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### A Message From MHLC's Conservation Director

*As we head into the colder months, I always like to reflect and take stock in the last growing season. What did we accomplish, what did we learn, and what will we do next year? Reflecting on your land and what you want to do is always a good measure when it comes to management practices. Whether it's growing a certain variety of vegetable in the garden or removing your first stand of invasive species, reflecting on what worked and how to make improvements for next year is the heart of land management.*

*In this edition, we look at managing for wildlife on your land with tips on species to plant, ways to provide the bare necessities to wildlife in your space, and techniques for increasing habitat regardless of the size of the land you love. We hope this edition gives you the ideas and inspiration!*

*If you are making improvements to your property in the coming year and want to ensure it works within the terms of your conservation easement, please reach out! I am always happy to discuss projects and how they fit within your protection plan. Happy New Year!*



Sarah Walsh, Conservation Director



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# Managing for Wildlife

If you are looking to manage for wildlife on your property, the first step is to determine if your conservation easement allows for this type of management. Most MHLC easements do address wildlife management and note that practices are allowed in “Acceptable Development Areas” and “Active Areas.” However, be sure to read your easement language carefully and reach out to MHLC staff if you have any questions before starting your management project.

Managing your property for wildlife however big or small is a great way to provide food, water, and shelter for wildlife—the resources they need to survive. This article will give you some simple tips you can implement in your woodlot or backyard to provide these essential needs to your local wildlife while also ensuring the health of your land.

## Food

Depending on the species you are looking to manage for on your property, there are many excellent native trees and shrubs you can plant to feed a variety of wildlife and birds. Native trees and shrubs provide nutrient rich foods for wildlife, while invasive trees and shrubs do not. Therefore, the first step in providing nutrient-rich foods for any wildlife is to remove any invasive trees and shrubs you have on your property.

Species like buckthorn, honeysuckle, and Asiatic bittersweet all provide berries, but all don’t have the same level of nutrition as native berry-producing shrubs. These berries do not provide the nutrient-rich caterpillars needed for growing nestlings, making native shrubs and trees the best species to add to your yard to support birds and pollinators for their life cycles.



Coneflower left on the stem at the end of the season provides seed to birds and shelter for overwintering beneficial insects.

## Native Species We Love!

Native Shrubs	Native Small Trees	Native Large Trees
<a href="#">Winter berry</a>	<a href="#">Staghorn sumac</a>	<a href="#">Red oak</a>
<a href="#">Service berry</a>	<a href="#">American plum</a>	<a href="#">White oak</a>
<a href="#">Arrowwood</a>	<a href="#">Flowering dogwood</a>	<a href="#">Shagbark hickory</a>
<a href="#">Nannyberry</a>	<a href="#">American hazelnut</a>	<a href="#">Bitternut hickory</a>
<a href="#">Highbush cranberry</a>	<a href="#">Grey birch</a>	<a href="#">American basswood</a>
<a href="#">Gray dogwood</a>	<a href="#">River birch</a>	<a href="#">Red maple</a>
<a href="#">Red osier dogwood</a>	<a href="#">Speckled alder</a>	<a href="#">White pine</a>

See the digital version of *Loving Your Land* on MHLC’s website for clickable links to learn more about each species: [www.mohawkhudson.org/news/resources-and-publications/](http://www.mohawkhudson.org/news/resources-and-publications/)

To identify invasive trees and shrubs on your property, and learn the process for removal, please visit: <https://adkinvasives.com/data/files/Documents/APIPP-BMPs.pdf>.

Once your invasive species have been removed, we recommend planting a variety of native trees and shrubs that not only provide berries and nuts with high nutrition content for wildlife species, but that also ones that self-seed, making more of them over the years to ensure long-term health of your land and the wildlife that live there.

## Water

Water is essential for all living things survival. Whether it’s keeping a bird bath in your yard or enhancing an existing pond or stream on your property, providing a source of water is a nice touch for helping wildlife.

If you have a small yard, putting a bird bath with some stones placed in the bottom that come just to the surface can be an excellent source for birds and other wildlife. The stones in the bottom provide a perching spot for smaller birds and serve as a landing space for smaller pollinators such as hummingbirds, bees and butterflies that also need water. They will use the stone to land on and cling to as they reach down to the water to drink.

If you have a water course on your property such as a stream or pond, making sure the edges are vegetated is important. This provides a sense of security for vulnerable animals pausing for a drink out in the open. Studies have also shown that wild shorelines are more often used by nesting reptiles and amphibians—they too like the protection a wild edge provides as they lay their eggs, but also are drawn to it for the protection their hatching young will have too! To learn more about improving ponds for wildlife, please visit the Royal Horticultural Society website at <https://www.rhs.org.uk/ponds/wildlife-ponds>.

Placing a bird bath in your yard is a simple way to help wildlife.





Brush piles left on field edges and in the woods provide important shelter for wildlife.

## Shelter

Providing shelter to wildlife can be as easy as leaving the occasional brush pile in the woods as you collect firewood to leaving your perennial plants up through the winter months to provide wintering habitat for insects. Every little bit helps! [Brush piles](#) provide hiding places for foraging birds, but can also provide vital habitat for rabbits, groundhogs, squirrels, and even toads.

If you don't have a woodlot for a brush pile, you can create one at the back of your yard. Simply stack logs or brush, and you have created instant shelter for many species. If you only have a small garden, create a stack with smaller logs. These small shelters will provide space for snakes, toads, and beneficial insects to be a part of your garden. [Leave perennials uncut](#) at the end of the growing season to provide wintering habitat for beneficial insects and seed for birds throughout the winter months.



A small stack of logs in the garden can also provide shelter for beneficial insect and toads.

## Native tree and shrub resources

- Soil and Water Conservation District Office spring sales
- Saratoga Tree Nursery Annual Spring Sale
- Cornell Cooperative extension Office Annual Sales
- Local Nursery – read the label and ask nursery staff to point you to native stock

## Resources for tree planting equipment

- Forestry Suppliers
- The Arborist Store
- Tractor Supply
- To learn how to plant your new native trees and shrubs, check out this video by the Dept. of Environmental Conservation: <https://tinyurl.com/2p9yykzr>.

# Supporting Pollinators

As you may know, we are losing our pollinators at a rapid rate. These insects, birds and other wildlife are critical to food production and the health of our environment. You can support pollinators regardless of the size of your property.

## Plant Native Gardens

Native plants provide the nutrition wildlife need. From insects who pollinate plants that provide food to the birds that feed on those insects and use them to feed their young, plants that support pollinators are vital to a healthy ecosystem. Perennials are a great way to not only provide native plants each year, but they are also low maintenance and can be planned by species bloom times to create available blooms to pollinators throughout the growing season.

To learn more about perennial gardening for wildlife, check out this [Guide to Landscaping with Native New York Plants](#).

## Reduce Your Lawn

If you don't necessarily want to get into gardening, you can still support pollinators by simply letting sections of your lawn overgrow. This allows for some native flowers to pop up and allows your lawn to go to seed, providing food for wildlife, flowers for pollinators and a healthier yard for the future.

If you want to up the color in your unkempt yard, you can plant native wildflower mixes that will provide annuals and perennials in a section of your yard. These mixes are also great to follow a major invasive species removal project to ensure native species are taking hold to support pollinators and wildlife.

You can learn more about native wildflower mixes and tips for small space gardens from [American Meadows](#), visit <https://tinyurl.com/yhe7ddf4>.



# Trees for Trib Provides Free Trees to MHLC

## *...and you may qualify too!*

Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy's Wolf Creek Falls Preserve had a strip of land along Wolf Creek that was open field and provided only a small buffer of trees and shrubs to Wolf Creek. This past spring, MHLC applied to DEC's Hudson River Estuary Trees for Tributaries Program that plants trees next to streams within the Estuary watershed.

MHLC staff worked with Trees for Tribs staff to create a planting plan with native trees and shrubs to create the desired effect for managing for wildlife and planting species that self-seed, increasing shrubs, wildlife feed, and soil stability for years to come. Once the plan was agreed upon, Trees for Tribs staff worked with DEC's [Saratoga Tree Nursery](#) and other local nurseries to gather native trees and shrubs for the planting, tree tubes to protect the plants from deer browse, and stakes to ensure trees straight grown in the coming years – all provided to MHLC for free through New York State's Environmental Protection Fund. MHLC volunteers generously donated their time on a wet Saturday in the spring of 2021 to complete the planting of 150 trees and shrubs!

This program is available to any landowner with a significant buffer next to a stream in either the Hudson Estuary River watershed or the Mohawk watershed. Trees for Tribs provides the planning guidance and everything you need to plant a successful buffer along your stream.

If you are thinking of hosting a Trees for Tribs planting, please let us know! We can coordinate volunteers to assist in the planting if you need additional help. To learn more about this program and if you are eligible, visit the Trees for Tribs website at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/77710.html>.

Volunteers plant free native trees and shrubs at MHLC's Wolf Creek Falls Preserve.



**Don't have a stream? You can still buy bareroot, native stock locally through DEC's Saratoga Tree Nursery's annual seedling sale.**