

Native Plants & Ecological Service



About Quality Parks

Quality Parks is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit advocating for public access to open spaces and water, and best practices for public lands management. We are hands-on conservation, offering a variety of conservation and educational programs, since 2000. Our home base is Port Jefferson, NY.

- We work with hundreds of local organizations to extend their outreach and community service engagement.
- One of our environmental service programs is the Quality Parks CSA for Native Plants. It is in need of financial support.

About Me

Cultural Anthropologist and Professor of Disability Studies but have been involved and passionate about Environmental Education since I was a child. Also interested that our parks be accessible to disabled people.

Why Plant for Clean Water? - Blue Thumb - *“In natural landscapes, rain tends to soak into the ground gradually. However, nowadays, much of the land is covered by impervious surfaces – such as streets, parking lots and roofs – where the water cannot soak into the ground [1].”*

Why Native Plants Matter- National Audubon Society - *“Restoring native plant habitat is vital to preserving biodiversity. By creating a native plant garden, each patch of habitat becomes part of a collective effort to nurture and sustain the living landscape for birds and other animals [2].”*

Wildflowers & Native Plants - National Garden Clubs - *“A wildflower and native plant garden can be a wonderful opportunity to teach children about the animal and plant life that thrives around them. The wide variety of interesting species will draw their attention and give them a chance to better understand their native habitat.[3].”*

Benefits

- Require less water, once established, and no need to fertilize
- Increase native insects, bees, and pollinators
- Increase birds feeding on seeds, insects, fruits
- Increase wildlife viewing and appreciation of nature
- Shifts garden knowing to being naturally intelligent
- The more you work with native plants the more you understand nature cycles

Where To Plant

- Port Jefferson Open Spaces, Golf Course, Commercial Residential
- Find a place in your garden: soften the edge between lawn and wooded area. Work in the wooded area to remove invasive species, and open up with natives for color. Select an item in your lawn you would like to feature.
- Find a public open space for restoration native garden
- Incorporate into existing garden.....locate an area that has no irrigation

How to Start

- Know plants requirements, your soil conditions, and the amount of sun or shade
- To remove lawn cover it with cardboard and some rocks, then wait. Remove grass to bare soil. You don't need to add compost if selected right plants for soil conditions.
- Add in plants, some native grasses and wildflowers. Initial watering is needed until plants establish. You may need to water if extensive drought.
- Natural landscape also can have color and texture throughout the season
- Group tall grasses with tall wildflowers, and shorter grasses with shorter wildflowers
- Trim around with border or weed around natives, depends how wild a look you want
- Plant natives of same kind in one location or scatter randomly, depends on how wild

How To Maintain

- Wild but cultivated and eco-friendly
- Reduce tick bites by use of regularly mowed wide paths
- Let things seed in naturally in lawn
- Selective mowing to invigorate grasses
- Let other plants spread naturally
- Distinguish native from NY Invasive Species [4]
- Visit places that feature native plants in different habitats

References & Resources

[1] - <http://www.blue-thumb.org/why/>

[2] - <http://www.audubon.org/content/why-native-plants-matter>

[3] - <http://www.gardenclub.org/projects/wildflowers-native-plants-gardening.aspx>

[4] - <http://www.nyis.info/index.php>