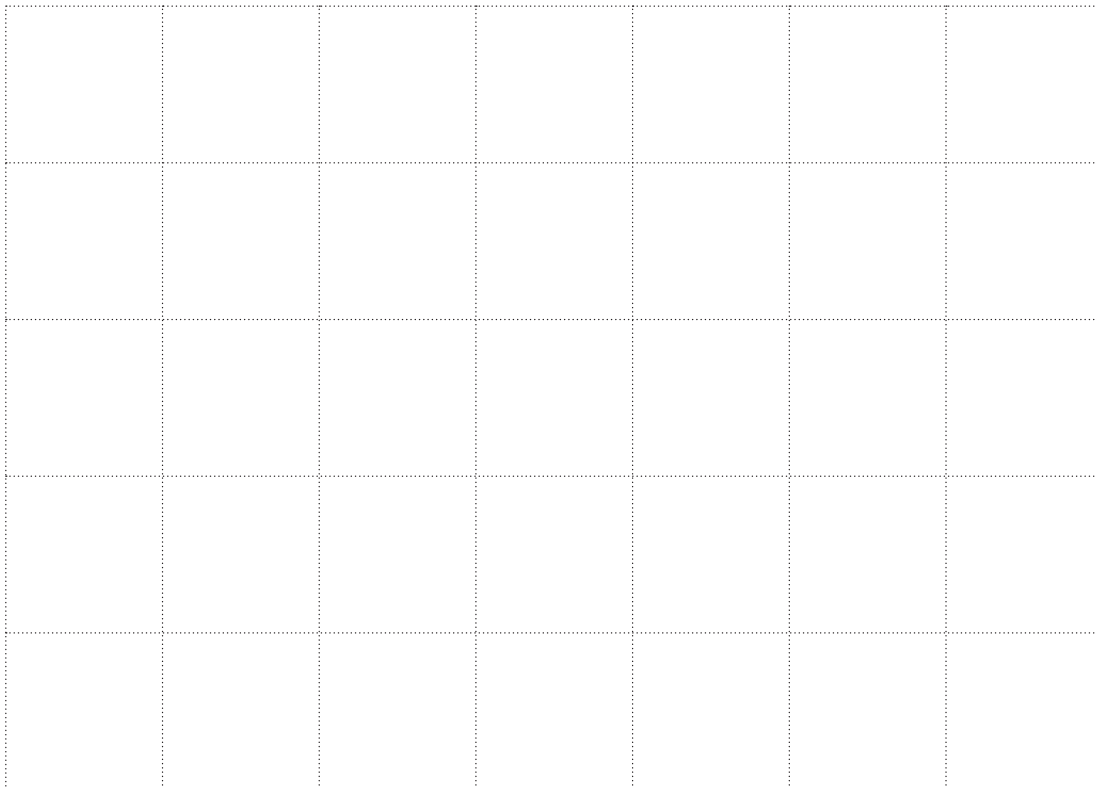
What native wildlife are already present in the area you live?

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 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:

Determine if your window is in a sunny or shady location.

Step 2:

Mount your window box and fill it with composted topsoil. Water the soil and make sure the window box is able to drain, in preparation of planting. Add drain holes if necessary.

Step 3:

Lay out the plants in the window box according to the plans.

**Want to DIY
your own
window box?**

**[HERE](#) is a
tutorial!**

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.



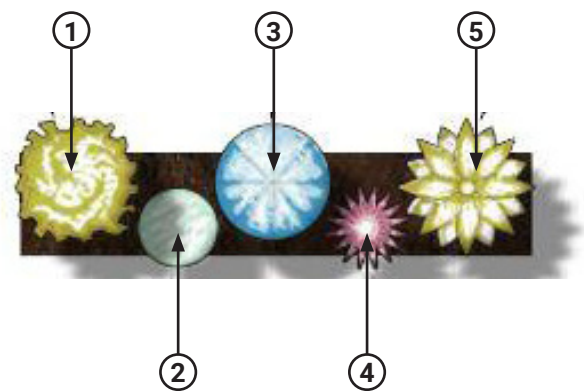
WINDOW BOX DESIGN

FULL SUN






3D VIEW



PLAN VIEW



PLANTING LIST

	Image	Scientific Name	Common Name	Bloom	Light	Height	Spread
1		Rudbeckia hirta	Black-eyed Susan	Summer to early fall	Full sun to part sun	2' - 3'	1' - 2'
2		Penstemon digitalis	Foxglove Beardtongue	Spring to early summer	Full sun to part sun	2' - 3'	1' - 2'
3		Schizachyrium scoparium	Little Bluestem	Summer	Full sun	2' - 4'	1' - 2'
4		Phlox subulata	Moss Phlox	Spring	Full sun to part sun	1/2' - 1'	1' - 2'
5		Solidago caesia	Wreath Goldenrod	Fall	Full sun to part sun	2' - 3'	2' - 2 1/2'

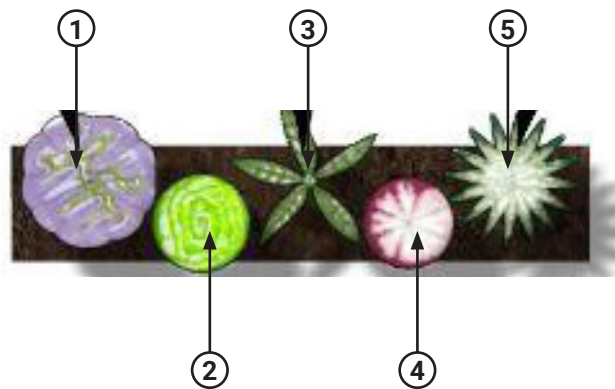
WINDOW BOX DESIGN

PART SHADE






3D VIEW



PLAN VIEW



PLANTING LIST

	Image	Scientific Name	Common Name	Bloom	Light	Height	Spread
1		Salvia lyrata	Lyreleaf Sage	Late spring to summer	Part shade to full shade	1' - 2'	1/2' - 1'
2		Tiarella cordifolia	Foamflower	Spring	Part shade to full shade	1' - 1 1/2'	1' - 2'
3		Polystichum acrostichoides	Christmas Fern	Evergreen	Part shade to full shade	1' - 2'	1' - 2'
4		Aquilegia canadensis	Wild Columbine	Spring to early summer	Full sun to part sun	1 1/2' - 3'	1' - 1 1/2'
5		Eurybia divaricata	White Wood Aster	Fall	Part shade to full shade	2' - 3'	1' - 2'

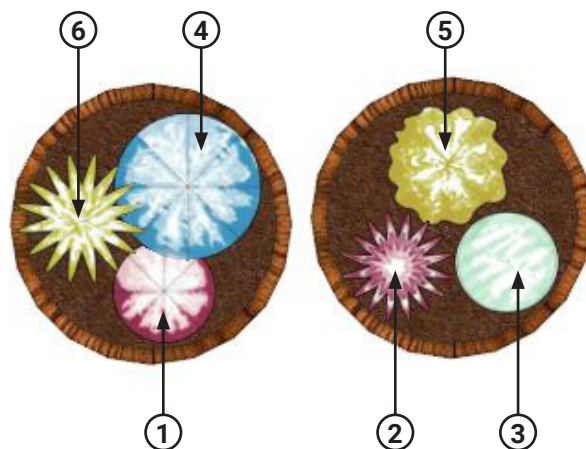
CONTAINERS DESIGN

FULL SUN







3D VIEW



PLAN VIEW



PLANTING LIST

	Image	Scientific Name	Common Name	Bloom	Light	Height	Spread
1		Aquilegia canadensis	Wild Columbine	Spring to early summer	Full sun to part sun	1 1/2' - 3'	1' - 1 1/2'
2		Phlox subulata	Moss Phlox	Spring	Full sun to part sun	1/2' - 1'	1' - 2'
3		Penstemon digitalis	Foxglove Beardtongue	Spring to early summer	Full sun to part sun	2' - 3'	1' - 2'
4		Schizachyrium scoparium	Little Bluestem	Summer	Full sun	2' - 4'	1' - 2'
5		Rudbeckia fulgida	Orange Coneflower	Fall	Full sun to part sun	2' - 3'	2' - 2 1/2'
6		Solidago caesia	Wreath Goldenrod	Fall	Full sun to part sun	2' - 3'	2' - 2 1/2'

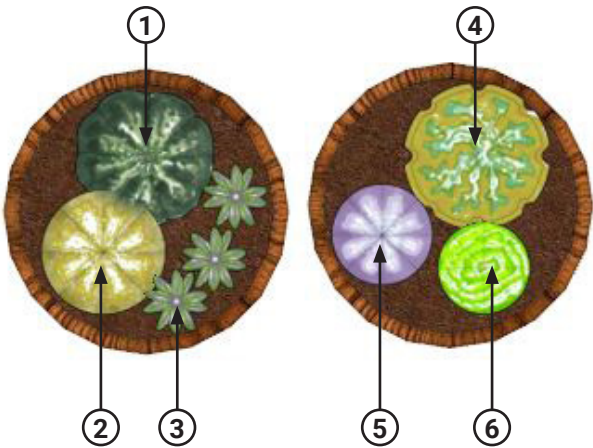
CONTAINERS DESIGN

PART SHADE

3D VIEW



PLAN VIEW



PLANTING LIST

	Image	Scientific Name	Common Name	Bloom	Light	Height	Spread
1		Polystichum acrostichoides	Christmas Fern	Evergreen	Part shade to full shade	1' - 2'	1' - 2'
2		Zizia aurea	Golden Alexander	Spring	Full sun to part sun	3'	2' - 3'
3		Viola sororia	Common Blue Violet				
4		Helianthus divaricatus	Woodland Sunflower				
5		Geranium maculatum	Wild Geranium				
6		Tiarella cordifolia	Foamflower	Fall	Full sun to part sun	2' - 3'	2' - 2 1/2'

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

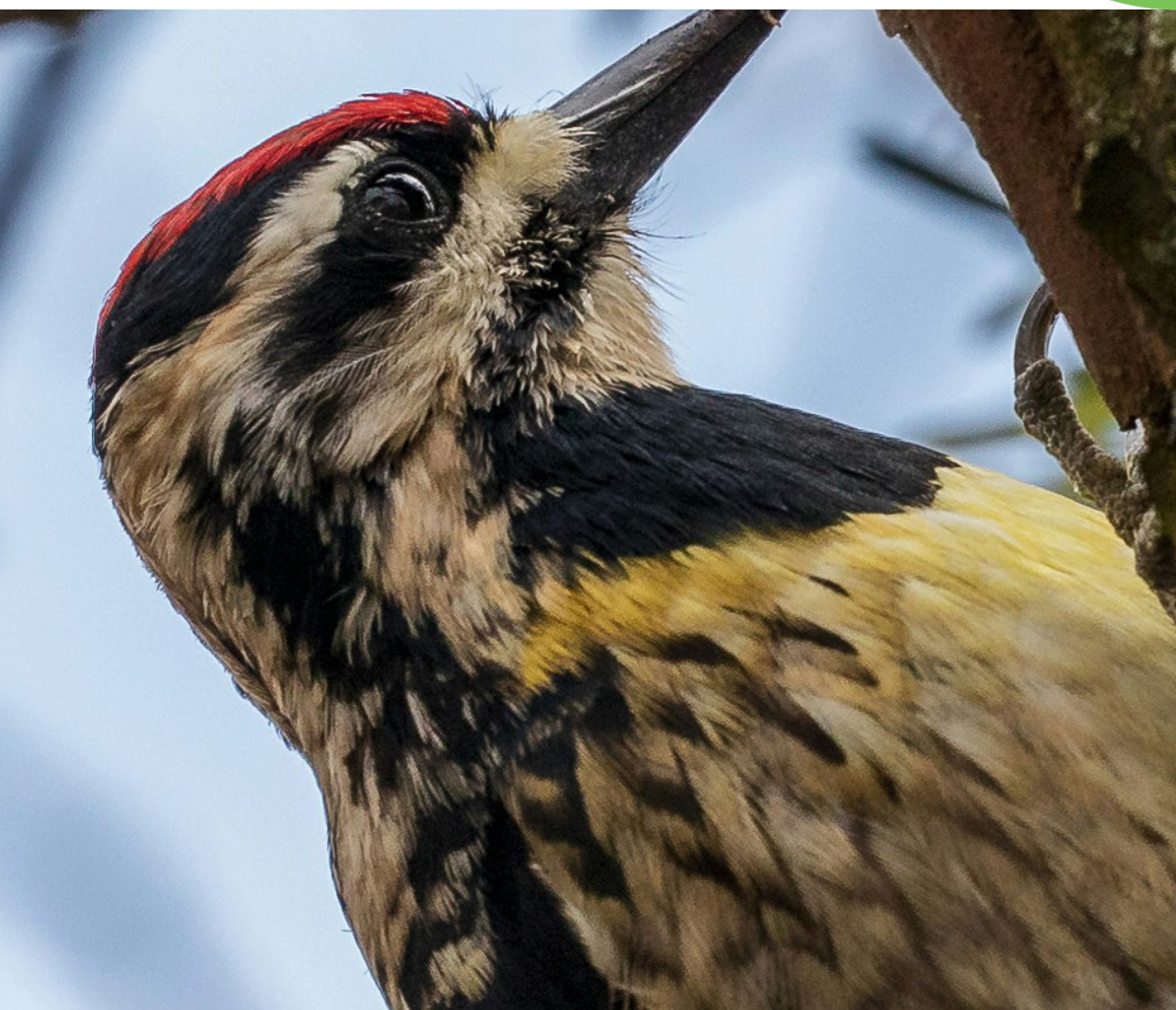
Water plants once or twice a week depending on rain conditions.

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

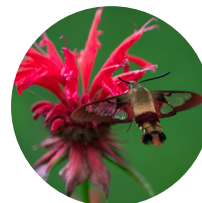
Insects are an incredibly diverse group of animals, and one of the most important roles they play are pollinators for our wildflowers and farm crops



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

Urban areas offer little support to wildlife, so it's extra important for us to improve their habitat and access to resources. Here are three NJ wildlife species of interest specifically to urban lands.



AMERICAN KESTREL

Falco sparverius

Wildlife Summary: The smallest falcon species in New Jersey, American Kestrels are found in grasslands and meadows, which are fading fast in New Jersey. They are migratory birds of prey that nest throughout the state wherever habitat provides

Habitat: Open grassland or meadow spaces

Range: Statewide across New Jersey

Human/Wildlife Conflict: Pesticides and rodent poison can be fatal if ingested by birds of prey. Habitat loss of meadow and grassland has pushed this small falcon into a threatened status

Ecological Benefit: Kestrels are expert hunters that assist in reducing numbers of small rodents

Personifying Fact: These small fierce falcons are amazing to watch and will respond to nest boxes of a particular size - [learn how to build one!](#)



OPPOSUM

Didelphis virginiana

Wildlife Summary: North America's only marsupial, the opossum is an adaptable nocturnal mammal that calls various habitats home. Nearly blind, but with a fantastic sense of smell, opossums search for food at night and have become masters of rural, urban, and suburban ecosystems

Habitat: In cities and large towns opossums tend to live in alleys, sewer systems, and park spaces. In the rest of New Jersey, they can be found in a variety of different ecosystems from suburban backyards to forested and wetlands areas

Range: Statewide in New Jersey

Human/Wildlife Conflict: Opossums are often hit by cars and other vehicles in urban areas as their poor eyesight

Ecological Benefit: Opossums eat ticks and are resistant to rabies

Personifying Fact: Opossum moms are incredibly dedicated parents to their babies



MONARCH BUTTERFLY

Danaus plexippus

Wildlife Summary: Monarch Butterflies are well known due to their beautiful orange and black patterned wings. These pollinators travel the farthest of any butterfly: across North America from Canada to wintering grounds in Mexico before returning in the spring. This is done over several generations of butterflies

Habitat: Anywhere milkweed grows. Monarch larvae depend on and will feed on all three species of milkweed native to New Jersey

Range: Statewide in New Jersey during summer and fall

Human/Wildlife Conflict: Habitat loss and decline in milkweed production have led to a significant drop in population

Ecological Benefit: Adult Monarchs are expert pollinators

Personifying Fact: The most recognized species of butterfly, many people have personal and emotional connections with them

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 urban rewilding projects:

FACTS:

Female Mason Bees lay their larvae in stems of dead plants during late spring

LINK:

[DIY mason bee house](#)



MASON BEE

Osmia

HABITAT ELEMENTS:

Leaving 'dead heads' of last years' stems in planters will allow the bees a spot to hatch their offspring. Bee Hotels can also be purchased or built specifically for Mason Bees

FACTS:

Great horned Owls are the largest and most widespread year-round owl in New Jersey

LINK:

[How to attract owls to your yard](#)



GREAT HORNED OWL

Bubo virginianus

HABITAT ELEMENTS:

In urban areas, Great-horned owls are known to nest in parks and rooftops as well as the occasional bridge. Other birds of prey will use these areas as well. The owls are considered natural pest removers in cities making them most susceptible to rodent poisons in these urban areas.

FACTS:

Over half a BILLION birds are killed due to window strikes and from city lights every spring and fall migration. Most of these species migrate at night where city and suburban lights disorient the birds and lead to collisions, usually fatal



MIGRATORY BIRDS

HABITAT ELEMENTS:

Turn off outdoor lights from April to June and September to November each year. Install bird safe adornments to windows

LINK:

[Learn more about bird safety in urban environments](#)

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.

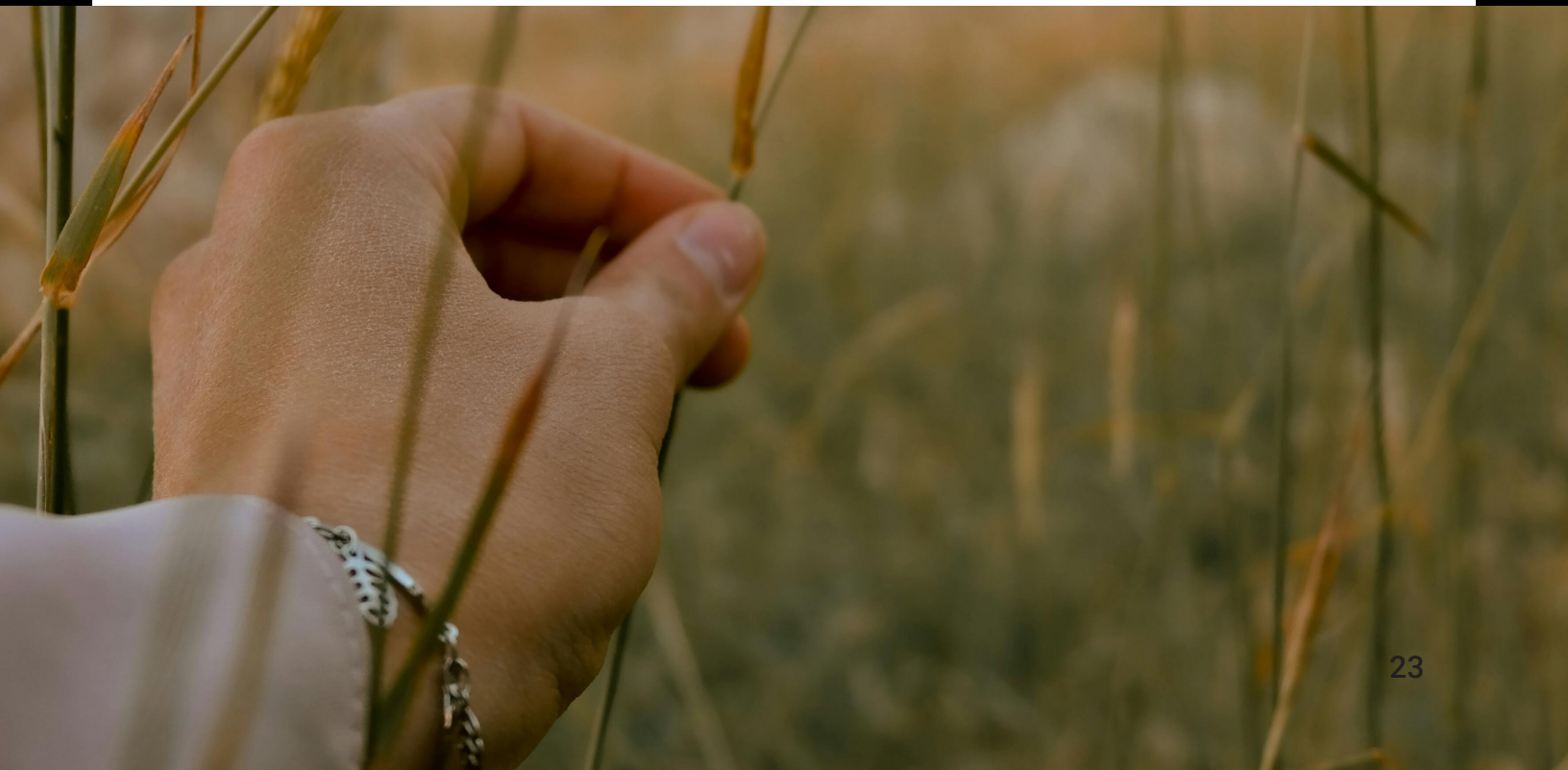


5. REWILDING YOURSELF



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.

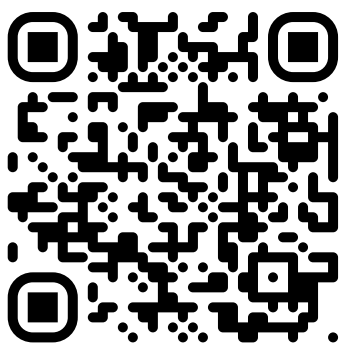
ABOUT THE REWILD NJ NETWORK

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](#)

