

CONSERVATION@HOME

shaping private and community landscapes in a conservation-minded way

extension.illinois.edu/fmpt/conservationhome



SPRING

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Spring is officially here according to the equinox, but the weather doesn't always seem to know that is the case. I have many plants that are up and then a cold spell comes along for a couple of days putting a slow down on their growing. Luckily, many plants that come up this early can handle a little bit of cold weather without being damaged. Some even prefer the colder temperatures and spend their energy putting down strong root systems

that will be a benefit for support and seeking water when a dry time might occur.

Keeping leaf litter and mulch on around your newly sprouted plants will provide some insulation during the extreme temperature swings in a Central Illinois springtime.

They also provide a place for beneficial insects to overwinter. It is best to wait until there are several 50 degree Fahrenheit days to move the leaves and other plant material off of the flower beds. Native bees should also be leaving their nests at that time so you can trim those stems back to 18 inches without disturbing the bee's home.



CHOOSE NATIVE PLANTS FOR ECOLOGICAL BENEFITS AND WILDLIFE RESOURCES

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS EXTENSION ILRIVERHORT BLOG
[EXTENSION.ILLINOIS.EDU/BLOGS/ILRIVERHORT](https://extension.illinois.edu/blogs/ilriverhort)



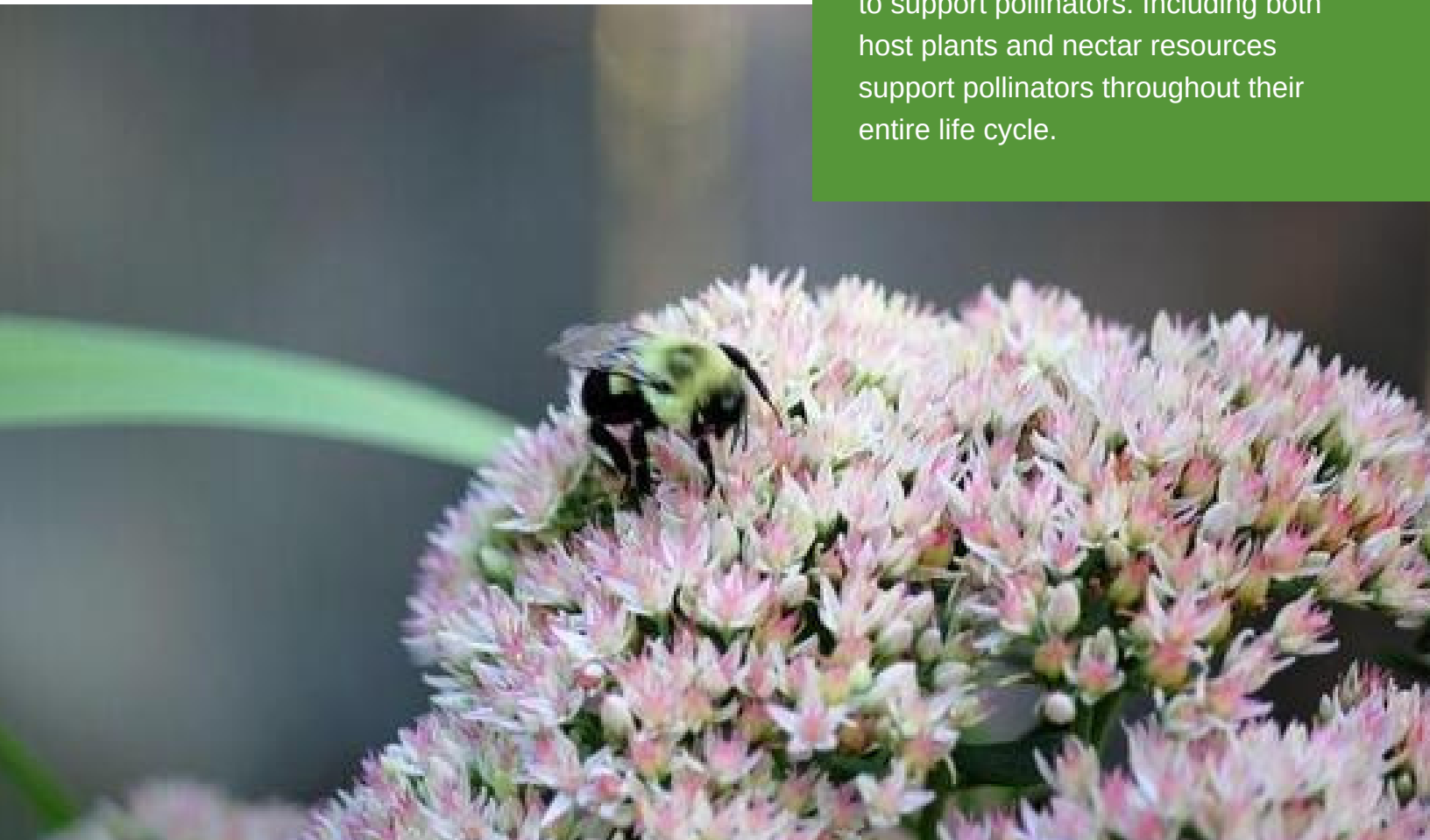
Are you looking to select plants that support local wildlife, conserve water, and enhance the overall ecosystem in Central Illinois? Here are some steps to assist you:

[READ MORE](#)



SUPPORTING POLLINATORS WITH NATIVE PLANTS

The [Illinois Pollinator Website](#) has a plant selector tool to help you choose the right native plant for the right place to support pollinators. Including both host plants and nectar resources support pollinators throughout their entire life cycle.



OHIO SPIDERWORT

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS EXTENSION: ILLINOIS POLLINATORS

Tradescantia ohiensis

Clump forming perennial with long grass-like leaves that are blue to gray-green in color. Spiderwort produces terminal clusters of blue to purple flowers. Great option for mass plantings. Has a long bloom time because only a few flowers of the cluster are in bloom at one time.

Ohio Spiderwort is an herbaceous perennial that thrives in zone 4 to 9. This native perennial can grow to be between 2 to 3 feet tall and spreads about 1 to 2 feet.

Can tolerate part shade, but better flowering in full sun. Great for the edge of a garden. Flowers open in the morning and close during the heat of the day.

Blue to purple flowers bloom in May and June. Ohio Spiderwort doesn't have a significant change in foliage color in the fall.

Can be aggressive in optimal growing conditions and can take over a small space. If cut back to 6 to 12 inches at the end of summer could possibly rebloom in the fall. Foliage can turn yellow in the heat of the summer.

Start from division or seed. Seed requires 120 days of cold, moist stratification. Best when planted from seed in the fall.

For more information on Ohio Spiderwort check out these articles:

- [Ohio Spiderwort in the Garden](#) by Chris Enroth
- [Ohio Spiderwort](#) from Illinois Wildflowers
- [Spiderwort](#) from Morton Arboretum

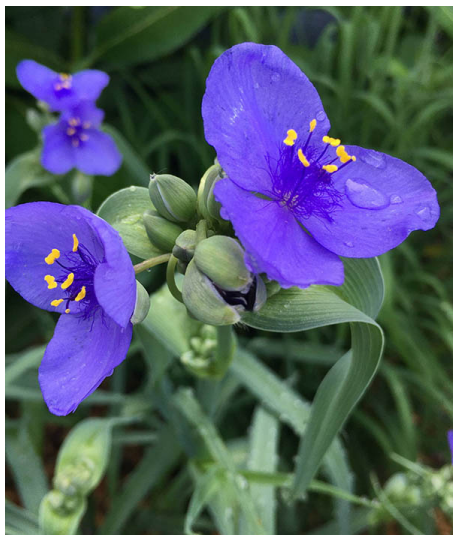


Photo credit: Janice Milanovich



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Photo credit: Erin Garrett

CONSERVATION@HOME MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

JENNIFER BASS

PEORIA COUNTY

As I opened my National Wildlife magazine this week the quote on the front page is, "We have to keep native plants on the landscape, because they are our life support system. I know my small yard has proven so because of the increase in animal, insect and bird population and the joyful comments I have received.

Jennifer Bass

"It Seemed the Natural Thing to Do!
When I was growing up, I lived on a farm with a large yard and two wonderful timbers. My mother had many flower beds with some natives and walks in the timbers to find flowers each spring was a day of delight. When we moved to where we now live, we had shade and more shade. The MANY bushes in our yard were so old and not full. Having them removed and adding shade plants seemed logical. After the bushes were gone, I had some native plants that been shaded and never amounted to much and I had not seen them. It was a delight to see bluebells, trillium, wild ginger, bloodroot, columbine and more appear.

It was also about this time I began to work with the Jubilee Prairie Dawgs and learn more about native plants and their value. I also began to do a lot of reading and I thought it would be great to create a "mini national park" in my yard, as Doug Tallamy would encourage.

After taking out a tree I had some sun! We planted a new tree near the area, but I now had an area to add natives which have bloomed and multiplied. When I heard about the Conservation@Home program, I thought I would like to do this! I began to assess my yard and each category and I



found I would qualify, so I signed up for a visit from a team.

It was great to walk through my yard with the C@H team and talk about my yard, how I created an area for not only my enjoyment but most importantly the benefit of wildlife. I have seen more butterflies, bees, and new species of birds visiting my garden. The deer love visiting and walking around sometimes stopping for a snack. People walk by and ask questions, my neighbor enjoys seeing blooms from spring until a hard frost, and the children even want to help and often ask questions.

As I opened my National Wildlife magazine this week the quote on the front page is, "We have to keep native plants on the landscape, because they are our life support system. I know my small yard has proven so because of the increase in animal, insect and bird population and the joyful comments I have received. I know it is a positive support system for me for the delight and well-being I feel as I work and the pleasure it brings to others.

Think about a spot where you might create a natural garden, watch for plant sales, dig in the soil and create a bit of a natural park in your yard. Share a lifeline for your neighbors, animals, birds, and insects.



SPRING PLANT SALES

[Master Gardener Plant Sale, May 4](#)

[Grand Prairie Friends, online May 5-18](#)

[Friends of Rocky Glen May 11](#)

[Wild Ones IL Prairie Chapter Sat May 18](#)

8am-1pm

[IL Native Plant Society Central Chapter,](#)

May 11 9am-noon

Local native plant sales are a great way to add diversity to your yard. Plants started from seed help to ensure that genetic diversity is conserved. Genetically diverse populations are more likely to have individuals that can survive as environmental changes occur.

UPCOMING EVENTS

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- **May 21, 2024, 5:30 pm** at ICC Horticulture Land Lab East Peoria: Corinne Brown will share information about “Native Trees and Shrubs” and tour the ICC arboretum. Social time begins at 5:30 pm, program begins at 6 pm.
- **June 10-14, 9 am to 3 pm.** Core Naturalist Training. University of Illinois Extension's Naturalist Core Education Training is designed for adults of any age who love to learn about the natural world. The 5-day course will include hands-on learning at natural outdoor areas throughout the four-county unit and digital learning on your own. [Register here](#)
- **July 16, 2024, 5:30 pm** at the Fulton County Farm Bureau Building: Dr. Mike Wiant will share information about “Native American Use of Plants.” Social time begins at 5:30, program starts at 6 pm.
- **September 17, 2024, 5:30 pm:** Log Room, Wildlife Prairie Park, 3826 N Taylor Rd, Hanna City Nicole Flowers-Kimmerle will share information about Invasive Species and Wild Spotter. Social time begins at 5:30 pm, program starts at 6 pm.
- **December 10, 2024, 5:30 pm:** Wallace Park 250 S Ave D, Canton. End of the Year Gathering. A time to enjoy each other’s company and celebrate all of the accomplishments and experiences of 2024.



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