



Start a new **HABITAT**™

HOMEGROWN NATIONAL PARK™

THE PROBLEM

Our planet is experiencing an increasing rate of species extinction. Bird and insect populations are particularly in decline. North America has lost a quarter of its bird population—**three billion birds**—since 1970. Much of this loss relates directly to the loss of insects. More than 95% of songbirds, for example, feed their young almost exclusively on caterpillars. Ohio alone has seen a 30% decline in the number of butterflies over the last 20 years. Monarch butterfly populations have plummeted by 90%. The populations of bees and other pollinating insects are also declining. In some parts of Europe, the decline has reached 70%.

WHY SHOULD I CARE?

Humans cannot exist without biodiversity. Most of the flowering plants that are the basis of all terrestrial food webs are insect-pollinated. Basically, without insects and the plants that feed them, we have no food.

HOW CAN I HELP?

Plant native! HOMEGROWN NATIONAL PARK™ is a grassroots call-to-action to restore biodiversity and ecosystem function by planting native plants and creating new ecological networks.

WHY NATIVE PLANTS?

All plants protect themselves with naturally-occurring chemicals to deter predation. Over time, plant-eating insects have developed the physiological adaptations required to digest the chemicals in their host plant's leaves and have specialized to eat only the plants sharing those particular chemicals. When insects from Ohio land on plants that evolved on another continent, chances are those insects will be unable to eat them.

OUR MISSION

TO RESTORE BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM FUNCTION, because every human being needs diverse, highly productive ecosystems to survive.

OUR GOAL

Twenty million acres of native plantings in the U.S.! This represents approximately half of the green lawns of privately owned properties and will effectively double the area of our existing national parks.



HARMAR'S HOMEGROWN NATIONAL PARKS

Very different but working together

FORT STREET POLLINATOR HABITAT

This Harmar Village habitat began as a project of the Green Sanctuary Committee of the First Unitarian Universalist Society in partnership with the City of Marietta, made possible by a grant from Dupont's Clear Into the Future program. The habitat is now managed by a community advisory board. When complete, it will provide a 200-foot hillside sweep of native flowering plants that will not only provide host plants and shelter for pollinators but reduce erosion, filter toxins from street runoff, and reduce maintenance. In the meantime, mulch donated by Greenleaf Landscapes is protecting the soil. We are grateful as well for plant donations from Davis Nurseries, a drip irrigation system from Al Tuttle and Chris Hoke of Rising Moon Farm, and practical assistance from Gilman United Methodist Church. Huge thanks go to RESolve Studios for logistical, design, and planning support—and hours of physical labor.



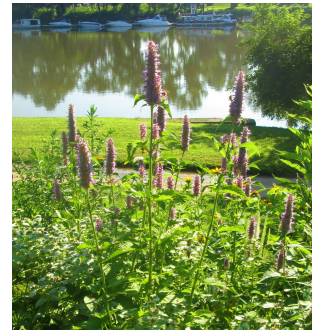
HISTORIC HARMAR BRIDGE COMPANY BUTTERFLY GARDEN

Situated on Historic Harmar Bridge Company property along Maple Street, this space is a formal tapestry garden using only three native species, fronted by a hedge of hydrangea. Designed by Caroline Eels of Passiflora, it demonstrates how native plants can be used in a traditional but easily-maintained garden design.

HOW DO I START?

Based on advice from Doug Tallamy of the University of Delaware, author of *Nature's Best Hope* and originator of Homegrown National Park.

1. **SHRINK THE LAWN.** Every square foot dedicated to lawn is a square foot that is degrading local ecosystems. Turfgrass offers no ecological benefits, although it is nice to walk on. Replacing half your lawn with native plants creates wildlife habitat and increases our Homegrown National Park System.
2. **REMOVE INVASIVE SPECIES.** Invasive plants are those that can spread unchecked into natural ecosystems. Some of the villains in our area are bamboo, barberry, Bradford pear, burning bush, English ivy, Japanese knotweed, Johnson grass, porcelain berry, privet, and purple loosestrife.
3. **ADD KEYSTONE PLANTS TO YOUR LANDSCAPE.**



Professor Tallamy's research has shown that a few keystone genera of native plants form the backbone of local ecosystems, particularly in serving as larval hosts for insects. Landscapes that do not contain one or more species from keystone genera will have failed food webs.

MID-OHIO VALLEY NATIVE PLANT SUPERSTARS:

- Oaks. These long-lived trees feed 477 species of butterflies and moths in our area.
- Native cherries and plums. 381 species.
- Willow. 328 species.
- Maple. 273 species.
- Goldenrod. 122 species.
- Perennial sunflower. 76 species.
- Joe-Pye weed. 32 species.
- Violets. 29 species.
- Switchgrass. 27 species.
- Wild geranium. 25 species.



4. **EDUCATE YOURSELF.**

Libraries and the internet are full of great resources. Good places to start are Doug Tallamy's books and the following websites:

- nwf.org/NativePlantFinder/Plants
- homegrownnationalpark.org
- And you can follow the sites' progress on our Facebook pages: just search for the names.

We can do this!