

# Building a Biodiverse and Climate Resilient Yard: Simple Action Steps



Rendering by Julia Frederick







N



St. Lawrence River

Quebec

Gulf of St. Lawrence

**WABANAKI**

Mikmaq

New Brunswick

Maliseet

Maine

Abenaki

Penobscot

Passamaquoddy

Bay of Fundy

Nova Scotia

Gulf of Maine

# Why do we need biodiverse and resilient yards?





# WHAT IS A NATIVE PLANT?



**An Indigenous plant that occurs naturally in a particular region, ecosystem, and habitat, and has coevolved with the region's animals, insects, amphibians, bacteria and fungi. Usually, plants that have grown here prior to European colonization.**

# Why are they important?



Supporting  
Pollinators

Cleaning  
the air

Competition  
for invasives

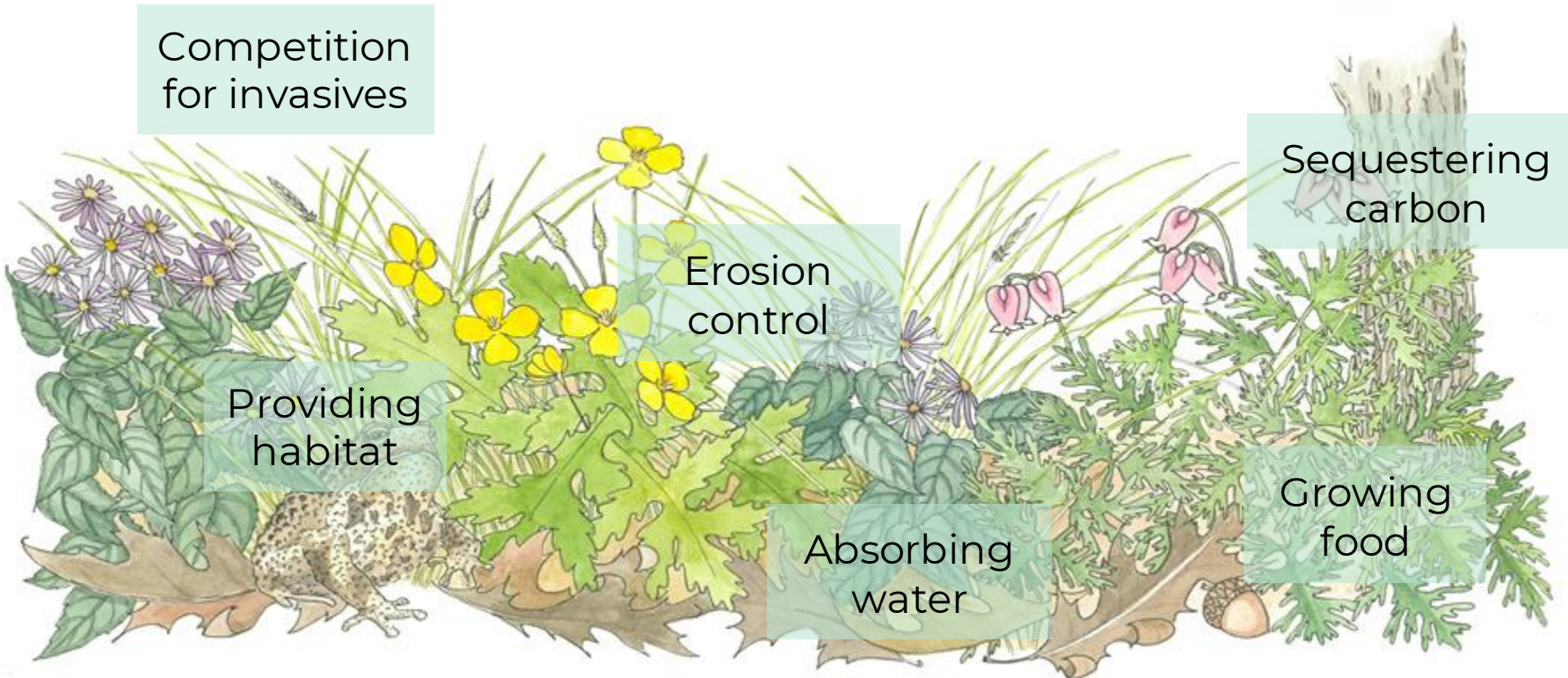
Erosion  
control

Sequestering  
carbon

Providing  
habitat

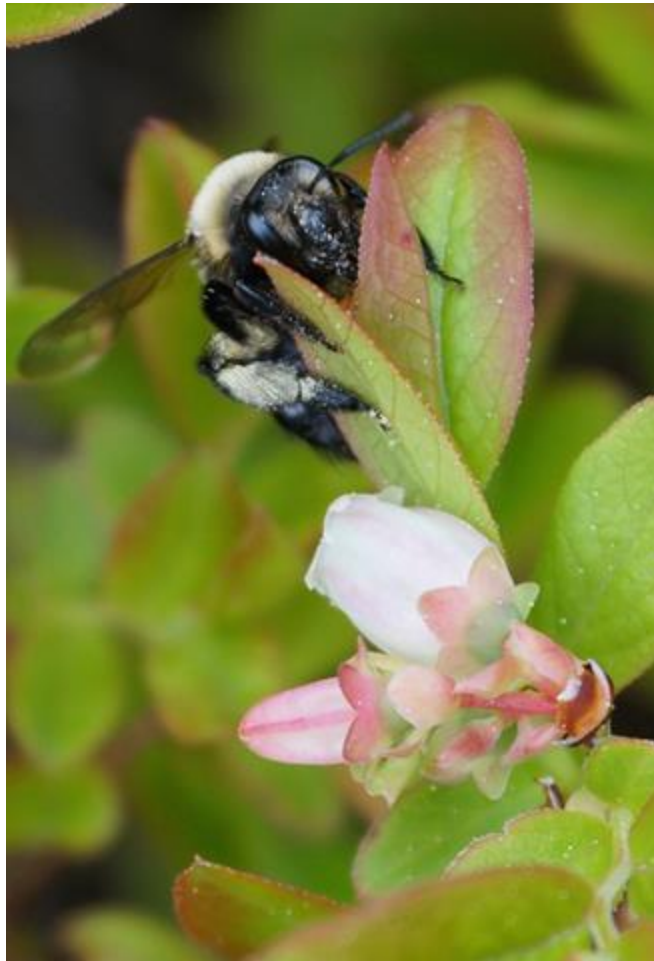
Absorbing  
water

Growing  
food





# Native plants lay the foundation of our local food webs



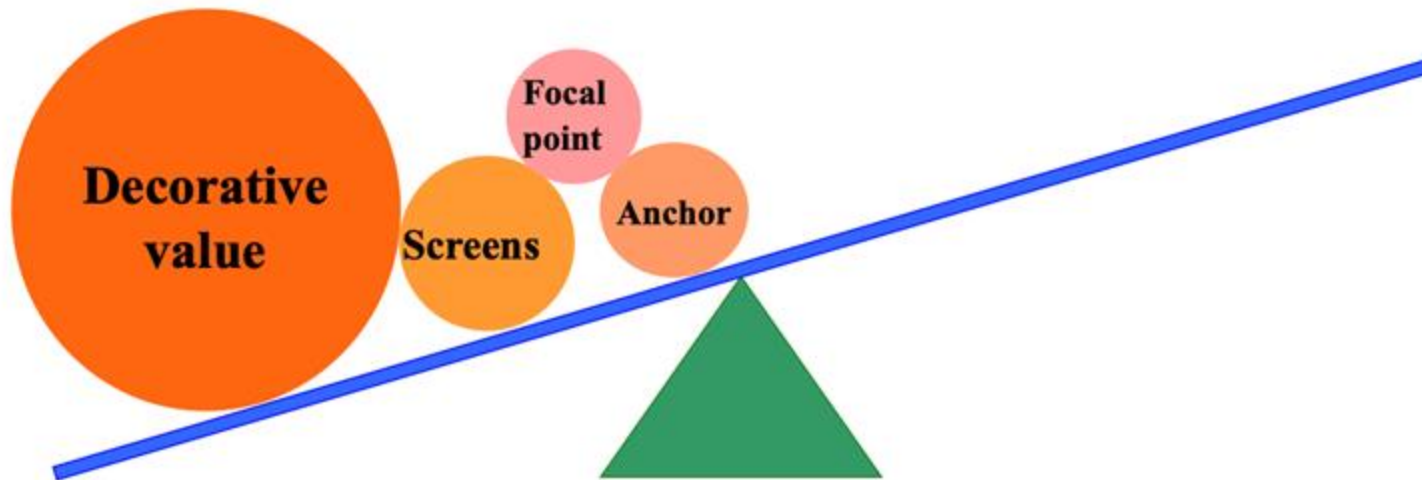
# Simple Action Steps

## To build resilient landscapes



1. **Change your maintenance plan** to see what's already growing.
1. **Plant native species** to build habitat, biodiversity, & climate resilience.
1. **Get creative**, use all your space, and use it year-round to support the full life cycles of pollinators, birds, & other creatures.
1. **Collaborate with others** to create wildlife corridors & become advocates for native plants.

# Current landscape priorities





# Do I Need a Lawn?







**How much lawn do I need?**









# Ways to Remove Lawn



→ Let it go and edit

→ Sheet mulching

→ Solarizing



# Sheet mulching



Cayte McDonough

1. Overlapping cardboard
2. 3-6" mulch
3. Leave for 3+ months & plant



# Stop using pesticides

## They are:

- harmful for *plants, insects, birds, small mammals, large mammals (including humans)*
- persistent in the environment

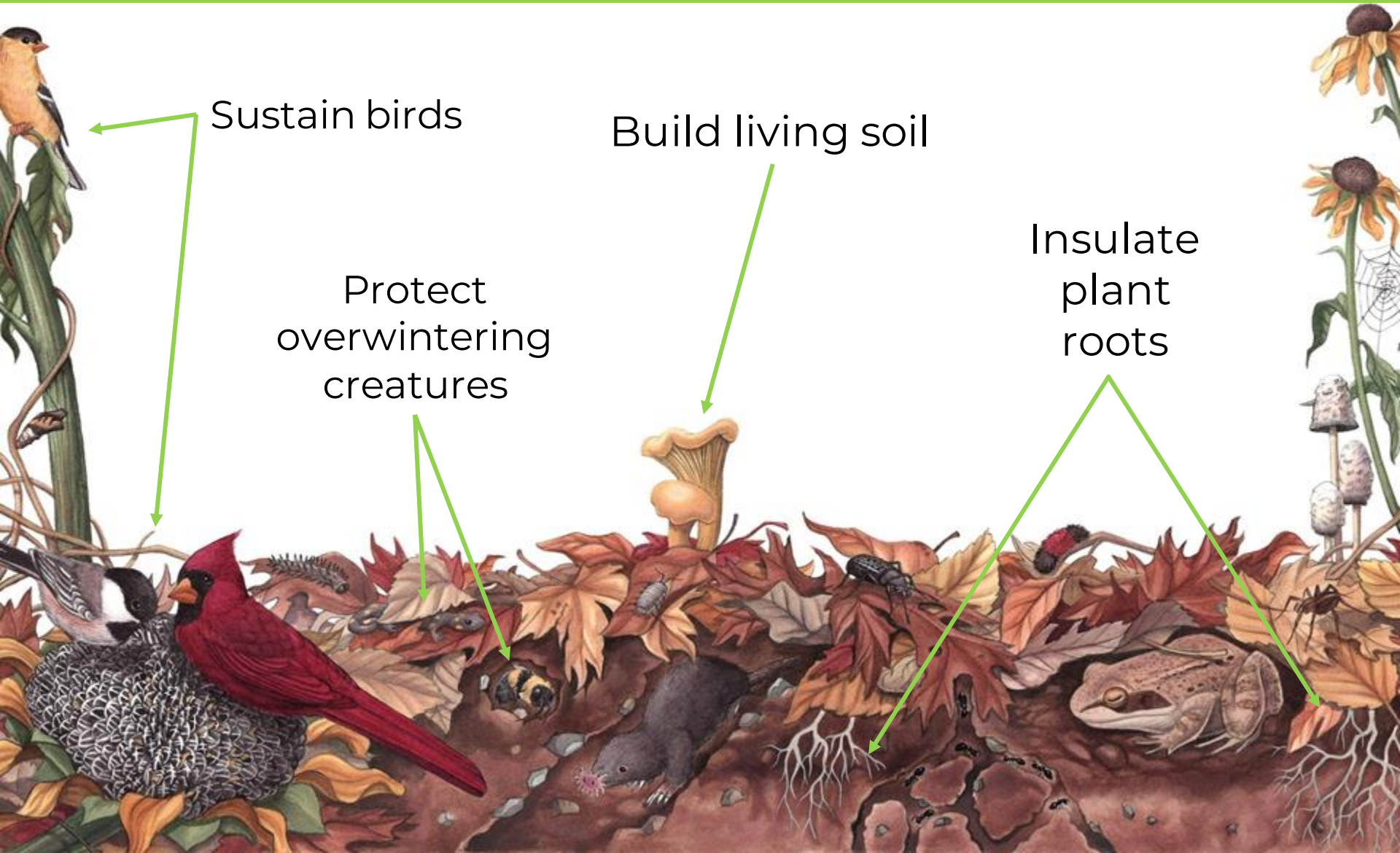
## Instead:

- restore balance through biodiversity





# Leave the leaves!



Sustain birds

Build living soil

Protect  
overwintering  
creatures

Insulate  
plant  
roots

Many species rely on leaf litter for shelter to survive the winter





# Leave standing stems for nesting bees



Elderberry



Illustration by Vanessa Nesvig



# Leave sticks and logs for decomposers, insects & birds





# Leave dead trees





# Support full insect and animal life cycles



Turtlehead & Baltimore checkerspot butterfly



# Add Plants!

→ Trees

→ Shrubs

→ Flowers



# Plant Flowers





# Target Your Favorite Pollinators



Hummingbird on  
Scarlet bee balm

Cardinal flower



Trumpet  
honeysuckle



# Plant it, and they will come



Artwork by Aaron Birk



# Plant Shrubs

Build an understory,  
feed wildlife.



Artwork by Lin Snow



# Plant Native Trees

## Butterfly & Moth Species Supported:

- Oaks- 400-500+
- Willows- 400+
- Cherries- 400+
- Birches- 400+
- Poplars- 300+

\*From Douglas Tallamy's  
*Bringing Nature Home*



black cherry,  
*Prunus serotina*





## Finding Native Plants

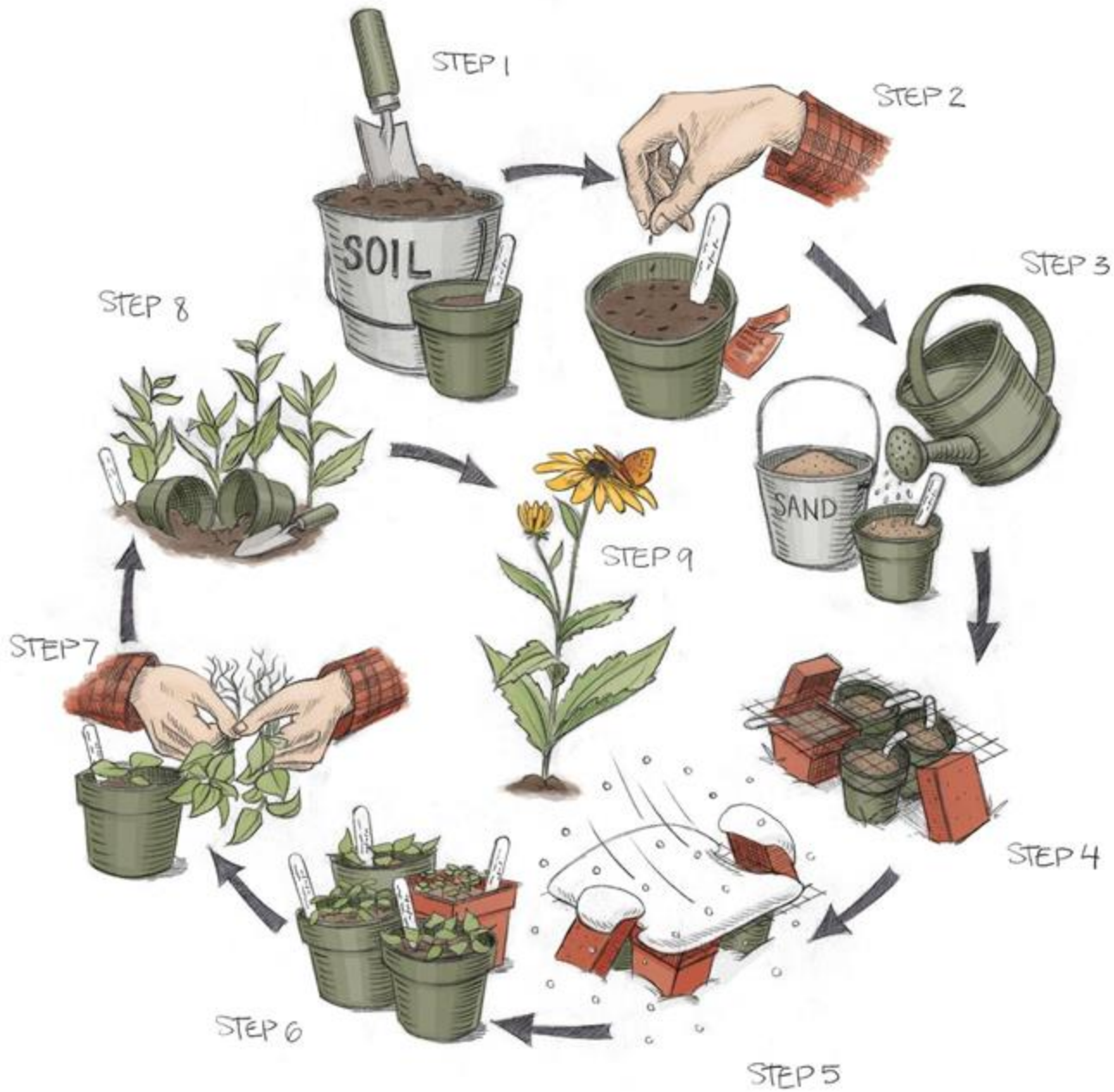
➔ “Where to Buy Native Plants”  
[wildseedproject.net](http://wildseedproject.net)

Illustration by Vanessa Nesvig



Cayte McDonough





# Native Seed Sowing





**Get Creative!**

sundial lupine





**Create more spaces!**






# Stack, pack, and layer





# Focus on beauty

## Ornamental garden-worthy asters & goldenrods



Flax-leaved  
aster

A photograph of a cluster of light purple flowers with yellow centers and narrow, lanceolate leaves. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, and the background is a soft, out-of-focus green.

Tom Potterfield



blue wood aster


A photograph showing a dense cluster of small, light purple flowers with dark red centers. The flowers are arranged in a loose, rounded shape, and the background is a dark, blurred green.



zigzag  
goldenrod

A photograph of a zigzag goldenrod plant. The plant has large, heart-shaped, serrated green leaves and a central spike of small, bright yellow flowers. A small insect is visible on the flowers.

Lisa Looke

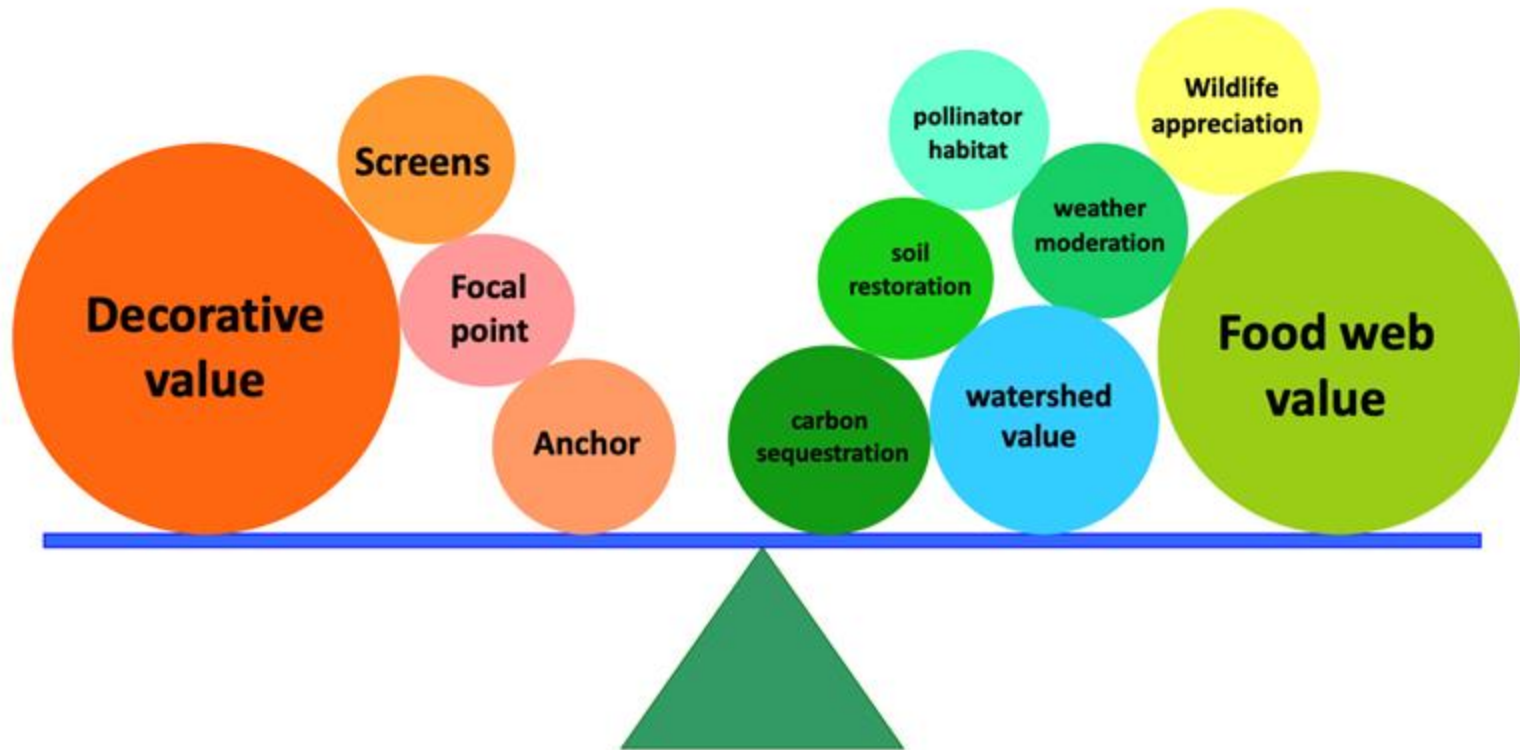


wreath  
goldenrod

A photograph of a wreath goldenrod plant. The plant has long, narrow, lanceolate green leaves and a central spike of small, bright yellow flowers. The background is a dark, blurred green.



# The Future of Landscape Priorities





Rendering by Julia Frederick









# Join Local Efforts

**5** Landscape Designs    **9** Partner Organizations    **1** Climate Future

PHOTO: HEATHER MCCARGO



## NATIVE PLANTINGS

Native plants offer countless benefits beyond their four-season beauty—purifying air, shading and cooling cities, storing atmospheric carbon, minimizing flooding and stormwater runoff, and helping to sustain vital pollinators, birds and other wildlife.

**100** Resilient  
Yards

Revitalizing South Portland  
One Yard At A Time



# Create wildlife corridors

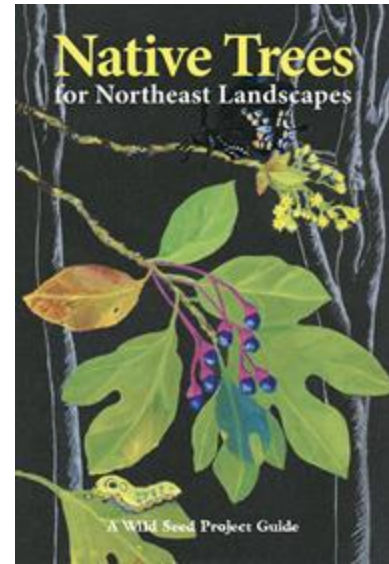
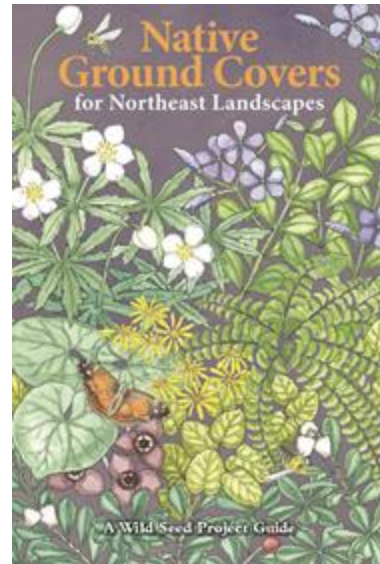
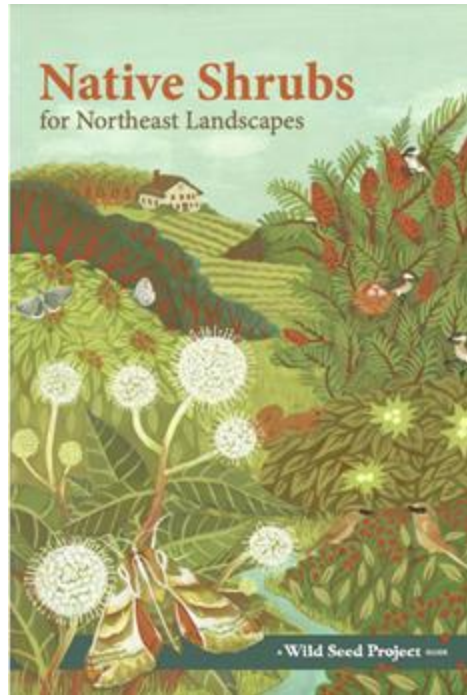


Illustration by Molly Burhan, from  
*Portland Pollinator Vision Plan*



# Wild Seed Project

RETURNING NATIVE PLANTS TO THE MAINE LANDSCAPE



[www.wildseedproject.net](http://www.wildseedproject.net)





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