

Habitat Corridors: Tying Home Landscapes to Greenways

Submitted by Mark Luthin

Joel Neylon emphasized the benefits of native plantings to attract wildlife such as bees and birds. However, it's equally important to look beyond our home habitats and keep in mind the larger habitats that may be nearby and try to incorporate similar plants that are found there. Joel shared with us a 5 point plan, realizing that many Wild Ones members already do number 1 and 2.

1. Plant native plants specific to northern Illinois. Many pollinators rely exclusively on one species of plant, so it's important to offer them the food or nectar source that they require.
2. Plant for the entire season. With careful planning, homeowners can have blooming plants from April-October (or November)
3. Try to expand off of the bigger nearby natural areas. Organisms that are already utilizing the larger areas will then move easily into your home landscape.
4. Favor specialists. As mentioned, many pollinators rely on one plant species. Planting with the specialists in mind will also attract the generalists, such as bumble bees.
5. Document your findings. Using phone apps such as iNaturalist and eBird will add to a huge database of all types of wildlife. These apps can be used to see what species might be in the area, so the amateur naturalist can keep an eye out for them.

Joel, being an avid birder, also discussed the benefits of building nest boxes and including them in the home landscape. People that live in cities tend to remove dead trees, which happen to be ideal habitats for cavity-nesting birds. Placing bird houses around the lot can replace those lost habitats. Even blue birds will nest in town.

Unfortunately, we do not have a Zoom recording of Joel's presentation. However, a video using a cell phone was started towards the end of Joel's presentation. Click the link below to watch.

<https://youtu.be/uLE9i8djnSg>