

# Habitat Gardening

*Habitat Gardening in Central New York*

*A Chapter of Wild Ones: Native Plants, Natural Landscapes*

## "Seeds for Education" Grant Awarded

The national Wild Ones recently granted a *Seeds for Education* (SFE) monetary award to the Ithaca Children's Garden.

SFE began in 1996 and was named in honor of Wild Ones leader Lorrie Otto, a pioneer in the natural landscaping movement in the U.S.

SFE gives small grants to schools, nature centers, or other non-profit educational organizations to establish outdoor learning centers that reflect the Wild Ones mission to educate and share information about the benefits of using native plants in our landscape and to promote biodiversity and environmentally sound practices.

Money for the grant program comes almost entirely from donations from Wild Ones members and other benefactors.

This year, there were 41 applications for grants, and Wild Ones awarded eight grants.

The *Ithaca Children's Garden* is an innovative grassroots effort to create exciting, interactive garden-based experiences with children of all ages. Garden programs are intergenerational and open to all. The garden itself will be a beautiful place where local residents and visitors will

explore the many ways in which plants enhance our lives. It will create a living venue for experiential learning, blending disciplines such as horticulture, art, literature, music, life skills, and science. Its diverse uses will include tours, workshops and special events, and it will foster an appreciation of the natural world, relaxation, reflection, and the wonder of discovery. Children, volunteers, mentors and youth apprentices will participate in garden development, maintenance, and educational programs.



For more information, visit <http://counties.cce.cornell.edu/tompkins/ithacachildrengarden>

## Words of Wisdom

Rising in an airplane higher than the clouds, cities shrink, highways narrow, and the land is unified. There are no lot lines from the sky, no state boundaries, not even clear distinctions among geographical areas whose names – Piedmont, Hill Country, High Sierra—are so distinct on paper. The type of vegetation changes smoothly, the way colors in a pointillist painting shift without hard edges. The land each of you owns is one dot among the millions that compose the painting of our country. Change the tone a bit

and the painting changes. Change many dots and the shape of the future is transformed. That much I'm sure about, and I'm sure also of the necessity for change.

- Sara Stein

From: *Planting Noah's Garden: Further Adventures in Backyard Ecology*

The first half of this book is inspiration; the second half is practical and describes how to transform your own yard.

*Although currently out of print, it's available at the library or can be purchased second-hand on Amazon.com.*

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*Volume 2, Issue 1  
Spring 2006*

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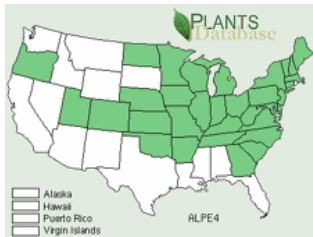
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## Invasive Plant Profile

**Garlic Mustard** *Alliaria petiolata*

Garlic mustard

Photographer: Leslie J. Mehrhoff,  
Invasive Plant Atlas of New England,  
University of Connecticut



## Distribution Map

USDA NRCS, The PLANTS Database, Sept 2003

Have you noticed increasingly large areas covered with a bright green plant with white flowers here in Central New York? You may even have some in your own yard. As you see more and more of this invasive plant, you may see fewer and fewer of the native wildflowers you love. As you read the description below, you'll understand why our Garlic Mustard service project at Baltimore Woods is so important!

## Origin: Europe

Background—Garlic mustard was first recorded in the United States around 1868, from Long Island, New York, and was likely introduced by settlers for food and medicinal purposes.

Distribution and Ecological Threat Garlic mustard ranges from eastern Canada, south to

Georgia and as far west as Kansas and Nebraska. It occurs in a wide range of moist to dry habitats including roadsides, floodplains, and forest edges and interiors and does not tolerate highly acidic soils. Garlic mustard invades areas disturbed by human activities and appears to be aided by white-tailed deer that prefer to eat native wildflowers and leave garlic mustard untouched. Garlic mustard displaces many native spring wildflowers such as spring beauty (*Claytonia virginica*), wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*), bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*), Dutchman's breeches (*Dicentra canadensis*), toothworts (*Dentaria* species) and trilliums (*Trillium* species) that occur in the same habitat. It is also credited with the decline of the West Virginia white butterfly (*Pieris virginiensis*) because chemicals in garlic mustard appear to be toxic to the butterfly's eggs.

## Description and Biology

- **Plant:** a biennial herb in the mustard family (Brassicaceae); completes its life cycle within two years and dies back by the second June, when it is recognizable only by its dried fruiting stalks; flowering plants range from 1 to nearly 4 feet in height.

- **Leaves:** crushed leaves and stems have a garlic-like odor; first-year plants appear as a rosette of kidney-shaped leaves that stay green throughout the winter; in its second year, the plant forms

a shoot which rapidly elongates and flowers in early spring.

- **Flowers, fruits and seeds:** clusters of small white flowers in the axils of leaves along the stem; each flower has four petals in the shape of a cross; fruits are slender, erect capsules that contain a row of shiny black seeds when mature.
- **Spreads:** a single plant can produce hundreds of seeds, which are scattered up to several yards from the parent plant.

Prevention and Control - Because garlic mustard seeds can survive for five or more years in the soil, effective management of garlic mustard requires a long-term commitment. Hand removal of entire plants, including the roots, is effective for light, scattered infestations. Cutting flowering plants low to the ground in spring will prevent flowering and thus seed production. Careful hand removal and bagging of plants with mature fruits can be done from June through August. Several herbicides are also effective for its control. Researchers are investigating the potential for biological control of garlic mustard.

*This information about garlic mustard is from the online booklet Plant Invaders of the Mid-Atlantic at [www.invasive.org/eastern/midatlantic/](http://www.invasive.org/eastern/midatlantic/). Although this booklet covers a slightly different region than NYS, many of the plants described are also invasive in NYS.*

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or call 487-5742

Service Project

## Garlic Mustard Pull at Baltimore Woods April 29

Central New Yorkers treasure The Centers for Nature Education at Baltimore Woods for many reasons, but especially for its spectacular display of trillium in the spring.

For the past few years, though, this Central New York treasure has been put at risk because garlic mustard is crowding it out.

*To learn more about garlic mustard, read the article on p. 2.*

For the past few years, dedicated groups of volunteers have adopted different sections of Baltimore Woods and have worked to keep their section free of garlic mustard, allowing trillium and other native plants to

thrive. But there's more garlic mustard than volunteers. That's where we come in!

Our swallowwort service project last summer was a success. No, we didn't eradicate the black swallowwort at Green Lakes State Park. But we did prevent it from going to seed and spreading further while the park develops a management plan.

Those of us participating also gained a deep understanding of how great a threat invasive plants can be to natural areas. We learned to spot this invasive plant in other locations. And we had a good time working together!

This year, we'll gain an inti-

mate knowledge of garlic mustard. It's easy to pull, so big muscles aren't necessary. It's also easy to identify so you don't need to be an expert.

This service project is part of a larger Work and Play Day at Baltimore Woods, with other groups making a similar effort to preserve our CNY natural heritage. It's scheduled for Saturday April 29 from 9:00 am until 12:30, and then they'll be providing lunch! Email or call Janet (see p. 10 for contact info) if you're attending so we can get a head count for lunch.

Baltimore Woods is located at 4007 Bishop Hill Road in Marcellus. There's a map on their website at [www.takeahike.org](http://www.takeahike.org) or call their office at (315)673-1350 for directions.



All our past HGCNY newsletters are now on the web at

Go to [www.hgcny.org](http://www.hgcny.org) and click on Newsletters

# Great Lakes Horticulture

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## Citizen Science

## Lend a Hand to Protect Wildlife

Efforts by citizen scientists are making a major difference. "Volunteers are helping us collect information from across the state that we simply do not have the staff or resources to get ourselves," says Sally Stockwell, Director of Conservation for Maine Audubon. Other project directors agree.

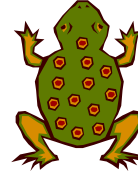
By relying on volunteer researchers, professionals are able to track a particular species or habitat over time and begin to address more long-term conservation issues.

[www.maineaudubon.org/conservation/citsci.shtml](http://www.maineaudubon.org/conservation/citsci.shtml)

You, too, can lend a hand to protect wildlife by being the eyes and ears of scientists, collecting the large amount of data necessary to direct conservation efforts.

There's sure to be a program that's just your style. Here are two possibilities.

## Frogwatch USA



Frogwatch USA is a frog and toad monitoring program that gives YOU the opportunity to help scientists conserve amphibians. In as little as 20 minutes a week you can collect essential information to protect frogs and toads.

Anyone can volunteer. You don't have to be a frog or toad expert to make a contribution—all you need is an interest in frogs and toads.

This long-term amphibian study, managed by the National Wildlife Federation in partnership with the United States Geological Survey, will increase awareness of amphibian decline and will give you the opportunity to be directly involved in gathering information that can ultimately lead to practical and workable ways to help stop the decline of these important species.

## How to

Step 1: Register as a Frogwatcher and register your site online.

Step 2: Choose one or more wetland sites

Learn which kind of wetlands in your neighborhood would be good to monitor for frogs and toads. If you have a pond, it could be right in your own backyard.

Step 3: Learn about frogs and toads in your local area. You can use a field guide or the information on the Frogwatch USA website.

Step 4: Learn the protocol. A protocol just means following a simple set of rules when collecting your data.

Step 5: Print out the data sheets. These are available online.

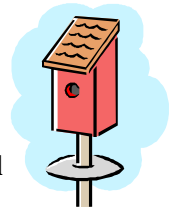
Step 6: Go Frogwatching! It is up to you how often your site is monitored. Your data would be most useful if you could monitor at least twice a week throughout the breeding season. Each session is just 3 minutes!

Step 7: Submit your observations online

If you cannot enter your data online, you can mail them (or visit a library to use their computers.) Not finding any frogs or toads? This is important information to pass along, too.

For more information or to register, go to [www.frogwatch.org](http://www.frogwatch.org)

## The Birdhouse Network



Help scientists study and conserve cavity-nesting birds. All you need is a nest box

(birdhouse) and a small amount of time each week during spring and summer to monitor the birds nesting in your box(es).

You record information such as nesting material, species, number of eggs, egg color, number of chicks, and so on, then enter your data online. Cornell's Lab of Ornithology website provides all the information you need.

To register or for more information, go to [www.birds.cornell.edu/birdhouse](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/birdhouse).



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Chapter Preference: **Habitat Gardening Club of Central New York**

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**“Free” Video**—For a limited time, when you join or renew your Wild Ones membership at the \$50 level or higher, you will receive, at no extra charge, the highly acclaimed video, *Wild About Wildflowers: How to Choose, Plant, Grow, and Enjoy Native American Wildflowers and Grasses in Your Own Yard*. This item sells for \$30 in the Wild Ones Store, but here’s your chance to get it almost for “free.” *If you’re not interested in the video please let us know.*

Mail membership application and check to:

Wild Ones  
P.O. Box 1274  
Appleton, Wisconsin 54912-1274

*Make checks payable to **Wild Ones**.*

Do you want to do more? You can send a donation for one of the following o the above address

I'd like to see more educational projects funded, so I'm donating \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the Seeds for Education project.

Publishing and mailing costs are increasing, so I'm donating \$ \_\_\_\_\_ toward the publication of the nationally-distributed *Wild Ones Journal*.

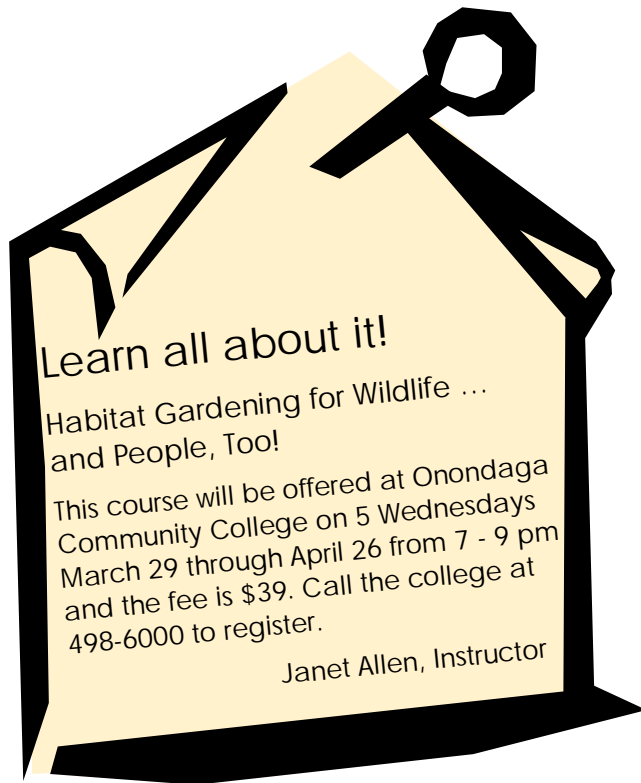
I want to further support the educational and advocacy efforts of the Wild Ones, so I'm donating \$ \_\_\_\_\_ toward the general expenses of the Wild Ones.

When you're a member of Wild Ones, you're automatically a member of Habitat Gardening in Central New York!



## Mission

*Wild Ones: Native Plants, Natural Landscapes promotes environmentally sound landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restoration and establishment of native plant communities. Wild Ones is a not-for-profit environmental education and advocacy organization.*



Lawn Care:

## Getting rid of clover?

Why do you want to get rid of clover in your lawn?

Until a few decades ago, people just expected clover would be part of a lawn. It wasn't until we began to think a lawn had to be perfect that clover became a "problem."

Dutch White clover is the type recommended for lawn use.

The advantages

- Clover is a larval host plant for many of our butterflies.
- Clover is a nitrogen-fixer so it improves the soil and doesn't need fertilizing.
- Dutch White clover is relatively low-growing (4"-8").
- It tolerates low-mowing.
- It stays green during

droughts.

- It tolerates dog urine.

A few negatives

- There will be bees visiting the flowers, so if you're allergic or have children playing there, this might be a problem. (Or you could mow more often.)

- Clover won't hold up as well as turf grass in high-traffic or play areas.

Why not experiment with clover in a part of your yard and see if it works for you?

More information is at

- <http://versicolor.ca/lawns/docs/clover.html>
- [http://landscaping.about.com/cs/lawns/a/clover\\_lawns\\_4.htm](http://landscaping.about.com/cs/lawns/a/clover_lawns_4.htm)



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## Field Trip to Cornell's Lab of Ornithology

(and Moosewood Restaurant, too!)

We'll again be traveling to Ithaca for our spring field trip. This year, we'll be visiting Cornell's new Lab of Ornithology building—the Johnson Center for Birds and Biodiversity—and the surrounding grounds. Both are innovative.

They not only designed a beautiful building, but also a bird- and earth-friendly landscape that features native plants and wetlands. In fact, the building and parking lot are on islands!

They've put the birds and the environment first, so we won't see the nice neat parking lots we're accustomed to. They're unpaved, allowing the water to percolate down through the soil before moving into the wetlands.

They also have very little lawn.

Interestingly, they've found that this departure from convention has been controversial. (*Maybe for other folks, but not for us Wild Ones!*)

Besides native plants, we'll see snags (dead trees), but they won't all be natural. Some are dead trees that have been "planted" because of their importance to wildlife.

We'll stroll through at least some of the four miles of trails. *Bring your bird and plant field guides and your binoculars!*

Moosewood Restaurant

Our trip will end with lunch at the world-famous Moosewood Restaurant, a vegetarian restaurant. From our experience last year, we found that it was affordable and the food

was delicious.

### TRIP DETAILS

Saturday April 22 schedule:

8:00 am—Meet at Carousel

We'll meet at the far end of the Borders entrance of Carousel Mall and those not driving will leave their cars for the day.

9:30—Tour the building and grounds

12:30—Travel to Moosewood

2:30—Leave Ithaca

4:00—Arrive back in Syracuse

### Fees

The fee is \$10 (to pay our drivers mileage). Bring extra money for lunch (\$5-\$10) and for possible purchases at Wild Birds Unlimited or for a Moosewood cookbook.

## Did you know?

- Shade coffee and cacao plantations support over 150 species of birds, exceeded only in tropical forests.
- In the past twenty years, coffee has begun to be grown with no shade canopy at all.
- The diversity of migratory birds plummets when coffee plantations are converted from shade plantations to sun plantations.
- Some studies have found 94–97% fewer bird species in sun than in shade coffee plantations.
- The U.S. consumes about 1/3 of the world's coffee.

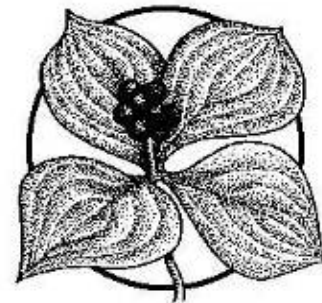


- Sun coffee plantations also lead to soil erosion, toxic runoff, and acidification.

We work hard to preserve our migratory birds' summer home here in the Northeast. When you buy shade-grown coffee you preserve their winter homes, too!

Fair Trade coffee, which provides a living wage for coffee farmers, is often shade-grown and is available at some local grocery stores and online.

From Smithsonian's Migratory Bird Center factsheet  
[http://nationalzoo.si.edu/ConservationAndScience/MigratoryBirds/Fact\\_Sheets](http://nationalzoo.si.edu/ConservationAndScience/MigratoryBirds/Fact_Sheets)



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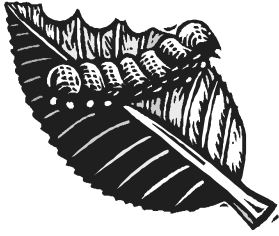
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Web: [www.AmandaGarden.com](http://www.AmandaGarden.com)

Email: [amandasgarden@bluefrog.com](mailto:amandasgarden@bluefrog.com)

Flora and Their Fauna:

“You mean I *want* my leaves to be eaten?!?”



Everyone knows that nectar plants provide food for butterflies, so people interested in attracting butterflies always include these in their garden.

Of course nectar plants are important, but a true butterfly garden will also “grow” butterflies by including larval host plants – plants that are food for the larval stage of the butterfly, the caterpillar. Yes, this means you’ll want to provide plants whose leaves you hope will be eaten!

It’s true that some of the leaves may be a little unsightly for a while, but most plants ultimately survive this munching.

And it’s not just wild flowers that serve as larval host plants. Other kinds of plants, such as trees, are also food for butterfly caterpillars.

So if you want to provide habitat for butterflies, be sure to include at least some of the following in your yard:

Note: The name of the plant is followed by the butterflies that use it as a host plant.

#### Trees

Birch (*Betula sp.*) – Compton Tortoiseshell, Mourning Cloak, White Admiral

Common hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*) – Question Mark (yes, that’s the name of the butterfly!), Mourning Cloak, Tawny Emperor

Flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*) – Spring Azure

Eastern Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) – Juniper Hairstreak

Hickory (*Carya*) – Hickory hairstreak

Oaks (*Quercus sp.*) – Banded hairstreak, Striped hairstreak

Tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) – Eastern Tiger Swallowtail

Willow (*Salix*) – Mourning Cloak, White Admiral, Viceroy

#### Shrubs

Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) – Spicebush Swallowtail

Dogwood (*Cornus sp.*) – Summer Azure

#### Grasses

Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) – Little Wood Satyr, Hobomok Skipper

Bottlebrush Grass (*Hystris patula*) – Summer Azure Wild Flowers etc.

White clover – Clouded Sulphur, Orange Sulphur

Legumes (such as *Lupinus perennis*) – Eastern-tailed Blue, Karner Blue

Milkweed (*Asclepias*) – Monarch

Nettles – Eastern Comma, Red Admiral

False nettles – Red Admiral

Violets, such as Bird’s Foot Violet (*Viola pedata*) – Great Spangled Fritillary, Meadow Fritillary

Asters – Pearl Crescent

Turtlehead (*Chelone*) – Baltimore Checkerspot

Pearly Everlasting (*Anaphalis margaritacea*) – American Lady

Pussytoes (*Antennaria*) – American Lady

Thistle (Don’t plant Canada thistle, though) – Painted Lady

Mallow (*Malva*) – Painted Lady, Common Checkered Skipper

#### Herbs

Parsley, dill – Black swallowtail

*Note: This is not a comprehensive list, just a sampling to get you started. When you do further research, make sure you look for host plants for butterflies that actually live in Central NY.*



## Growing Wild

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## Try a bat house this year



You probably already know the many myths about bats are just that—myths. You probably also know that bats have a voracious appetite for insects.

In fact, if you have visited Chautauqua in western NYS, you've probably noticed you can enjoy summer there without pesky bugs. Chautauquans value their bats – affectionately known as “Chautauqua butterflies” – and they have an active bat conservation and research program to preserve their population.

So why not invite them to your yard this year?

Bat Conservation International warns that many bat houses commonly sold will fail to attract bats. They have free plans on their website so you can build your own, and they also sell bat houses designed according to their research findings.

Spring is the time

Bat houses can be installed at any time of the year, but they are more likely to be used during their first summer if installed before the bats return in spring.

For more information, visit [www.batcon.org](http://www.batcon.org) or call 1-800-538-2287.



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We're on the web at  
[www.hgcny.org](http://www.hgcny.org)

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## Mark Your Calendar



**Sunday March 26**  
Solvay Library 2:00 pm  
*Attracting Butterflies to the Habitat Garden* with Jim D'Angelo of Sterling Nature Center. He will talk about native plants butterflies like, as well as butterfly identification.

**Saturday (not Sunday!)  
April 22 FIELD TRIP!**  
We'll carpool to Cornell's new Lab of Ornithology building and grounds AND enjoy a delicious lunch at the famous Moosewood Restaurant. Details about the trip are on p. 7.

To sign up, email Janet at [stewardship@twcny.rr.com](mailto:stewardship@twcny.rr.com) or call 487-5742.

**Saturday April 29**  
Service Project 9:00 am  
Garlic Mustard Pull at Baltimore Woods. (See the article on p. 3 for details.)

**Sunday May 28 at 2 pm**  
Liverpool Library  
(TBA) Check [www.hgcny.org](http://www.hgcny.org) for an update

Looking ahead to summer:  
**Show Me, Help Me Garden Tours**

Our Show Me Help Me Garden Tours are always popular and instructive. Watch for details in the Summer issue.

Here are some events not sponsored by HGCNY, but they're sure to be of interest to native plant enthusiasts. Mark your calendars now!

**Saturday April 1 "Going Native!"**  
The Men's Garden Club of Syracuse and Phoenix Flower Farm/PFF Landscaping are hosting their 12th Annual Spring Gardening Seminar with a program that's of special interest to Wild Ones!

The event features William Cullina, the director of the New England Wild Flower Society's Garden in the Woods, and Don Leopold, author of *Native Plants of the Northeast* and a SUNY-ESF professor.

**Tues June 27 through Thurs June 29** Northeast Symposium on Native Plant Education, Conservation, and Gardening

**Day One:** Pre-Conference workshops and field trips

**Day Two:** Conference with keynote presentation(s), plenary session(s), and concurrent workshops and seminars

**Day Three:** Post-Conference workshops and field trips to natural areas and industry-related locations.

For more information, go to [www.esf.edu/outreach/NativePlants/](http://www.esf.edu/outreach/NativePlants/)