NATURE WALK: LISA'S POLLINATOR GARDEN AND THE TPS NATURE TRAIL

Celebrate our Pollinators, Wildlife and Native Plants: TODAY and EVERYDAY!!
Learn More About Them and How to Make Them Thrive.

Dot Odgren and Karen Pellegrini, Co-Coordinators of Lisa's Pollinator Garden 6/28/2025

Our walk today will include the new Pollinator Garden, dedicated last fall to Lisa Beaupre, information about native and invasive plants, pollinators and their relationships with plants, educational signs on native and invasive plants and a newly installed sign with a map of where these signs are located along the trail, next to the trail head sign. We will hike a 2 mile loop with local flora and fauna, including Lisa's original Butterfly Garden.

TPS Lisa's Pollinator Garden was created in loving memory of a TPS kindergarten teacher, Lisa Beaupre, who loved her TPS students and butterflies. Her Butterfly Garden was initially located on the hill in back of the baseball field. It became overgrown and shady and has been relocated to the west side of the TPS building, on an old used playground site. Since the plants that support butterflies also provide food and shelter for many other pollinators, her garden is now called Lisa's Pollinator Garden. The garden is a hands-on learning space where students can learn about pollinators, native plants, science and nature, why they are important and how to protect them.

As you know our **pollinators have been declining at significant** rates due to loss of habitat, pesticide, disease and climate change. They are essential to pollinating 85 % of the world's flowering plants, 35% of the food we eat and maintaining a healthy ecosystem. Without them, wildlife and humans would not be able to live. Having a pollinator garden at TPS provides a wonderful opportunity for our students and community to enjoy nature and learn how to help our pollinators. In January 2025, we became a Certified Schoolyard Habitat through National Wildlife Foundation's Garden for Wildlife Program.

Major support for the garden came from the Lorri Otto Seeds for Education Grant from WildOnes, the Wachusett Garden Club, TPS Students and teachers, the community and town volunteers. Thank you!

DESCRIPTION OF THE POLLILNATOR GARDEN

THE GARDEN **has 4 main features**: a) over 170 plants consisting of 63 species including shrubs, perennials, grasses, and vines, 85% of them are native. b) a bird habitat tripod c) a small pond for wildlife and a d) bee nesting area and habitat. New signs include: definitions of native plants, pollinators, the life cycle of the monarch butterfly, info about milkweed and our National Wildlife Foundation Schoolyard certification sign.

The garden is designed with native plants** to provide a healthy habitat for butterflies, moths, bees, hummingbirds, flies, and beetles. They, like all living things, need food (nectar, pollen), water, shelter and a place to raise their young. Some butterflies or bees only eat nectar or pollen from specific plants and they are called specialists, for example the Monarch caterpillar can only eat milkweed leaves. It will not survive without milkweed.

**** **Native Plants**: Grow naturally in a particular area or region. Over thousands of years, they have formed important relationships with wildlife to provide food, shelter, water, and a place to raise their young. Without healthy native plant communities, wildlife and humans cannot survive.

Many trees, shrubs, perennials vines on the **TPS Nature Trai**l provide shelter, shade, and nesting cover and complement the plants in the garden. Especially important are the **"Keystone Plants**," native plants, critical to the food web of wildlife to complete their life cycle. Fourteen percent (14%) of native plants support 90% of butterfly and moth (Lepidoptera) species. One of our most important keystone plants are oak trees that support over 500 species of caterpillars, crucial for our birds to thrive. Ninety-six percent (96%) of terrestrial birds rely on caterpillars to feed their young. It takes nearly 10,000 caterpillars to raise a clutch of chickadees (Doug Tallamy, Entomologist, University of Delaware). https://www.nwf.org/-/media/Documents/PDFs/Garden-for-Wildlife/Keystone-Plants/NWF-GFW-keystone-plant-list-ecoregion-8-eastern-temperate-forests.pdf

Sources of water in the garden and on the nature trail include brooks, ponds, vernal pools, plants and added sources in the garden (bird bath, bee water stations). Wet, sandy or muddy sites provide places for butterflies to sun or get extra nutrients ("puddling").

The size, shape, color, odor of plants and presence of nectar or pollen, determine which flowers pollinators use, as well as whether or not they are specialists (prefer only one type of flower or family of flowers). Native plants were selected to provide blooms with nectar and pollen plants in every season: Spring (March-May), Summer (June-August) and Fall to Frost (September-Frost). They make up more than 60 species of perennials and shrubs in the garden. Plants are labeled with their Latin and Common names. Spring floral resources are extremely important for bees coming out from hibernation such as flowering maples, willows, violets, cherry, clover and ephemeral plants like Canadian mayflower and ginger. Fall plants such as aster, goldenrod and sunflowers provide important food for migration and preparation for hibernation

Other examples of plants:

Spring: Shrubs: Amelanchier, Blueberries, Cherry (Prunus, ground), Inkberry, Potentilla, Elderberry
Perennials: Pussytoes, Columbine, Geranium maculata, Ground Phlox, Beardtongue and Native honeysuckle (vine, shrub).

Summer: Shrubs: New Jersey Tea, Sumac, Ninebark, Virginia Rose
Perennials: Beebalm, False Sunflowers, Mountain Mint, Milkweed (common and butterfly), Rudbeckia, Salvia, Yarrow
Annual Sunflowers

Grasses: Little Blue Stem, blue-eyed grass and Shenandoah Switch Grass

Annuals/Biennials: Dill, Zinnias, Morning Glories , Celosia, Dill, Bachelor Buttons, Calendula, Verbena bonariensis. Many of them have re-seeded from last year.

BIRD HABITAT: The Bird Tripod habitat is made of 3 branches tied together. It provides nesting materials, food, water and a place for birds to rest and hide. There are Sunflowers, Shenandoah Switch Grass, Goldenrod, Native Honeysuckle and Morning Glories. A small water/puddling area provides water for birds and butterflies, and suet feeders attract local birds. Some of the birds we see are hummingbirds, goldfinches, catbirds, red-winged blackbirds, robins, cardinals and, blue jays. When you approach the garden, the birds all scatter! There are many native trees for them to live in on the trail and around the garden.

BEES HABITAT: NESTING: 70 % of bees live in the ground and the other 30% hibernate in stems of plants or wood. We are beginning to make a ground nesting habitat with branches and sticks, including old stems from flowers. We have many of the plants bees use for hibernation, present in garden or nature trail for example: coneflower, aster, beebalm and goldenrod. They also use woody plants on the nature trail such as elderberry and raspberries. https://extension.psu.edu/heather-holms-top-gardening-activities-to-support-native-bees

YOU CAN HELP POLLINATORS by:

- planting pollinator-friendly pollinators
- decreasing the use of pesticides and
- learning about pollinators and working with others to help them https://xerces.org/
- learning to become a citizen scientist. Take pictures and send them in to places that monitor pollinators, e.g.: Monarch tagging: https://www.monarchwatch.org/tagging,
  Bees: https://www.bumblebeewatch.org/Bee,
  Great Bird Count: https://www.audubon.org/community-science/great-backyard-bird-count
  iNaturalist: https://www.inaturalist.org/, an online social network of people that help to identify plants and animals while generating data for science and conservation.

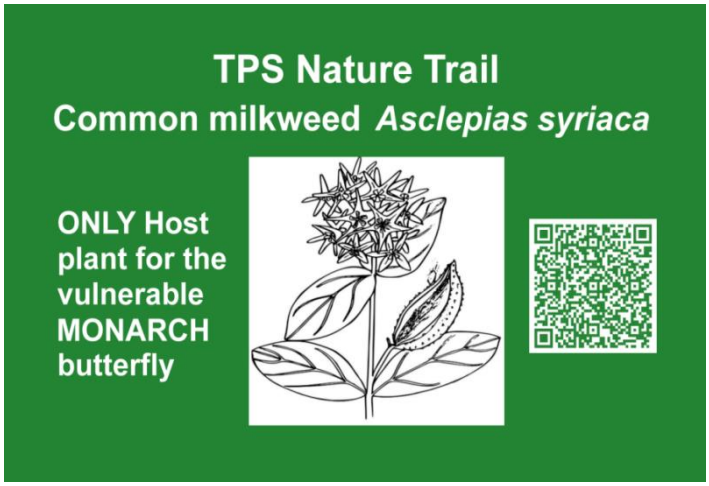
We have added EDUCATIONAL SIGNS about 5 native and 5 invasive plants on the trails. This is part of the Massachusetts Cultural Council grant obtained by WGC and TPS in 2020 to create a program for kindergarteners to learn about native and invasive plant and educate the community. The plants are:

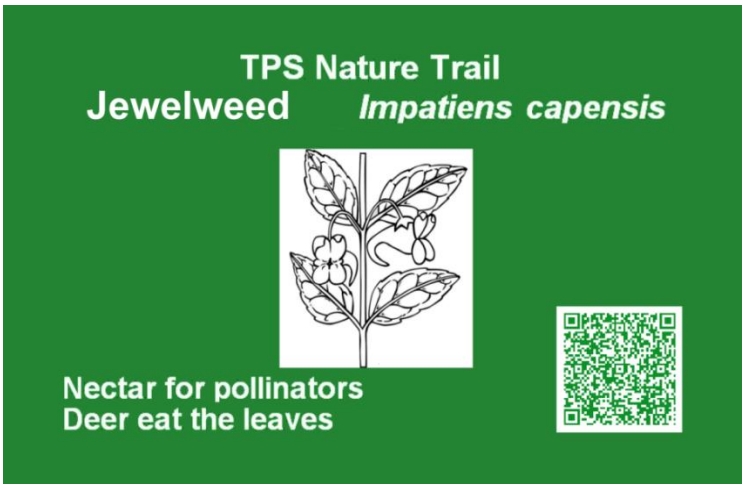
NATIVE PLANTS	INVASIVE PLANTS
Common Milkweed	Asian Bush Honeysuckle
Jewelweed	Multi Flora Rosa
Staghorn Sumac	Oriental Bittersweet
Eastern Hemlock	Japanese Barberry
Sweet Fern	Hemlock Wooly Adelgid

The signs were paid for by the WGC. Thank you!

Here is what the 10 individual native and invasive signs along the trails look like:

NATIVE PLANTS:





NATIVE PLANTS:

TPS Nature Trail

Sweet Fern *Comptonia peregrina*

Food and cover for birds, pollinators, mammals

TPS Nature Trail

Staghorn sumac *Rhus hirta*

Food for pollinators, wildlife

TPS Nature Trail

Eastern Hemlock *Tsuga canadensis*

Food and shelter for wildlife

INVASIVE PLANTS:

TPS Nature Trail

Asian Bush Honeysuckles

Several Species
Lonicera tatarica
Lonicera morrowii
Lonicera maackki
Lonicera x bella

Do Not Eat Orange-Red Berries
Native to Asia

TPS Nature Trail

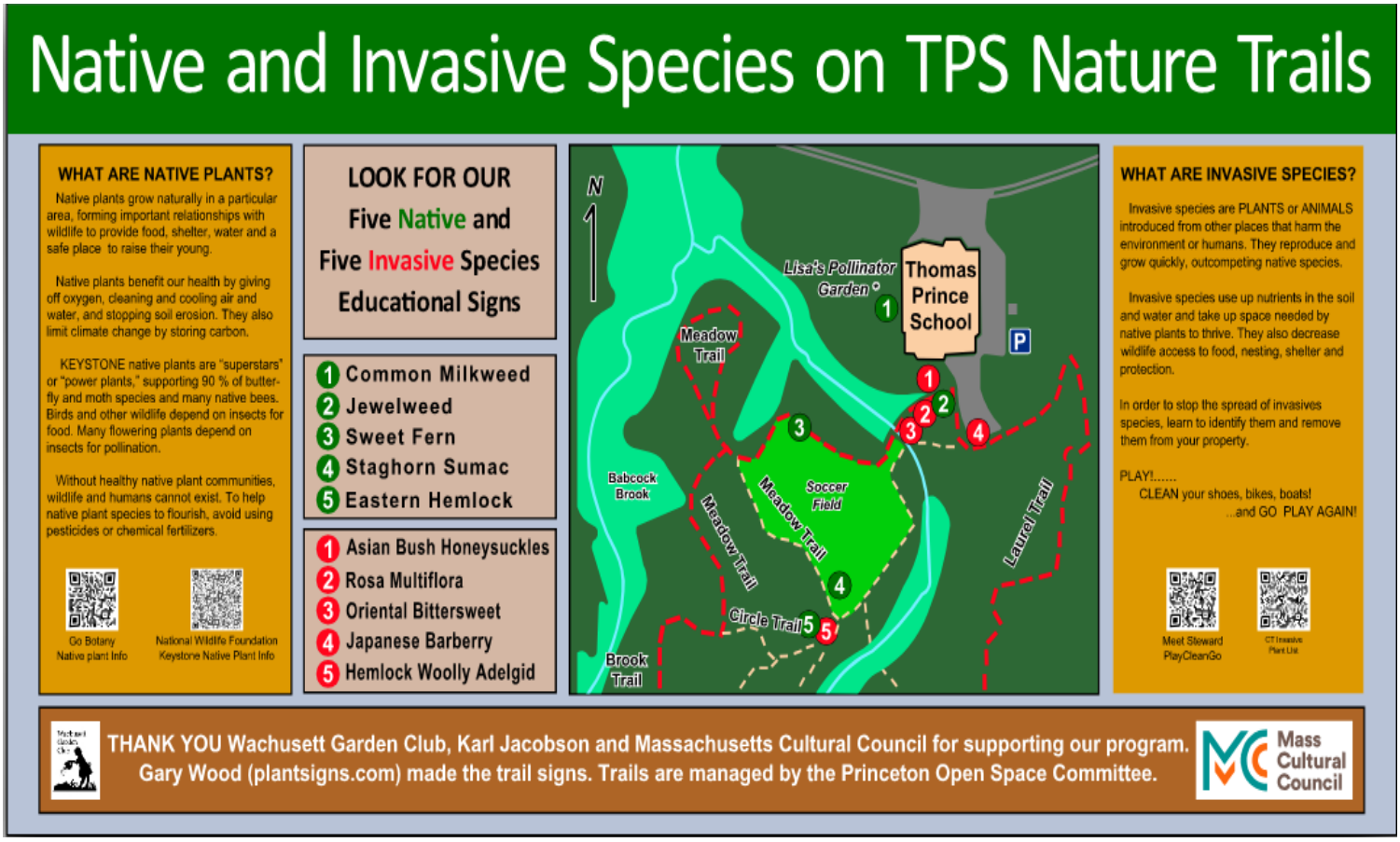
Rosa Multiflora *Multiflora rose*

Forms thickets with sharp thorns
Native to Eastern Asia

INVASIVE PLANTS:

In June of 2025, we added a map of the TPS Nature Trails showing the location of the small signs on the natvve and invasive plants. This sign also has definitions of native plants, why they are important, and the keystone plants. The defintion of invasive species includes why they damage the enironment and ways to stop their spread. QR Codes proide links to Go Botany, the National Wildlife Foundation Keystone Plants, NAISMA Meet Steward PlayCleanGO and the CTInvasive Plant List.

MAP OF TPS NATURE TRAILS WITH LOCATION OF SIGNS is located next to the Trailhead sign



The trails are maintained by Trails Around Princeton. You can find information at:

https://www.town.princeton.ma.us/open-space-committee/pages/princeton-trails
https://www.town.princeton.ma.us/open-space-committee/pages/thomas-prince-nature-trails

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Thomas Prince School Outdoor Spaces https://sites.google.com/wrsd.net/outdoorspaces
Wachusett Garden Club https://www.wachusettgardenclub.org/home.html

THANK YOU FOR COMING!!