

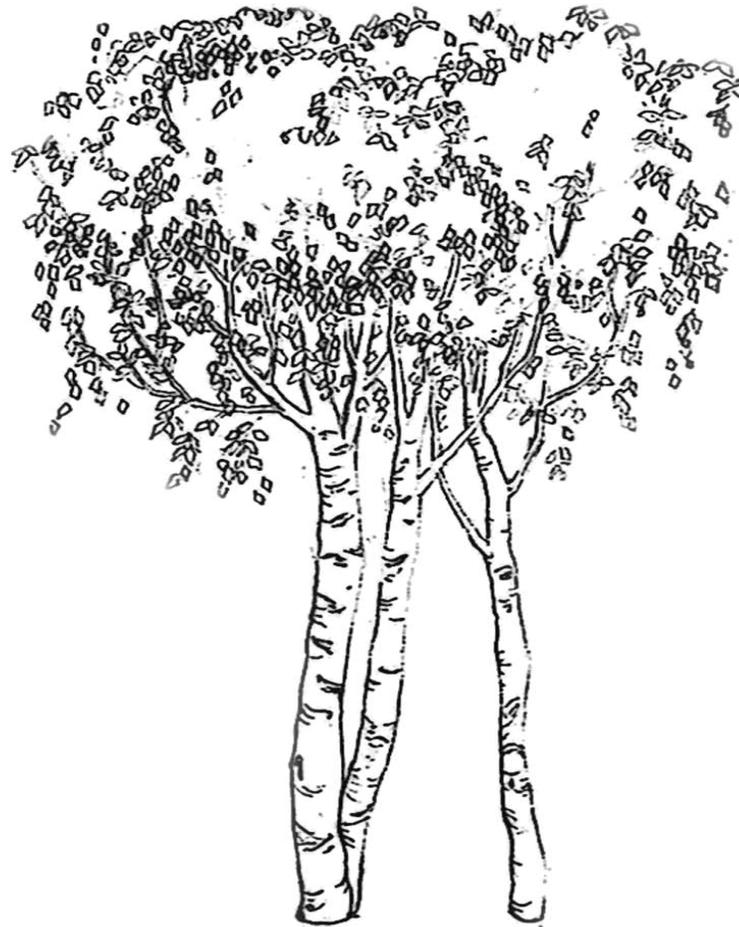


Photo credit Doug Tallamy

The Perfect Match: Nature in Balance



Photo credit Doug Tallamy



Why and how, you, as a gardener, are critical to restoring balance in our ecosystem.

Native Trees and Native Insects ARE: "The Perfect Match"

Oak 534

**Native
to our region**

Diversity is the key to a balanced self-sustaining ecosystem. Each of the native butterflies shown here represents 10 different varieties of butterfly and moth species (lepidoptera) that are supported throughout their life cycles by the native and alien trees and by the plants you grow.



**Alien
to our region**

Dawn
Redwood 0

Norway Maple 6

Birch 411

Ginkgo 5

Eastern Red
Cedar 42

Flowering Dogwood 118

Wild Plum
456

Weeping Katsura 0

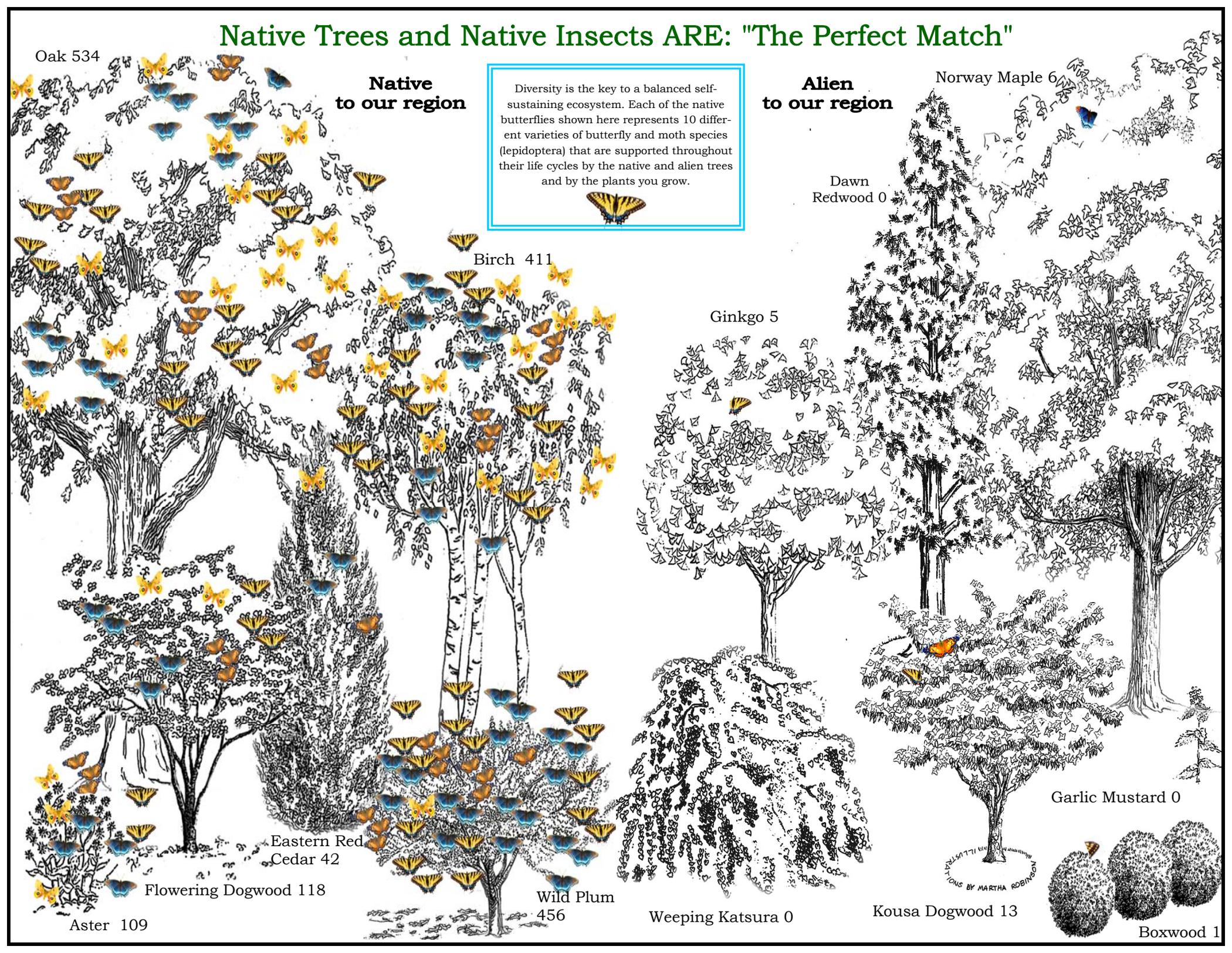
Kousa Dogwood 13

Garlic Mustard 0

Aster 109

Boxwood 1

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MARTHA ROBINSON



Native Plants and the Ecosystem

Native plants have adapted over millions of years to provide food and shelter throughout the seasons for native insects, birds, and wildlife.

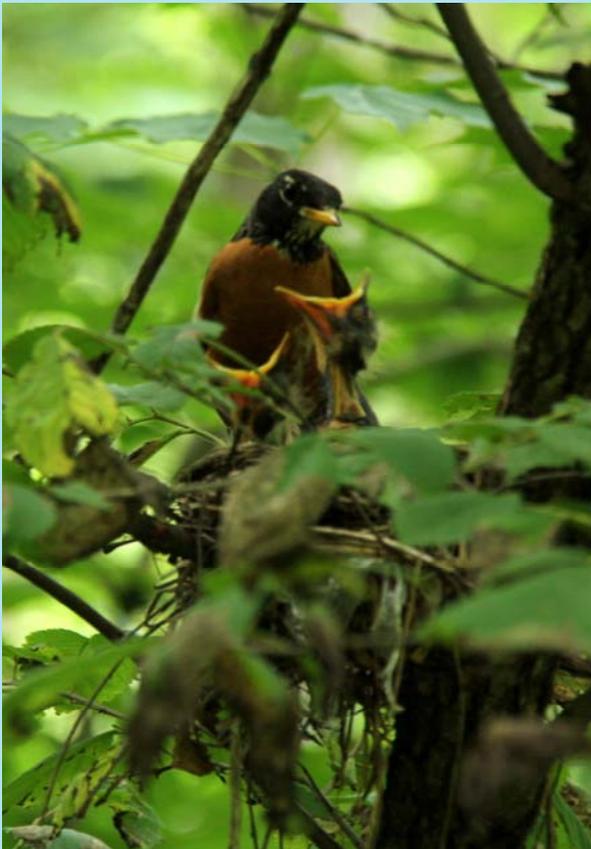


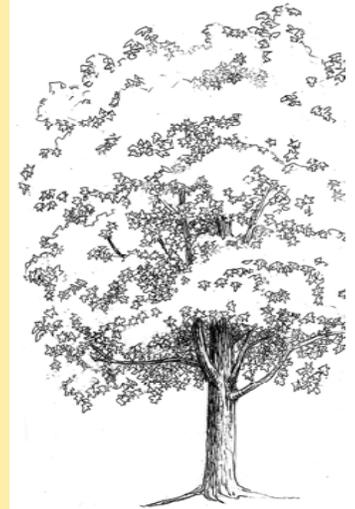
Photo credit: Doug Tallamy

WHY ARE NATIVES IMPORTANT?

- * Insects are specialists. Over 90% can only eat the host plant with which they evolved.
- * Baby birds eat only insects (protein).
- * Birds keep insect populations in balance.
- * Birds, butterflies and moths are vital to pollination.
- * Natives require less water, fertilizer and pesticides.
- * Natives increase the quantity and diversity of life.

Alien Plants are those brought from a different ecosystem by people or wildlife.

The Norway Maple (from Norway) is an alien to our region that is heavily planted, invasive, limited in its ability to support native insects, and allelopathic (its roots secrete chemicals that inhibit understory growth).



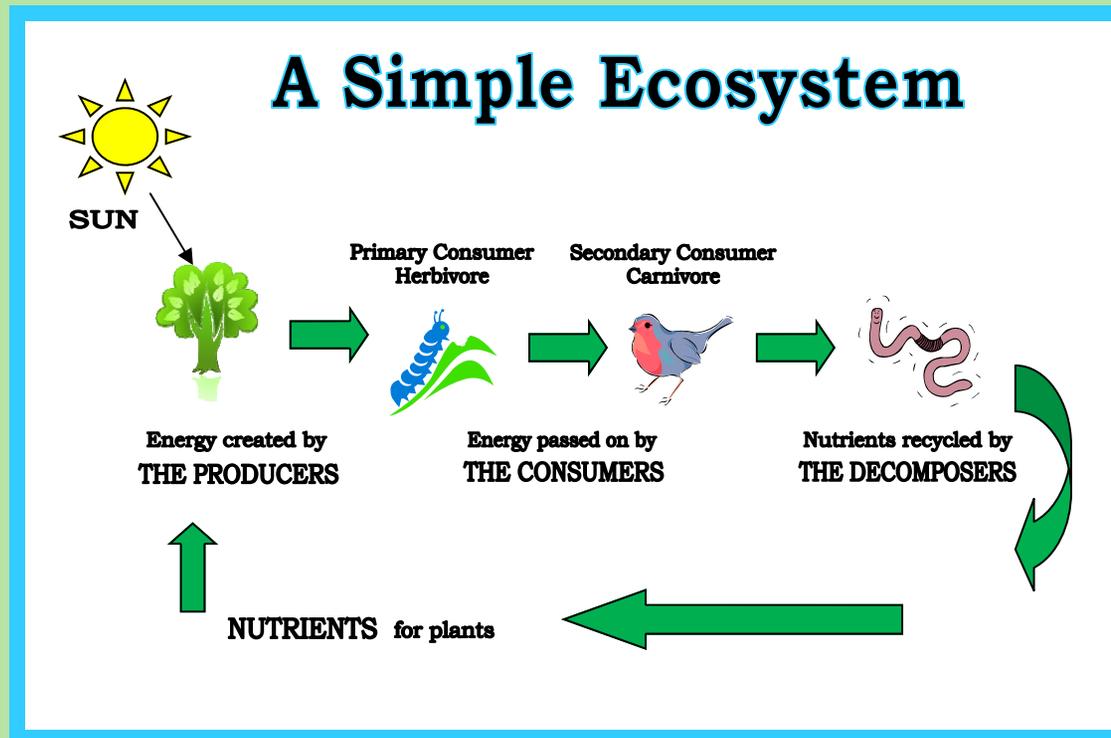
WHY ARE ALIENS HARMFUL?

- * Many become invasive and crowd out native species.
- * Aliens **do not support** the full life cycle of most insects.
- * Alien Plants introduce harmful diseases and insects.
- * Native insects **do not adapt** to alien plants.



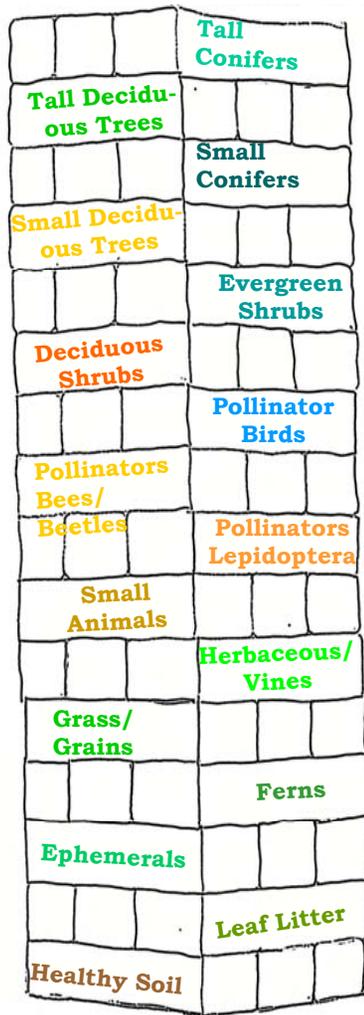
Invasive porcelain berry vine in Greenwich.

A healthy ecosystem is a **balanced**, self-sustaining interactive community of plants and wildlife. Sustainability is ensured by multiple species doing similar work. Many species are involved in pollination. If one species disappears, there is another to take over. If, however, too many species become extinct, the system will collapse. While the science is complicated, **balance** is the key.



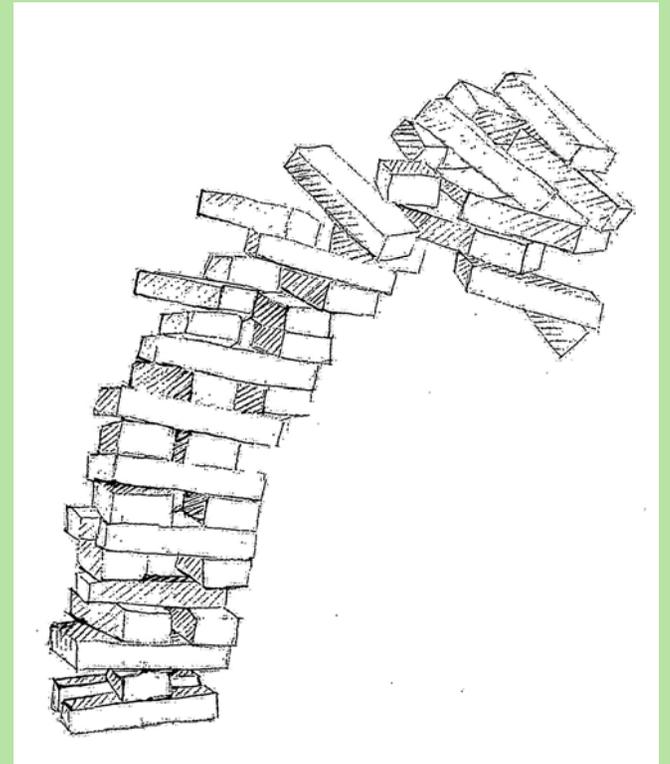
“Biodiversity is essential to the stability, indeed the very existence - of most ecosystems” D. Tallamy

Imagine the ecosystem as a game of JENGA!



The JENGA! tower's stability is directly related to the individual blocks. Native plants and insects are, individually, structurally important in the ecosystem. While there are thousands of species of flora and fauna, this JENGA! tower illustrates just a few of the interactive relationships in an ecosystem.

The tower wobbles as native plant species are reduced. The tower wobbles when pollinator species are reduced. What can YOU do to keep our ecosystem tower balanced?



Bring Your Garden to LIFE !



Photo credit Doug Tallamy

We expect our earth to support billions of people. The strain on the system is becoming apparent. As our natural spaces are diminished, our planned landscapes have become essential elements in the survival of our ecosystem. It is imperative that we plant with nature in mind and find the beauty of our gardens in the life they support.

Assess your garden:

- * Do you have enough native plants to attract and sustain wildlife?
- * Do you offer food, water, cover and nesting spaces?
- * Do you have natural food sources available through all seasons?
- * Do you use chemical pesticides and fertilizers?

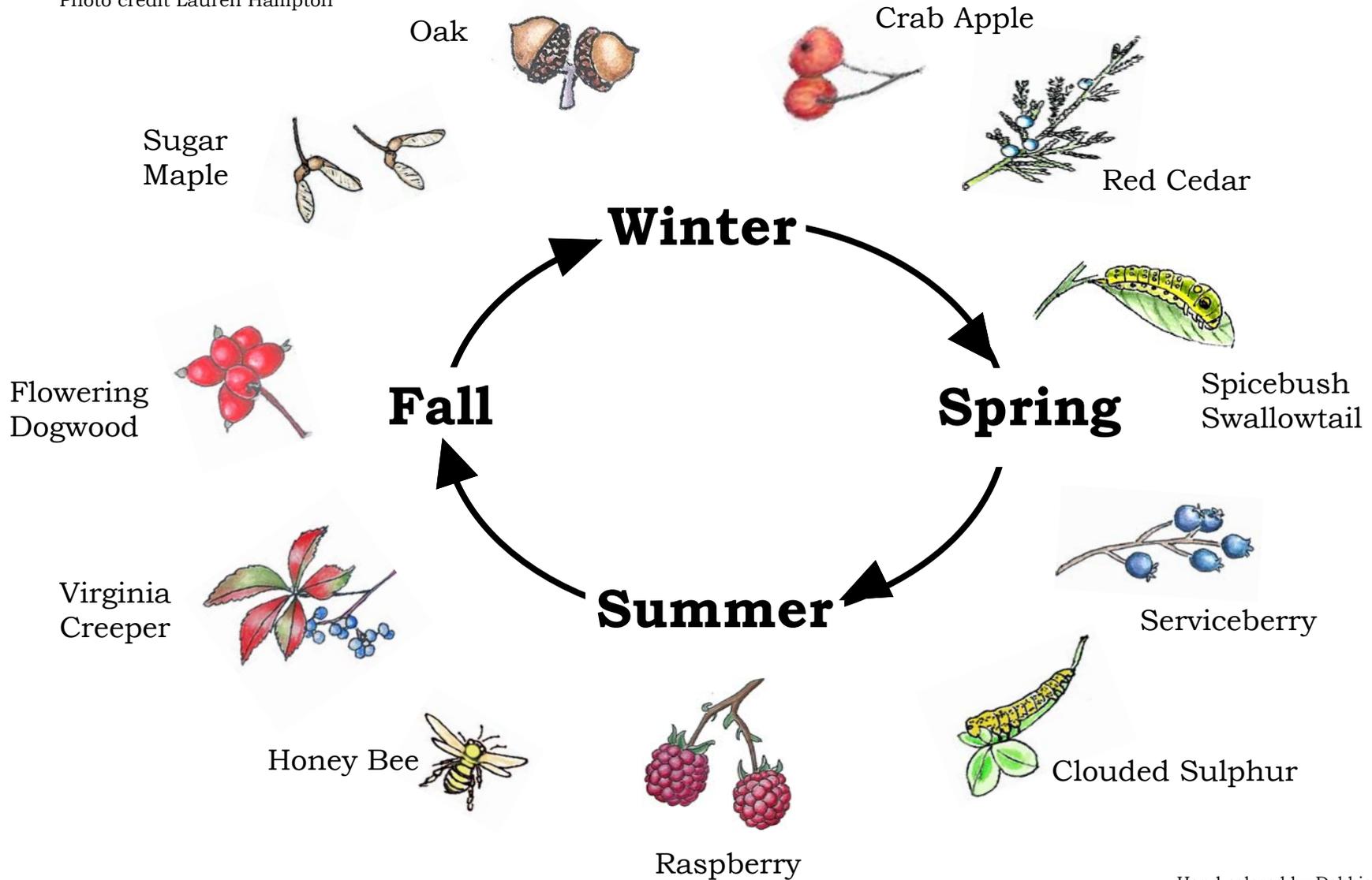


Photo credit Lauren Hampton



Photo credit Lauren Hampton

Natural Bird Food



Be an active supporter of wildlife:

- * Choose native plants to add to your garden.
- * Use organic fertilizers and no pesticides.
- * **Let nature thrive** - a little leaf damage is a sign of life!
- * Nourish your plants and soil with leaf litter.
- * Ask your nursery/plant center to stock native plants.



Photo credit Doug Tallamy



Photo credit Doug Tallamy

Think of a native plant as a *productive plant* in an ecosystem. Think of your garden as a vital ecological function...not just a decoration.

Perennials
such as Aster,
Milkweed and
Black-eyed Susan
are a quick way to
enliven your
garden.



Photo credit Lauren Hampton



Photo credit Sarah Morena



Photo credit Lauren Hampton

Allowing leaf and
twig litter to
accumulate under
your plants
creates shelter
and nourishment
for wildlife.

Consider the Monarch Butterfly

It will only lay its eggs on a milkweed plant because the caterpillar will only eat milkweed leaves. If the host plant is not available, the Monarch cannot reproduce.



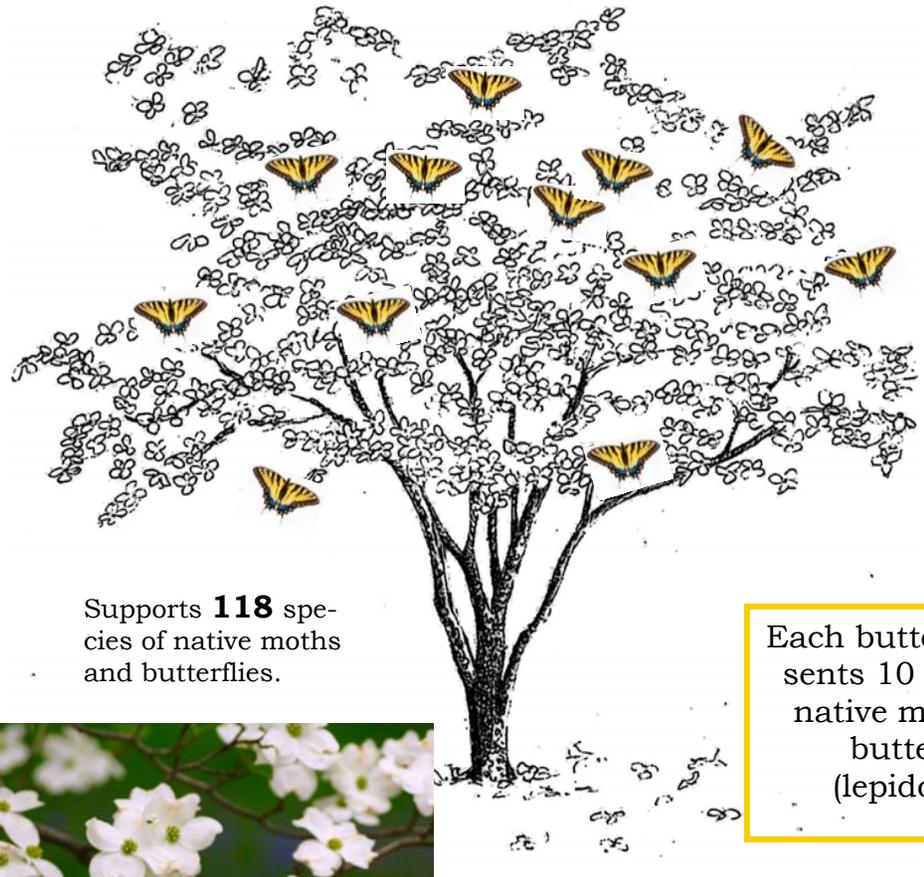
A Monarch butterfly on native milkweed.

A Tale of Two Dogwoods

Compare two dogwoods planted throughout Greenwich, CT.
Which plant do you want in your garden?

Cornus florida
Flowering Dogwood

Native



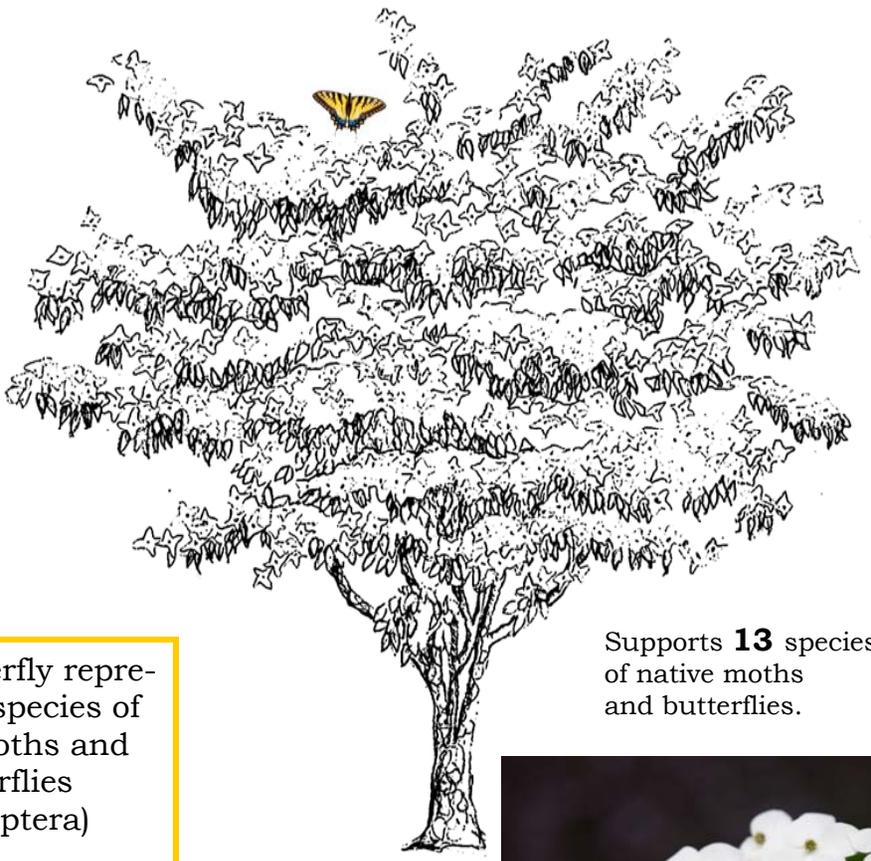
Supports **118** species of native moths and butterflies.

Each butterfly represents 10 species of native moths and butterflies (lepidoptera)



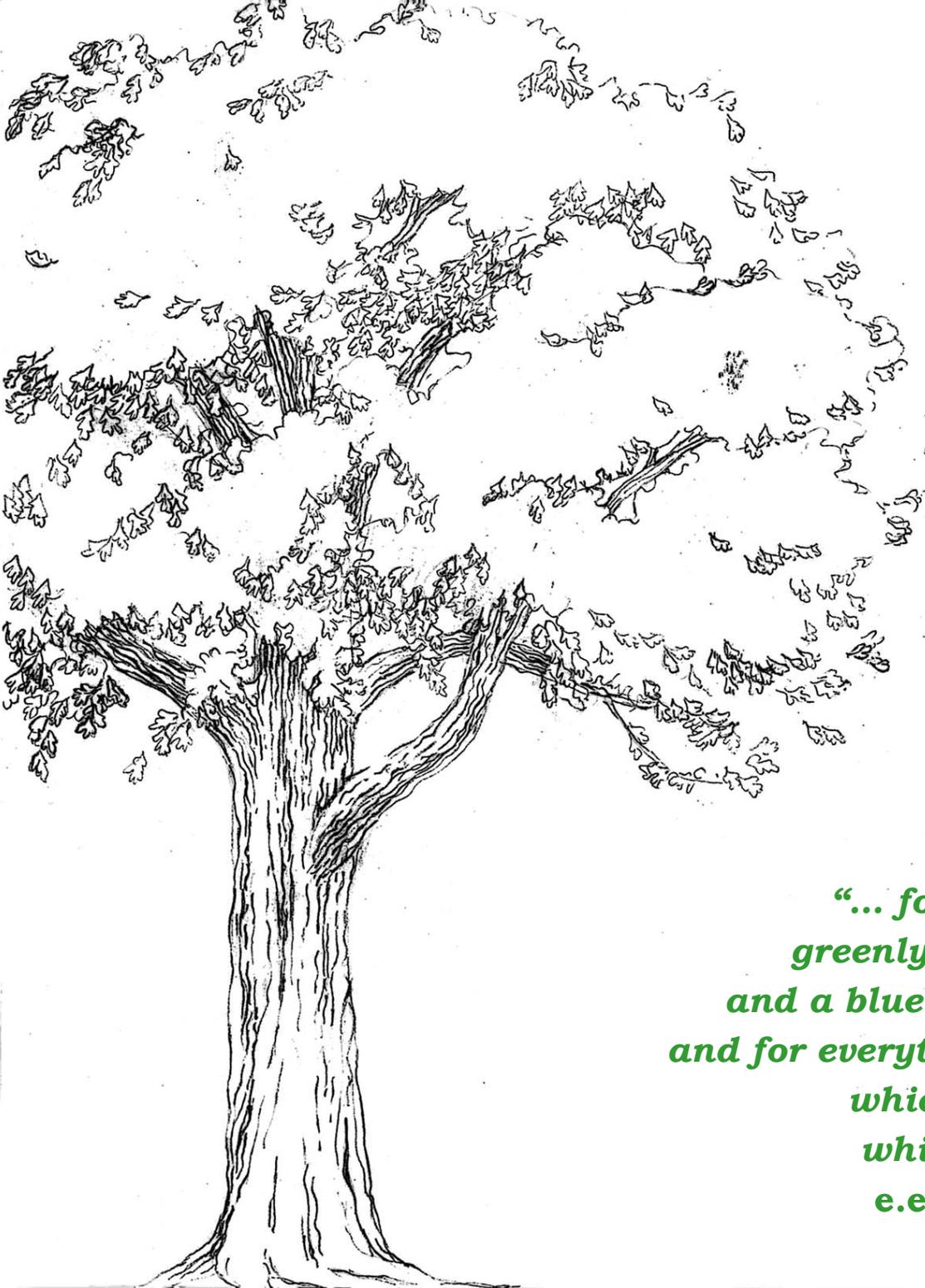
Alien

Cornus kousa
Kousa Dogwood



Supports **13** species of native moths and butterflies.





Our primary inspiration
and information source is
Bringing Nature Home
by **Douglas W. Tallamy.**

We are indebted to him
as well as:

Lauren Hampton

at LH Photography;

Lindsay Michel

at Greenwich Land Trust;

Taralynn Reynolds

at Audubon Greenwich and

Ted Gilman

at Audubon Greenwich

*“... for the leaping
greenly spirits of trees
and a blue true dream of sky;
and for everything which is natural
which is infinite
which is yes...”
e.e.cummings*

Beauty of Nature in Balance:

" Our gardens need native plants to support a diverse and balanced food web essential to all sustainable ecosystems." Doug Tallamy

Birds co-evolved with native plants and the insects they attracted. Many species are being pushed to extinction because our gardens are being landscaped with predominantly alien plants which do not sustain the insects birds need as vital protein for their young. We can all make a difference by planting native plants and reestablishing our landscapes as part of a community, rich in biodiversity.

- Plant native plants. They are hardy and generally low-maintenance.
 - Patronize nurseries that propagate native plants.
 - Do not take plants from the wild.
 - Remove invasive nonnative plants on your property.
 - Get your neighbors to plant natives.

Native Plant Websites:

www.Audubon.org and www.greenwich.audubon.org
www.bringingnaturehome.org
www.ct-botanical-society.org/garden/Index.html
www.ct-botanical-society.org/garden/garden2.html
www.ct.gov/caes publications
www.ct.gov/dep/lib/dep/wildlife/pdf_files/habitat/ntvtree.pdf
www.conncoll.edu>Arboretum>Plant Collections
www.conservect.org/ctrivercoastal
www.gardenofpossibilities.com/2011/12/31/native-plants-for-connecticut
www.gltrust.org
www.greenwichtreeconservancy.org
www.hort.uconn.edu publications
www.mcardles.com
www.merrittparkway.org
www.nativeplantcenter.org
www.plantnative.org
www.sambridge.com
www.rosedalenurseries.com plantsman's guide
www.wildflower.org/alternatives

**“The Perfect Match: Nature in Balance”
Exhibit Bibliography**

Attracting Birds, Butterflies and Other Backyard Wildlife

National Wildlife Federation/ David Mizejewski

Published by Creative Homeowner, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey

Bringing Nature Home How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants

Douglas W. Tallamy

Published by Timber Press, Portland, Oregon

Connecticut Wildlife Biodiversity, Natural History, and Conservation

Geoffrey A. Hammerson

Published by University Press of New England, Lebanon, New Hampshire

Manual of Woody Landscape Plants

Michael A. Dirr

Stipes Publishing L.L.C.

Native Alternatives to Invasive Plants

C. Colston Burrell

Brooklyn Botanic Garden Guides For A Greener Planet

Native Plants of the Northeast A Guide for Gardening & Conservation

Donald J. Leopold

Published by Timber Press, Portland, Oregon

Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas

National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The Wildlife Gardener’s Guide

Janet Marinelli

Brooklyn Botanic Garden All Region Guide, Brooklyn, New York

Preview of Spring 2012
The Nature of the Game

see www.greenfingersgc.org for more info.