



## Ardsley Cross Pollination News

### *January 2024 - The Darkest Month (or not)*



***Happy and healthy 2024!***

January is the darkest month of the year. Though we are now gaining daylight each day, it is a slow transition during this first month of the year. The lights of the holidays are gone and so we experience darkness for more than sixteen hours a day. Darkness can be beautiful and something to enjoy. Thanks to no humidity in the cold air the stars twinkle brightly, the milky way sparkles, and the full wolf moon shines coldly in the black sky on January 25. Or, that is how it is supposed to be. However, thanks to growing light pollution we can only see the moon and a few very bright stars. The rest is obliterated.

That may not seem like a big deal to some people, however light pollution has dire consequences. [Medical research](#) has shown that human exposure to artificial light at night can cause depression, mood and sleep disorders, stress, heart disease, cancer, obesity, and diabetes. There is a disturbing correlation between light pollution and Alzheimer's disease. Light pollution is also [deadly and harmful to birds, amphibians, pollinators and other insects, and animals](#). For example, the United Nations warns that millions of migrating birds are killed by light pollution each year.

Outdoor lighting is needed for safety and security, and what I am proposing as actions for each of us to take does not reduce the amount of outdoor lighting. It, instead, decreases the harmful effects of light pollution and can be accomplished through simple changes to how we light our outdoor spaces. I'll give easy and workable ways for us to bring back the stars and stay healthy in the process. Let's give our kids the stars and milky way.

Finally, January is the month to start planning your new pollinator gardens or garden expansions. You'll find information to get you started and ready for when the earth warms.

## UPCOMING EVENTS



### Going Wild With Hedgerows, Meadows and Plants with Kathy Evers. **Wednesday, January 17 at 7:30**

Kathy Evers returns to inspire us through telling the story about the next steps she took in 2023 to rewild her suburban yard. In 2023 Kathy focused on creating a hedgerow and small meadow on her property as well as nurturing her gardens that were installed in 2022. She will share her lessons learned, favorite plants, tips and tricks to make native gardening easier, and the joy of rewilding her yard. [Click here to register.](#)



### Macy Park Invasive Vine Cutting. **Saturday, January 27 from noon - 2 pm.**

Westchester Parks Foundation and the Village of Ardsley are again partnering to tame the invasive vines at Macy Park. Our December volunteers did amazing taming and now we will move into another section of the park. [Register here.](#) Not suitable for young children.



### Easy Native Trees For Your Yard. **Thursday, February 1 at 7:30, Zoom**

*and*

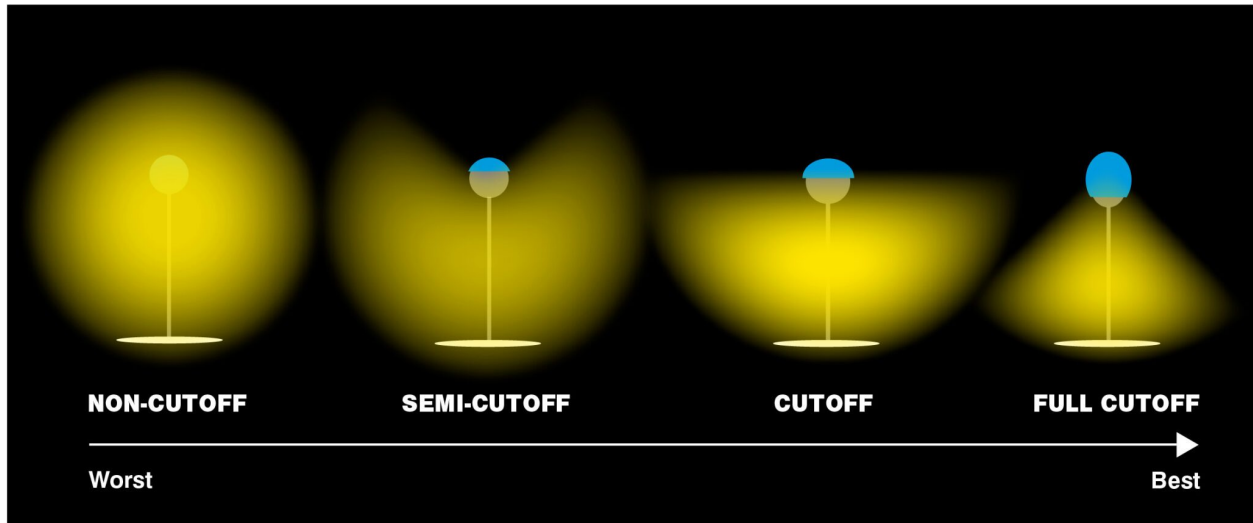
### Easy Native Shrubs For Your Yard. **Thursday, February 8 at 7:30, Zoom**

We are thrilled to have nationally renowned landscape designer and native plant expert Carolyn Summers present easy native trees and shrubs for your yard. There is a native tree and shrub for every situation, height requirement, and use. Fall in love with our gorgeous native trees and shrubs and help pollinators, birds, and wildlife by including natives on your property. ***These webinars will not be recorded.***

Easy Native Trees For Your Yard: [Click here to register.](#)  
Easy Native Shrubs For Your Yard: [Click here to register.](#)

**Save the Date! The Spring Gardening festival returns on Sunday, March 10 from noon to 4:30 pm Lots of how-to programs and help with planning your pollinator gardens. Fun for all ages.**

# How to Curb Light Pollution



We each have a part to play in reducing harmful light pollution. If you love birds, fireflies, luna moths and more this is a critical way to help them. It also makes you a considerate neighbor since your light pollution adversely affects those around you.

1. All lighting should be fully shielded (see diagram above).
2. Choosing lighting that is certified as Dark Skies Approved. Lights that have this approval can be located at [Dark Sky Approved | DarkSky International](#)..
3. Lighting should be low wattage 2,700 Kelvin (warm white) or amber. The color temperature should never exceed 3,000 Kelvin. Blue light is very harmful to humans and wildlife.
4. Lighting should have state-of-the-art lighting control management technologies to dim lights or turn off lights after hours. This will also serve to save money and energy. Favor motion sensitive lighting.
5. Lighting should never be directed upward or sideways, it should only point down.
6. Use the lowest wattage lights possible for the need.

That's it! Easy. But powerful. To learn more go to the [DarkSkies International website](#).






# The Bird and Bees Protection Act is Signed by Governor Hochul!

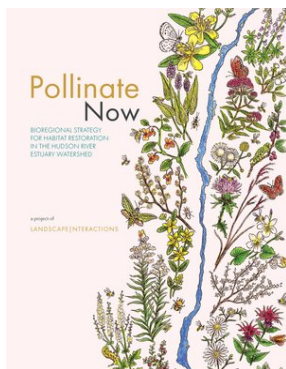
“The law will limit the use of neonicotinoid pesticides (neonics), and, when fully implemented, would eliminate up to 80-90% of the neonics entering New York’s environment annually by prohibiting unneeded neonic coatings on corn, soybean, and wheat seeds and non-agricultural lawn and garden uses.”. Thanks to everyone who called, wrote letters and attended rallies.

## Time to Start Planning Your Gardens!

It may seem too early, but January is the perfect month to plan your gardens. If you order some of your plants online you’ll want to get your orders in once ordering opens up for spring delivery; which is generally January and February. By March the popular plants are often out of stock. Our website has a [list of local and online native plant vendors](#), as well as native plant resources to help you plan and implement a new or expanded pollinator garden.

	<h3>Guides to help you</h3> <p>Our website has a wealth of information in the <a href="#">Quick Start Guide section</a>. Learn how to create a garden from scratch. As a lazy gardener there are lots of hacks to get started without tedious work. Let’s face it, we should be having fun in the garden, not dreading chores.</p>
 <p><b>Create your own Monarch Waystation!</b></p> <p><b>Plants in the Garden</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A - Swamp Milkweed <i>Asclepias incarnata</i></li><li>B - Butterfly Weed <i>Asclepias tuberosa</i></li><li>C - Wild Blue Indigo <i>Baptisia australis</i></li><li>D - Pink Purple Coneflower <i>Echinacea pallida</i></li><li>E - Joe-Pye Weed <i>Eupatorium purpureum</i></li><li>F - Prairie Blazing Star <i>Liatris pycnostachya</i></li><li>G - Wild Bergamot <i>Monarda filifolia</i></li><li>H - Shrew Black-eyed Susan <i>Rudbeckia fulgida</i> var. <i>speciosa</i></li><li>I - Prairie Dropseed <i>Sporobolus heterolagus</i></li><li>J - Little Bluestem <i>Schizanthus scoparium</i></li><li>K - Mountain Mint <i>Pycnanthemum virginicum</i></li><li>L - Rattlesnake Master <i>Eryngium yuccifolium</i></li></ul> <p><small>© 2023 Native Plant Society of New York</small></p>	<h3>Don’t reinvent the wheel when designing</h3> <p>There is a wealth of free pollinator garden designs for every condition, purpose and size, including containers. Get a jump start by finding a design you like and, if you’d like, modifying it to your needs. Our <a href="#">January 2023 newsletter</a> had a wealth of practical and easy to implement information on designing a pollinator garden.</p>
	<h3>Consider creating a soft landing</h3> <p>Whether you are starting or expanding a pollinator garden there are some design features you may want to include. For example, you may be interested in creating a soft landing for insects under your trees. Soft landings provide native groundcovers and organic matter to support and shelter insects as they fall or descend from trees to overwinter and/or pupate. Who doesn’t want a soft landing in life! For more information and plant lists <a href="#">visit this site</a>.</p>





## Support locally endangered pollinators

Some of you may have attended or watched [the recording](#) of our webinar on *Pollinate Now!* with Evan Abramson of Landscape Interactions. Many of us are now inspired to plant natives that support at-risk pollinators in our Hudson River estuary watershed. The *Pollinate Now!* book is hands-on and informative and includes free designs. The book is free to [view or download online](#).



## Don't forget to create a waystation for our endangered monarch butterflies

A [Monarch Waystation](#) provides host plants (milkweeds) and nectar plants to support monarch butterflies throughout the months they reside here. Being a lazy gardener, I love designs that support multiple purposes. The plants in a monarch waystation are also super favorites of other pollinators and birds. Sadly, I am hearing from other pollinator gardeners that we had the same experience in 2023 - no or only a few monarch butterflies in our pollinator gardens. Let's turn this around.



## Plant to attract beneficial insects

Ditch the pesticide and control harmful insects the natural way - by [attracting predatory insects](#) to do the work for you. Get your yard back in balance for healthier results.



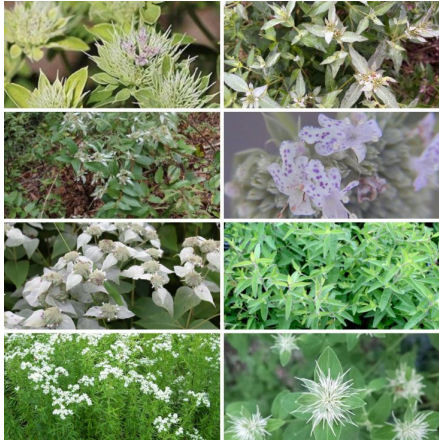
## Have fun and incorporate a stumpery in your designs

I am a big fan of artfully leaving branches, stumps, and logs in my woodland gardens. I think they are beautiful, particularly the ones with colorful (and fascinating) [lichens](#). They add structure to the garden in all seasons and an added bonus is the gorgeous and colorful mushrooms that appear after autumn rains. Well, I just learned that the Victorians loved this too and called this a [stumpery](#). Now that sounds official! Why leave your branches at the curb? Build these valuable elements into your garden designs.



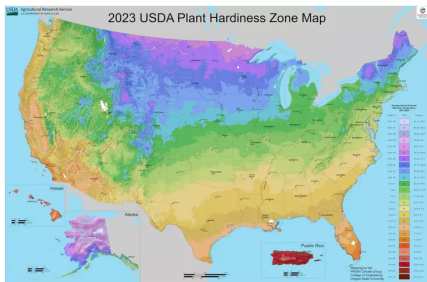
## Jazz up your garden for next winter

Is your garden looking a bit dull in the winter? Why not incorporate some [winter interest](#) and [bird essential](#) native shrubs and trees in your plans?



## Mountain mints - powerhouses for pollinators

Need a plant that does it all? Absolutely deer resistant? Brings pollinators to ecstasy? A long 8+ week blooming period? Carefree? Crowds out invasives? Makes a nice tea? Is beautiful? Spreads? Likes sun through part shade? Takes lots of different moisture conditions? Look no further than the native mountain mints. There are many varieties, each with its own winning quality. Check out [the various mountain mints](#) and make room for a couple in your garden.



## Right plant, right zone

Besides the crazy weather, another sign of climate change is our ever warming temperatures. This year [the USDA revised its hardiness zone maps](#) to reflect warmer temperatures in all regions. Though this means we can more safely grow species normally native south of us we still advise that you try to select plants native to this area to improve our regional biodiversity. Ardsley is now hardiness zone 7a (coldest temps 0 to 5 F). Use [this interactive map](#) (type in your zip code) to find your new hardiness zone.



## Cool winter weather terms

By now you know I love folklore and common nature wisdom. Did you ever wonder what you call some of the things we see in winter? From hoar frost to frost flowers, [learn the origin of the terms and what they describe](#).



## Check out the Ecoregional Revegetation Application (ERA)

This [tool from the Federal Highway Administration](#) is used to recommend pollinator trees, shrubs and plants for revegetation of highways in a region. The tool is a great reference for us too! It lists plants with growing and pollinator value of each.



## Saratoga Tree Nursery now open for orders

If you want to plant a variety of trees and shrubs for little money take a look at the [NY DEC Saratoga Tree Nursery](#). You can't beat the prices. There is a minimum of 25 trees/shrubs per species. They have some great mixed species packets (e.g. Pollinator Packet, Wildlife Habitat Packet) and many come with 30 plants in the packet. They also have single species hardwoods, ([click here](#) to see what is available). For a delivery fee they will ship the seedlings directly to you. Why not involve your friends and neighbors? One shipment can help to create habitat in many yards.



## Be Lazy When Preparing Your Garden!

There is no reason to work to create a garden (unless you want to). This is the perfect time to use a no dig method to create your garden areas. [Sheet mulch now](#) to create a garden for planting in the spring. This is so easy! How lazy am I? In the winter I skip a lot of steps. Step 1: lay down cardboard, newspaper or X-Board. Step 2: cover with wood mulch and/or leaves and/or compost. Step 3: let nature take over to kill the underlying lawn/weeds and create a fertile planting bed for you in April/May. That's it!

## ACCESS PREVIOUS NEWSLETTERS AND INFO SESSIONS



Previous Newsletters and information, recordings, references and presentations from our monthly get togethers are available. Just [click here](#).

Thank you for all you are doing to support our endangered pollinators and ecosystem! Please feel free to forward this newsletter to other interested (or potentially interested) people. Let's grow the pathway!

**The Ardsley Pollinator Pathway Team:** *Rebecca Arkin, Linda Azif, Savannah Donohue, Kathy Evers, Julie Larkin, Jen Nordhem, Dina Patterson, Carol Sommerfield (Chair)*

**The Veggie Gardening Mania Team:** *Ruchi Agarwal, Linda Caldwell, Carol Sommerfield*

Visit our [Ardsley Pollinator Pathway website](#) for inspiration and how-to guides.

If this email was forwarded to you, [visit our site](#) to subscribe to our newsletter or add your garden to our map. To unsubscribe, [email us](#) with "unsubscribe" as the email subject.

***The foregoing is provided as a public service announcement and without promotion, representation or review by the Village of Ardsley.***