



# POLLINATOR PATHWAY PROJECT

August 26, 2018



The idea for a Pollinator Pathway began a little over a year ago in Wilton, with members of the Land Conservancy, the Wilton Garden Club and the Norwalk River Watershed Association. A few properties (mostly town land, but some private) were planted with pollinator-friendly plants. Neighbors living near the sites became interested and asked to be added to the Pathway. In a few months, they had enough sites to reach the border with Ridgefield, and through an association the RGC had with the Norwalk River Watershed Association and the Wilton Garden Club, we were asked to continue the Pathway into Ridgefield. Since then, with support from town Land Conservancies, the Highstead Foundation, area Garden Clubs and other town organizations, we have added Pathways in six other towns in Fairfield County (with several more planning to do so). Four Westchester towns are also in the planning stages of creating their own Pathways. The Pathways (in both counties) will eventually connect to one another.

The physical Pathways are determined by local environmental organizations (garden clubs, conservation commissions, land conservancies, etc.) and we are encouraging property owners who are not on the Pathways to add pollinator gardens too (the "Pathways" are fluid). Our goal is to make people aware of the plight of our pollinators and to facilitate the creation of habitats in their yards that will be safe feeding grounds for all kinds of pollinators. This is accomplished by encouraging the use of native plants and by discouraging the use of pesticides.

The project began in Ridgefield in March, at the RGC's annual Conservation Meeting. We held an open meeting with Doug Tallamy as our speaker, It was very well attended, we had lots of interest in beneficial insects, and we discussed the Pollinator Pathway project at the end of the meeting. We had a panel discussion a week later, featuring experts on pollinators, pesticides and native plants. We picked five garden sites in town and planted them all on one day in April (we had over 50 volunteers show up to help). Many more properties have been added since then, and we have received a grant to purchase signs, publish brochures, create a website and buy native plants.

This has been a truly collaborative project, with support from the town government, area businesses and several organizations. We hope to have Pathways in all Fairfield County Towns and in many Westchester towns within two years.

**Submitted by:**

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