Impact Project Report

Master Naturalists challenge gardeners to go beyond beautiful

Issue

Picture the typical American neighborhood street — do you see an unbroken line of green lawns? Beautiful perhaps, but what goes into creating that image?

Some estimate that nearly one-third of residential water is poured on our lawns. Now add in fertilizer and its potential runoff into nearby streams, gas for power mowers, noise pollution from blowers, and the cost of labor. Lots of resources consumed for spaces with limited ability to support life.

Questioning this cultural norm - trading a green monoculture for spaces brimming with biodiversity is a conversation requiring diplomacy and patience. Master Naturalist students Saw Cherry and Brooke Roper have joined this national discussion, educating gardening newcomers about building spaces that go beyond beautiful.

Project

Working with the New Hope Bird Alliance, Cherry and Roper have created a free digital guide aimed at homeowners and small organizations on how to convert unused lawn space into native-plant pollinator habitats. This guide is written for the 'black thumb' gardener who would like to support butterflies, bees, and birds, but lacks how-to knowledge.

Launching at upcoming Earth Day events, this guide will be incorporated into New Hope Bird Alliance's displays and website. Cherry and Roper hope their work will help garden newcomers rethink "pretty" and inspire them to build spaces that can sustain life on our planet.



Beyond just grass, this front space supports life. Photo: S Cherry

Students

This project is the work of Saw Cherry and Brooke Roper.

Impact Projects

Beyond classwork, a key feature of the Master Naturalist Volunteer program are the Impact Projects students develop. These projects integrate course concepts and benefit a Partner Organization.

Highlight

Partner Organization

New Hope Bird Alliance

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