



Barrie Garden Club Newsletter

Cuttings

January & February 2024

Look for us at: www.barriegardenclub.ca



Written by Kimberly Sturge

UPCOMING 2024 BARRIE GARDEN CLUB ZOOM MEETING!



February 6th 2024 - 7pm on Zoom

Douglas W. Tallamy - Nature's Best Hope

Doug is a Professor and Chair of the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware, where he has authored 97 research publications and has taught insect-related courses for 40 years. Chief among his research goals is to better understand the many ways insects interact with plants and how such interactions determine the diversity of animal communities. Doug is the author of *Bringing Nature Home*, *Nature's Best Hope*, and *The Nature of Oaks*; and co-founder with Michelle Alfandari of **HOMEGROWN NATIONAL PARK®**.

<https://homegrownnationalpark.org/tallamys-hub/>



BGC paid members will be sent a ZOOM link at the end of January to attend. All others need to sign up!



Reminder:
There is no meeting in January 2024!

Also, to avoid having our meetings cancelled due to winter weather, the Barrie Garden Club will have our February and March meetings on-line!

"Anyone who thinks gardening begins in the spring and ends in the fall is missing the best part of the whole year; for gardening begins in January with the dream."

Josephine Niese



Wyevalle
garden
centres

"We are at a critical point of losing so many species from local ecosystems that their ability to produce the oxygen, clean water, flood control, pollination, pest control, carbon storage, etc. that is, the ecosystem services that sustain us, will become seriously compromised."

Douglas Tallamy



Being fed up with invasive species and sterile landscapes, **Douglas Tallamy** urges North Americans to go native and go natural.

His personal property "Homegrown National Park" is a model for suburbs, exurbs, uninhabited woods, highway margins, city parks, streets and backyards, even rooftops and window boxes, basically every square foot of land not paved or farmed. He wants to see it replanted with native North American flora, supporting a healthy array of native North American butterflies, moths and other arthropods, providing food for a robust population of songbirds, small mammals and reptiles.

He is very concerned with the damaging role of the 50,000 non-native plants from all around the globe that now burden our landscapes and our environments. Because most of our native insects cannot eat these ubiquitous ornamental invaders, and so many animals rely directly or indirectly on insect protein for food, these alien plants cannot sustain any life but their own. It's time for suburban homeowners and gardeners to rise up and transform their impoverished land by planting for the mammals, birds, bees, butterflies and all the other critters we may not find as appealing but which play equally essential roles in continuing human survival.

Tallamy eloquently argues, "Unless we modify the places we live, work, and play to meet not only our own needs but the needs of other species as well, nearly all species of

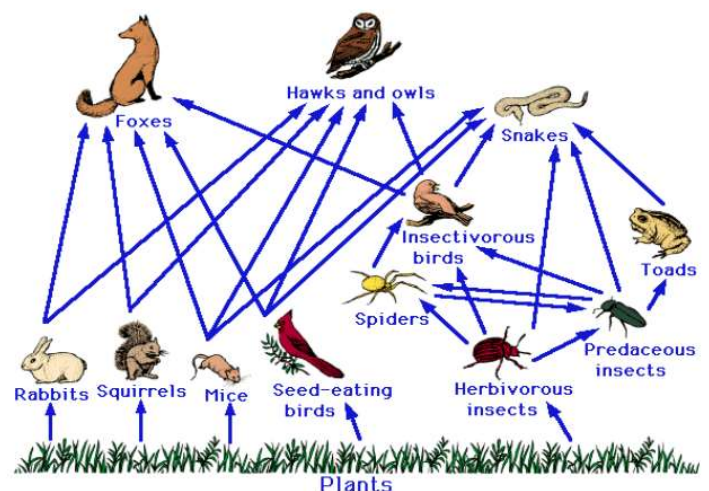
wildlife, will disappear forever. This is not speculation.

It is a prediction backed by decades of research on species-area relationships by ecologists who know of what they speak. Our preserves and national parks are not adequate to prevent the predicted loss of species, and we have run out of the space required to make them big enough. For conservationists, and indeed for anyone who celebrates life on earth, this is perhaps the direst possible consequence of the human enterprise."

Our traditional view of gardening has been to treat plants as if they are merely ornaments and to ignore their ecological roles. Your garden is part of the greater landscape, and each of us is responsible for becoming a steward of our properties as a healthy

contributor to the environment around us.

Native plants support local food webs. Invasive plants disrupt local food webs, and ornamental plants offer very little in the way of contributing to the local food web.



Some interesting facts:

- 30% of the plants in our natural areas are invasive plants. In fact, there are over 3400 species of invasive plants in this North America.
- 92% of our suburban areas is lawn, which does not contribute to local food webs.
- 79% of what is planted in our suburban areas is not locally native.
- 600 square miles of lawn is added in this country every year.

Tips for Landscaping with Native Plants

Where to start when it comes to using native plants in your landscape? Here are a few ideas to get things moving in your own space!

1. Create a rain garden.

Rain gardens are a landscaped area that is designed to soak up any excessive rain you might be dealing with. It diverts the rain from your other plants and grass, so they do not drown. They are a great way to landscape with native plants. The root systems of native species tend to be stronger and the rain garden will hold and collect the rainwater runoff in your outdoor spaces.

2. Add Native plants to your borders.

Adding native plants to your border plants is a simple way to use native species in your landscaping that don't require too much change. Choose native plants that complement your existing perennials, in height and colour.

3. Create a butterfly garden.

Butterfly gardens are a lovely way to bring native plants into your garden design. Ask at any local garden center what plants will support our gorgeous butterflies and you have a beautiful, environmentally supportive garden space.

(<https://notsohollowfarm.ca/native-plants-for-a-butterfly-garden/>)

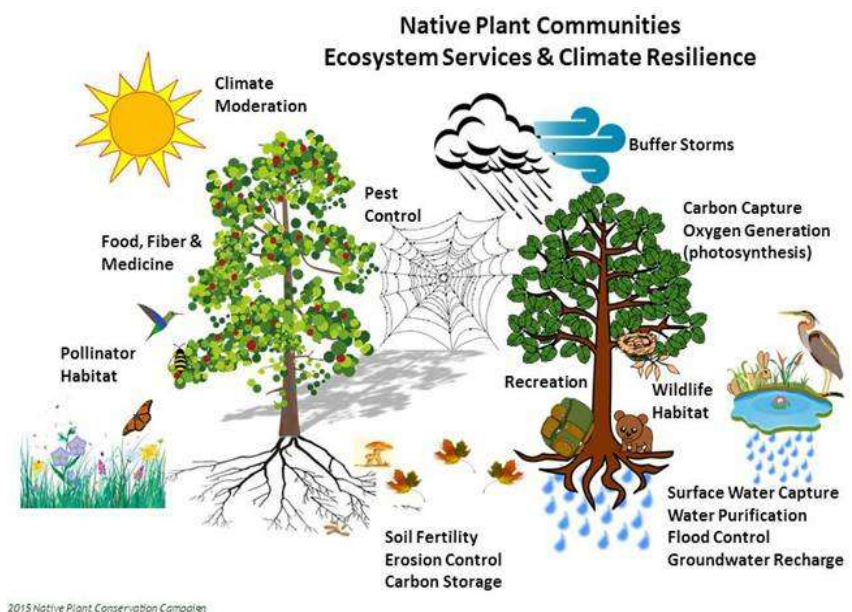
4. Find the right plants for our area.

There are lots of ways to find the right native plants for our area!

Going local is always a good idea - check in with local nurseries, gardening centers and even landscapers to find the right plants.

5. Or check out these great Native Plant sites:

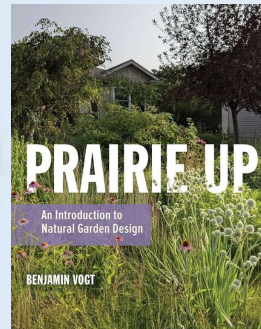
- North American Native Plant Society - <https://nanps.org>
- <https://onplants.ca/product-category/wildflowers/>
- https://ontariowildflowers.com/main/alien_native.php?type=N
- <https://www.ontario.ca/page/invasive-species-ontario>
- <https://www.wildflowersofontario.ca/list1.html>





YOU DO NOT WANT TO MISS THIS!!

**MARCH 5TH BGC MEETING
@ 7PM ON ZOOM**



**BENJAMIN VOGT – PRAIRIE UP
CONNECTING TO NATURE WITH NATIVE PLANTS**

Benjamin can often be found speaking internationally on environmental activism and sustainable urban design for wildlife.

Benjamin is the author of three books - *A New Garden Ethic: Cultivating Defiant Compassion for an Uncertain Future*; ***Prairie Up: An Introduction to Natural Garden Design***; and *Afterimage: Poems*. He owns Monarch Gardens LLC, a prairie-inspired garden design firm that works with clients in Nebraska and throughout the Midwest. His landscapes have been featured in *The American Gardeners*, *Dwell*, *Fine Gardening*, *Garden Design*, *The Guardian*, *Midwest Living*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. For over 5 years Benjamin wrote an award-winning garden column for Houzz (nearly 3 million readers) and has contributed words and photographs to several books.

BGC members will be sent a ZOOM link in February to attend. All others need to sign up!

Word of the Year:



Permaculture

[ˈpər-mə-ˌkæl-cher]

Permaculture is a system of agricultural and social design principles centered around simulating the patterns and features observed in nature.

This concept can be used in urban or rural settings, to create whole communities or a simple, backyard design. Adding a variety of plants that work together helps create a "backyard ecosystem," which can catch water in a landscape, provide a habitat for animals and beneficial insects, or even grow an edible forest to produce seasonal nuts, fruits and other foods.

**No winter
wind shall
chill my
gardening
heart.**

-Ruth Schenk



THE BARRIE GARDEN CLUB'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

SUNDAY, JUNE 23RD 2024

1:00PM – 4:00PM

At the Dorion Parker Center in Sunnidale Park

A fun filled afternoon with:

A Tour of the Arboretum

Historical Displays

Flower Displays

Vendors

Tea and Snacks

BGC Members are need to help on this very auspicious day!

Please contact kmsturge@gmail.com today, if you would like to be involved!!



GREY COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS THE 2024 ECO-RESPONSIBLE GARDENER - FREE ZOOM SERIES

SATURDAY, JANUARY 20, 2024 AT 11 A.M. SEMINAR 1: THE ABCs OF WINTER SOWING

In our first of three seminars of 2024, you'll learn everything you need to know to successfully germinate seeds outside in winter. Many plants - especially natives- need a period of repeated freezing and thawing, called cold stratification, to break dormancy and germinate. By mimicking nature, winter sowing is an easy, cost-effective way to increase important plant diversity in the garden, grow hard-to-find varieties often not available at your local garden centre and get an early start on spring veggies.

Grey County Master Gardeners Jennifer Deeks and Vicky Thompson share their different approaches to winter sowing, including a demonstration of the "pop-bottle" mini-greenhouse method. If you've ever wanted to try winter sowing, this is a must-attend event.

Visit the [Grey County Master Gardeners](https://www.greycountymastergardeners.ca) website to download the flyer and to **register for Seminar 1**. Registration will close on January 17, 2024 or when our maximum capacity is reached, so register early!

Alternatives to Salt for De-Icing Driveways

Information from the *Old Farmer's Almanac* <https://www.almanac.com>

There are many negatives to using salt to melt snow and ice on your property! Here are a few of its impacts and some alternate suggests to help you combat your icy winter world!

The Negatives of Using Salt:

- If your front walk or driveway is made of porous paving materials like concrete or brick, salt causes freeze and thaw cycles that eat away at it and make it prone to cracking and crumbling.
- Salt can dry out and burn your pets' sensitive paws, causing painful cracks and open sores. Licking the salt off also puts them at risk for gastrointestinal problems. If they ingest enough salt, it can be lethal!
- Salt runoff can contaminate well water and reservoirs and wash into lakes and streams where it is toxic to fish and amphibians.
- Salt injures plants in many ways often causing a slow death. Roots take up salt which accumulates in plant tissues causing nutrient imbalances. Salts also make it difficult for some roots to absorb water which leads to dryness and drought stress.
- Large amounts of sodium can chemically change the clay in the soil, decreasing drainage.
- Salt spray, splashed up from the roads, can cause chemical toxicity to the plants, especially evergreens within the splash zone.
- Salty deposits on the surface of twigs, leaves, and buds dehydrate them and interfere with photosynthesis, transpiration, and respiration.

Signs of Salt Damage to Plants:

- Browning leaf edges
- Wilting during hot dry weather
- Off-color foliage
- Stunted growth
- Fewer or smaller leaves
- Yellow leaves that are a sign of chlorosis
- Premature fall color and early leaf drop
- Smaller than normal flowers and fruit
- Evergreens with discolored needles



Alternatives to Rock Salt:



There's no "perfect" ice-melt solution, but here are some solutions that are less damaging than 100% rock salt.

1. Rubbing Alcohol: In a bucket, mix 1/2 gallon of warm water with 6 drops of dish soap and 1/4 cup of rubbing alcohol (You can pick this up at the dollar store!) Splash this around on your icy spots and watch the ice bubble up and melt away. The rubbing alcohol has a much lower freezing point than water so it thaws ice and prevents re-icing!

You can also combine the alcohol with water in a spray bottle, creating a portable ice-melting solution to keep in your car to defrost your windshield! Often, airplanes use rubbing alcohol to defrost the wings of a plane.

2. **Epsom Salt:** Epsom salt isn't as harmful to plants or vegetation as rock salt (or table salt). You may already have some on hand from the garden. It is an abrasive and melts ice slowly. To speed up your Epsom salts' melting power, combine sugar and Epsom salt in a 1:1 ratio. As Epsom salt costs more than rock salt so perhaps save it for the front steps when company is coming.
3. **Garden Fertilizer/Alternative Salts:** Check your garage to see if you have any fertilizer left over from gardening, and check the label for the below ingredients. These salts are slightly gentler than rock salt, though they are more expensive and they still have some of the disadvantages of salts described above.



—*Calcium chloride* is the popular ingredient in commercial de-icers and melts ice to about **-9 degrees C**, lower than rock salt. It will form slippery surfaces on its own, so mix it with sand—one part to 3 parts—to stretch it and add abrasive qualities. It's very quick-acting and melts ice almost instantly. It's less damaging to concrete than other ice melts. However, overapplication can still harm plants as well as corrode metals, damaging your car. Plus, its strength makes it the least pet-friendly of the salts and very irritating to pets' paws.

—*Magnesium chloride* is effective down to **-17 degrees C** and a popular ingredient in de-icers. The advantage is that it offers a more environmentally friendly alternative to calcium chloride. It causes minimal damage to surfaces, it's less harmful to plants, and it's less irritating to pets' paws than rock salt or calcium chloride. However, keep in mind it's still a salt so it still has the issues of salt residue and crumbling driveways as all salts, just less severe.

4. **Urea:** While also an ingredient in fertilizer, Urea (carbonyl diamide) is not salt-based. It's environmentally safe and doesn't cause damage to concrete. It's often used on airport runways. It can melt ice down to temperatures of **-9 degrees C** and in the spring, you might notice that the edges of your lawn grow more vigorously! The Animal Poison Control Center recommends a urea-based product as it is the most gentle substance for pet's paws and least likely to cause poisoning. Urea is different because it doesn't pull water from paws as much as salts do. If eaten, urea is nontoxic to dogs (though it may cause vomiting).

5. **Calcium magnesium acetate (CMA):** A new, salt-free melting agent, CMA works differently than other materials in that it does not form a brine-like salt. Instead, it helps prevent snow particles from sticking to each other or the road surface. CMA is made from dolomitic limestone and acetic acid (the main compound of vinegar). This material has little impact on plants and animals and is a good alternative for environmentally-sensitive areas. It's considered biodegradable and won't damage brick or concrete surfaces. That said, it is a more expensive alternative.
6. **Natural Fertilizer:** Alfalfa meal, wood ashes, coffee grounds. Alfalfa meal is a great non-chemical fertilizer that won't burn your plants. Wood ash from your fireplace contains potassium salts that help melt ice. Ash also absorbs solar energy, increasing the temperature to melt the ice. All these abrasives will help speed melting and improve traction. Plus, they have relatively few impacts on the environment or plants.
7. **Salt Plus Hot Water:** One way to use rock salt but also lessen the harm that it does while increasing its effectiveness is to melt ice more quickly. Salt should not sit on top of the ice; it needs to permeate the ice. The trick is to use hot water to melt the ice and then a small amount of salt to prevent the liquid water from re-freezing. For your doorsteps or a stubborn area, just boil a large pot of hot water and gently pour on ice. The trick is to sweep the water off the surface so that it doesn't get cold and freeze. Then sprinkle the salts. Using hot water is not less harmful and more effective but also means that you will end up using less salt.

8 Ways to Use Less Salt

1. Clear the snow first! The more snow and ice present, the more de-icing compound is needed for melting. Use minimal de-icing product to treat the pavement.
2. If you are going to use salt, don't just scatter it everywhere. Put it in the spots where you need it, not over the entire driveway. For example, sprinkle it near the door and along the entryway to your house after you shovel off everything you can.
3. Get a shovel with a sharp aluminum edge strip on the end of the shovel scoop. This metal strip is more effective at removing ice from your driveway!
4. When landscaping, avoid planting right along the driveway. Plant any salt-susceptible plants away from roads and sidewalks.
5. In the spring, irrigate the areas that had snow/salt buildup to lessen effects to the root zone of plants. Especially pay attention to any landscape beds that become heavily contaminated (from salty snow being dumped on them) and flush with fresh water as soon as possible.
6. Salt-covered foliage should be hosed off with clean water as soon as possible.
7. Use barriers, gutters, and hardscaping to channel de-icing materials away from the garden and plants.
8. If vegetation is in areas where heavy salt spray occurs, erect barriers or screens to protect plants (especially evergreens) during the winter months.



Winter Soups

There is nothing like a hot soup on a cold day — and what is better than feeling extra warm inside knowing that you can make a delicious soup from almost nothing? The basic formula for soup is a little bit of fat, some homemade broth (something you can make from food scraps and or bones), whatever veggies you have on hand in your fridge and some meat if desired!

Harrowsmith's Royal Spice Carrot Soup

From: <https://www.harrowsmithmag.com/44420/7-best-soup-recipes>

Serves 6-8

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1 cup of leeks, tender, white/light green parts only, chopped
- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp chopped garlic
- 5 cups chicken or vegetable broth
- 3 cups peeled and diced carrots
- 2 cups peeled and cubed potatoes
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup heavy cream or clotted cream
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1 tsp salt, to taste
- 1 tsp freshly ground cardamom

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 300°F.
2. In a large pot (like a Dutch oven), brown the butter on medium. Continuously stir as butter melts, then starts to foam and sizzle. The butter is 'browned' (after 3-5 minutes) when the butter has turned golden brown, the foam will have subsided a bit, and you'll see milk solids on the bottom of the pan. But most importantly, the butter will have an intoxicating nutty, buttery fragrance.
3. Add leeks and garlic, your aromatics, to the browned butter and sauté until just soft. Never overcook garlic.
4. Add freshly ground cardamom and let it 'bloom' for 30 seconds in the browned butter. This will draw out the fat-soluble flavours of the cardamom.
5. Add your broth and scrape off any tasty browned bits from the bottom of the pan.
6. Add veggies and bring to a boil. Cover and reduce heat to a gentle simmer, roughly 20 minutes, or until veggies are tender.
7. While veggies simmer, prepare your peppered pepitas, and blend your honey and cream together and set aside.
8. Once cooked, transfer the soup to a blender and add the salt, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon at a time to taste, and purée until smooth. When you are adding the salt, remember that the pepitas will be salty too.
9. Serve soup immediately, drizzle with honey cream and sprinkle with a handful of peppered pepitas.



PEPPERED PEPITAS

Ingredients:

- 2 cups pepitas
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp salt

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 300°F.
2. Line cookie sheet with parchment paper.
3. Toss all ingredients together and spread in a single layer on your parchment paper.
4. Bake for 10 minutes, stir. Then bake for another 10-20 minutes until seeds are golden, puffy and crunchy.
5. Store in an air-tight jar.
6. Soup can be frozen and reheated to be served later. And, you'll want to make extra pepitas because you'll be snacking on them as soon as they're cool enough to pop into your mouth.

Canada's Best Potato-Leek Soup

Serves 6

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp butter (30 mL)
- 4 leeks, white part only, washed and chopped
- 1 large onion, thinly sliced
- 5 large potatoes, peeled and sliced
- 5 cups chicken stock (1 L)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp dried thyme (2.5 mL)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp dried parsley (2.5 mL)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp ground black pepper (1.25 mL)
- 1 bay leaf
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of whipping cream (60 mL)
- 1 tbsp butter (15 mL)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup finely chopped fresh chives (60 mL)
- 4 oz blue cheese, crumbled (110 g)

Directions:

1. Melt the butter in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the leeks and onion and sauté until the onion is soft and translucent. Add the potatoes, chicken stock, thyme, parsley, black pepper, and bay leaf.
2. Bring the mixture to a boil; remove any scum that floats to the surface. Reduce heat to a simmer, cover and cook until the potatoes are soft, approximately 15 minutes.
3. Remove from the heat. Discard the bay leaf and cool briefly. Process the mixture in a blender until silky smooth.
4. Clean the pot, return the soup to the pot, and return the pot to the heat. Add the cream and when almost hot enough to serve, swirl in the remaining butter.
5. Ladle the soup into the bowls. Sprinkle each serving with the chives, then sprinkle the cheese over the chives. Serve.

