



MOUNT PROSPECT SUSTAINABILITY news

SPRING 2026

START SMALL, START NATIVE!

In recent years, native plants have seen an encouraging rise in popularity driven by both environmental awareness and increased availability. For those who don't consider themselves "gardeners," or who feel there's no need to fix what isn't broken, such as a yard filled with non-native perennials, adding native plants may seem unnecessary or complicated. In reality, incorporating native plants into your landscape is a meaningful way to support the environment in your own community while inspiring your neighbors to do the same.

Native plants attract and sustain native insects and wildlife, help filter stormwater runoff, and can sequester more carbon than many traditional non-native species. From a maintenance perspective, they typically require less water and fewer pesticides, and they often experience fewer pest problems. As with any planting project, research is key. Some native species reseed or spread more aggressively than others; sometimes a welcome trait, sometimes an added maintenance consideration.

Midwestern native landscapes are richly diverse and beautiful, offering an array of colors, flower forms, and textures. Homeowners can replicate these ecosystems on a smaller scale in their own

yards. Why not start small or introduce native species gradually? For many people, a complete yard overhaul is neither practical nor sustainable. Begin by understanding your site conditions. Assess your soil moisture (wet, medium, or dry). If your yard has varying topography, you may have a mix of these conditions. Next, observe how much sunlight the area receives. Full sun means six or more hours of direct sunlight during the growing season; partial sun is three to six hours; shade is fewer than three hours. Before purchasing plants, confirm that their growing requirements match your site conditions. Also consider bloom times to ensure flowers from spring through fall.

Several native plants make excellent starter options due to their familiarity and availability. Purple coneflower, black-eyed Susan, and butterfly milkweed are beautiful, well-suited to home landscapes, and widely available in stores and online. You may even have neighbors willing to divide and share their plants.

Other manageable native options, generally two feet tall or less and not overly aggressive include lance-leaf coreopsis, wild geranium, showy wild garlic, slender mountain mint, and Jacob's ladder. Grasses and sedges are another excellent way to incorporate natives. Paired with flowering plants,

IN THIS ISSUE

Native Planting
Bird Migration

Birds in the Ecosystem
Bird Fatalities

Bird Fatalities
Spring Cleaning

NATIVE PLANTINGS



they provide texture and year-round interest. Consider prairie dropseed, little bluestem, common wood sedge, or Pennsylvania sedge. If you have space for taller plants, several species of Baptisia (wild indigo) are native to our region. They form attractive, shrub-like mounds with lupine-like flowers in spring, followed by decorative seed pods. Joe Pye weed, lead plant, New Jersey tea, button blazing star, great blue lobelia, and cardinal flower also provide vibrant color and significant environmental benefits.

These examples represent only a small fraction of the native plants available in our area. Access

can sometimes be a challenge, but as interest grows, native plants are becoming more commercially available. One can purchase established plants or grow them from seed, which may be easier to source. Don't be intimidated by starting from seed—many helpful resources are available, including your local library, Friendship Park Conservatory, and Go Green Mount Prospect. Many perennial native plants grown from seed will not bloom in their first year. Depending on the species, flowering may take two to three growing seasons or more. However, once established, native plants are remarkably resilient and well worth the wait.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kaitlyn Scheid, Conservatory and Greenhouse Manager at Friendship Park Conservatory, has worked for the Mt. Prospect Park District since 2020. She previously served as an Environmental Restoration Technician and Seasonal Ranger in surrounding suburbs. Friendship Park Conservatory offers a variety of resources on native plants and sustainability, including a general plant help line at 847-298-3500 ext. 407.



Early Bird Gets the Worm... Right?

As climate change continues to impact the larger world ecosystem, it's important to understand some of the not highly publicized impacts that are occurring in the community! A recent multiyear study of North American bird migration and the impacts on their nesting environment as a result of changing ecological conditions was published in the National Library of Medicine. Their study found that changing environmental temperatures are having impacts on when birds "arrive home" from migrating south. Changes to the migration time line are then combined with issues of insect life cycles changing from climate change and not being an available food source when migrating birds are arriving.

Findings from the multiyear study show that insects, birds, and the plants are seeing various levels of impacts from the changing ecosystem. The various living creatures in the ecosystem can be better or worse equipped to handle these changes. It's important to note that all of the variables rely on each other either directly or indirectly, so these impacts are not limited to just one part of the ecosystem.

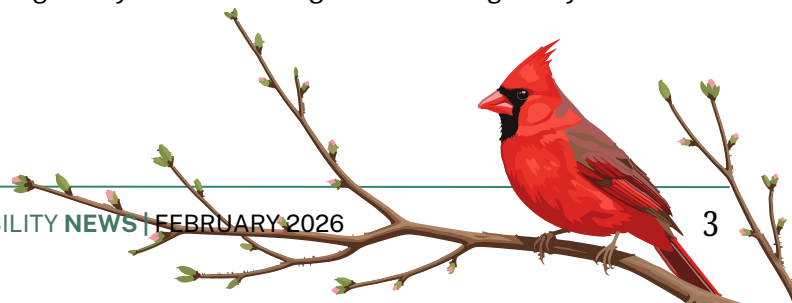


[Click here to access the full publication referenced in the above news story](#)

Help Birds During Migration!

One of the issues facing birds during their long migration journeys is the lack of "Stopover" habitat to take a break while migrating. Deforestation and decreases in natural spaces are giving birds fewer places to land. You can help out our feathered friends by increasing the amount of vertical space in your yard! Look to

add trees, shrubs and other tall plants as places for them to rest on their journey! Creating stopover locations is also a great chance to view migratory birds that might not see regularly.



What Role Do Birds Play?

Birds play a major role in helping maintain the ecosystem and keep balance in nature. Often overlooked, birds can often play a supporting role in many crucial activities completed by other players in the ecosystem. Check out some of the following roles completed by birds:

Seed Dispersal - Birds have a wide range of things they eat, with variations based off of geographic location, bird species, and food availability. Birds can be granivores, which means certain species can have diets where they consume seeds. Consumption of seeds has a positive impact on the environment as it helps seeds be spread thought-out the ecosystem as the digestive process concludes.

Scavenging - Some species of birds play a role in the removal of dead and decaying animals, providing a natural clean up of decay while also cycling the nutrients back into the environment. Scavenging and cleaning up decay may not be a “glamours” part of the ecosystem, but it plays a crucial role in maintaining balance.

Insect removal - In the natural balance, all species have counter weights to help keep populations in balance. Birds play a crucial role in this and help reduce bug and arachnid populations. Birds are natural predators for insects and are needed to make sure they do not overwhelm the ecosystem.

Sources of Bird Fatalities

Feral/Domestic Cats 1.4 - 3.7 Billion	Building Collisions 97 Million - 1.2 Billion	Power Line Collisions 130 - 174 Million	Legal Harvest 120 Million
Automobile Collisions 50 - 100 Million	Pesticides 60 - 72 Million	Communication Tower Collisions 4 - 50 Million	<u>Click here to access the full report</u>

The above numbers come from a Final Environmental Impact Statement for Proposed Habitat Conservation Plan and Incidental Take Permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Iowa – Illinois Field Office. The report was made regarding the MidAmerican Energy Company request for a Take Permit. Take Permits allow the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to

authorize the "taking" of endangered and threatened species, if that taking is incidental to, and not the purpose of, the carrying out of an otherwise lawful activity. These numbers provide valuable data regarding human impacts on bird populations. Published reports by organizations such as the Fish and Wildlife Service are monitoring the data and the impact.

Snowmelt Pollution

It may feel hard to believe in the depths of winter when snow is blanketing the community, but that snow will all melt! Melting snow can unleash a whole host of contaminants into the soil and eventually into waterways.

Automotive oils and road salts are contaminants that come as byproducts of dependency on roadways. Salt keeps roads safe to drive on, and oils in vehicles keep them operating smoothly. Snow removal operations then push these byproducts off the road and into abutting snow banks and along roads in the right of way. Salt and other chemicals can have negative impacts

on the public water way as they begin to be absorbed into the soil.

On top of these externalities, snow can also hide pet waste and litter. These items can be managed much easier and their negative impacts can be reduced through simple individual collection methods. Be sure to pick up after your pets and look for litter that may blow out of your garbage can. Pet waste alone can damage water ecosystems by lowering oxygen in the water, killing fish, and promoting weeds and algae.

Information in this article was sourced from NEIWPCC, click [here](#) to access the full article.

Watch Out for Ticks!

As everyone begins to go outside and spend more time in the grass and in the garden, it's important to take the appropriate steps to avoid any interactions with ticks! Ticks can harbor Lyme disease, anaplasmosis, babesiosis and other diseases. To help avoid any negative side effects, be sure to take the appropriate precautions. Wear long sleeves and cover exposed skin. After spending any time outside, be sure to also check for any ticks and monitor any areas impacted.

Follow these steps when you have found and are removing a tick:

- 1.If you find a tick attached to your skin, grasp it with tweezers as close to the skin as you can. Pull up on the tick with steady pressure. Do not squeeze.
- 2.Wash the bite area and your hands with soap and water. Dispose of the tick by sticking it to a piece of tape and placing in trash or by flushing the tick in the toilet.

Recycle Coach App

Have hard-to-recycle items? Maybe you can never remember if plastic bags can be recycled, or maybe they can and you had to do something special... Don't stress about remembering and have the Recycle Coach App help you out! Don't ever stress about these decisions again and download the app from the app store today.

Recycle Coach partners with the Village and helps provide information that is specifically localized for individuals who live in Mount Prospect. Have questions about the app or would like to learn more about the service? Click on the link [HERE](#) to visit their website!

SPRING CLEANING

Textile Recycling

The Village partners with Simple Recycling to offer a curbside textile recycling option for Mount Prospect residents. Participation in the program is free and easy! Either visit the Simple Recycling [website](#) or call (866) 835-5068 to schedule your future pick-up.

Picked up clothing items are graded and sorted locally and/or regionally based on quality and condition. The top quality materials will be resold to local thrift outlets, mid grade is exported to international markets and “unusable” items are processed for raw materials.

Items accepted by Simple Recycling include: Men's

clothing, Women's clothing, and Children's Clothing, Coats, Jackets, Jewelry, Shoes, Purses, Hats, Toys, Blankets, Drapes/Curtains, Pillows, Sleeping Bags, Tools, Silverware, and Dishes.

Simple Recycling offers unlimited collection for all of the mentioned items.

As long as the items you want to recycle qualify, they will take as much as you would like.



Electronics Recycling

The Village's electronics recycling program will begin in April. Residents are limited to 7 items each week. Please review the [Acceptable Electronic Material](#) list to see if your electronics item will be accepted. Residents can drop-off electronics at the Mount Prospect Public Works Facility. Items for recycling will only be accepted on Wednesdays between the hours of 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.. Items brought to the Public Works Facility outside of designated hours will not be collected.

Looking to recycle items before April? Residents can drop off items at the Glenview transfer station located at 1151 N River Road, across from the Maryville Academy on Saturdays between 9 AM and 11:30 AM



Battery Recycling

The Village provides a convenient method for recycling household alkaline and rechargeable batteries, preventing disposal in landfills. The program is provided at no cost to the resident, Village, or [SWANCC](#).

The program is only designed to accept household alkaline batteries (AAA, AA, C, D, 9V and button cells) and rechargeable batteries (NiCad, NiMH, lithium ion, and lithium polymer). Batteries can be brought to the Recycling Center located at the west end of the parking lot at Public Works Department (1700 West Central Road).

