

## TAKE THE HEALTHY YARD PLEDGE

FOR YOUR CHILDREN

FOR YOUR PETS

FOR YOUR NEIGHBORS

FOR THE BIRDS & THE BEES

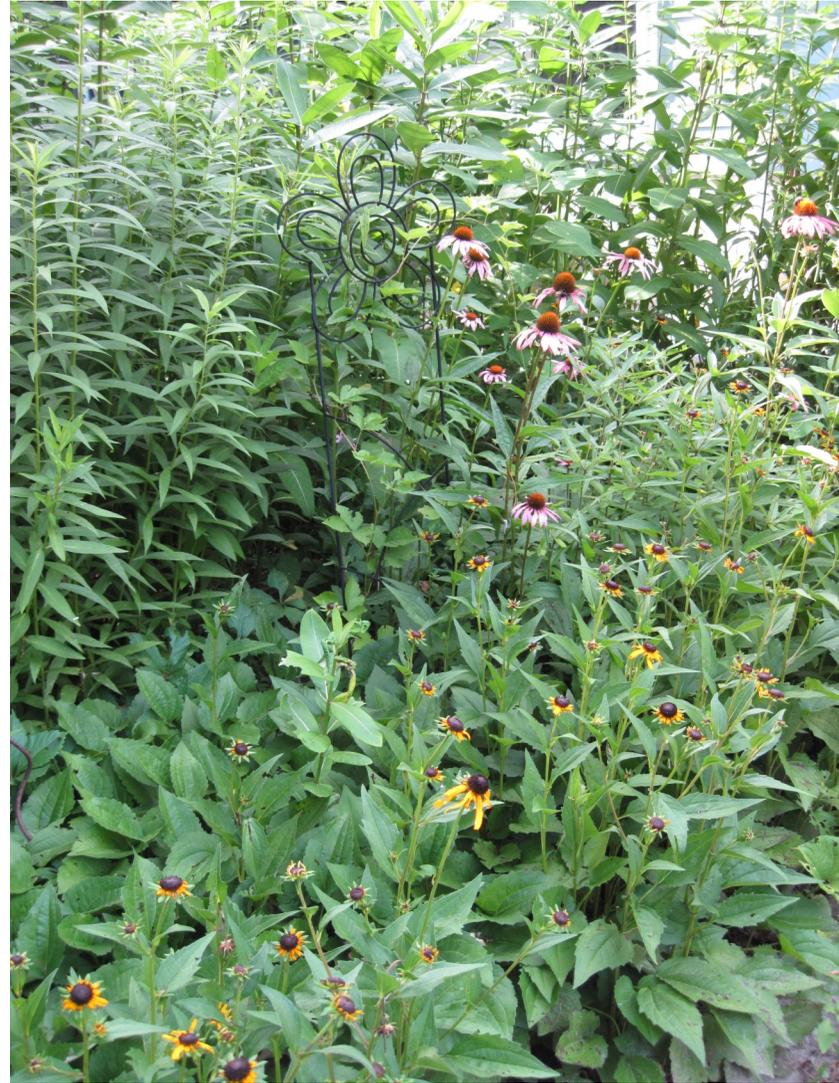
FOR YOURSELF



*Yards are personal havens for recreation, rest and relaxation. If you are using chemical fertilizers and pesticides on your lawn and garden, you may be risking the health of every living creature that inhabits that space.*

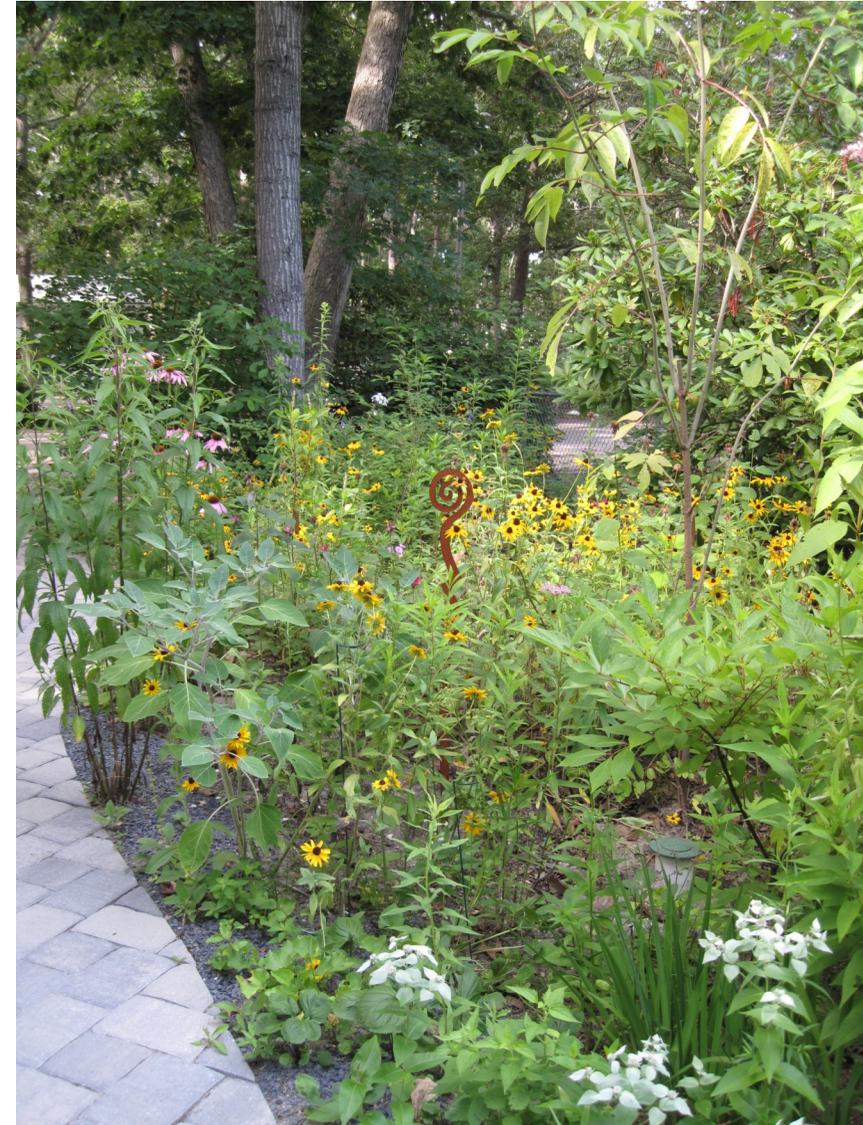
“When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world. “

- John Muir



For more information, contact  
THE GALLOWAY TOWNSHIP OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY  
300 E. Jimmie Leeds Road  
Galloway, NJ 08205  
mlynch@gtnj.org      www.gtnj.org

GO GREEN GALLOWAY  
*Healthy Yard  
Challenge*



## WHY ARE GARDEN CHEMICALS A PROBLEM?

Traditional lawn care products that use synthetic fertilizers and chemical herbicides not only put your family and pets at risk, but endanger the world at large. Three million tons of chemical fertilizer are applied to American lawns each year; and many of them are herbicide/pesticide/fertilizer mixes. These chemicals have been linked to cancers, Parkinson's disease, endocrine problems, asthma and thyroid diseases.

Children, with their still-developing metabolic and immune systems, are more susceptible to problems related to exposure of these toxins. They play in the yard, roll around on the ground, and put things in their mouths.

Chemicals used in the yard often do not stay outside...we bring them in on our shoes and our air filtration systems pull poisons inside.



There are rules that must be followed by landscape contractors for the application of these chemicals; but when a homeowner is a "do it yourselfer", often the packaging directions are ignored and the "more is better" theory is used; resulting in even further contamination of the soil, water and air.

When you reduce and begin to eliminate the use of herbicides, chemical fertilizers and pesticides in your yard, you will be amazed at the changes that you will see- More birds, pollinators and indigenous wildlife will return to your "safe haven".

### **Natural products for the garden (alternatives to chemicals):**

Corn Gluten Meal for fertilizing your lawn and preventing weed seed germination.  
Pyola oil and Neem oil as natural pesticides. Both protect your flowers and vegetables.  
**One source for these products is Gardens Alive! [www.gardensalive.com](http://www.gardensalive.com)**

## THE IMPORTANCE OF POLLINATORS

"Pollinators are essential to our world. Bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, moths, wasps, flies, beetles, even a few bats are some of the animals that move pollen between flowers, enabling them to produce seeds.

The ecological service these pollinating animals provide is necessary for the reproduction of over 85% of the world's flowering plants. The resulting seeds and fruits provide food for countless other animals ranging from songbirds to grizzly bears.

Pollinators are also essential to human life. Consider for a moment that approximately one in three mouthfuls of food and beverage required the presence of a pollinator. The United States alone grows more than a hundred crop plants that need pollinators. Without pollinators, there would be no apples, pumpkins, blueberries, or many other fruits and vegetables."\*

### **THREE THINGS TO DO TO HELP POLLINATORS:**

#### ***Create a Diversity of Bloom***

Pollinators need abundant nectar & pollen sources throughout the growing season. Plant a variety of native plants that will bloom at different times.

#### ***Protect Nests and Egg Laying Sites***

Many pollinators are specialists that only lay their eggs on and feed on specific plants. (Example: Monarch butterflies only feed on the leaves of milkweeds.)

Native bees need "untidy" areas of the garden to nest: sandy ground, brush piles and old tree stumps.

#### ***Don't Use Pesticides***

Even "organic-approved" insecticides can harm pollinators and other wildlife. Herbicides reduce plant diversity. Research non-chemical controls for garden pests.

## WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO CREATE A HEALTHY YARD?

- At the same time you are increasing the number of native plant offerings, identify invasive non-native plants and begin to eliminate them.
- Reduce the size of your lawn and replace it with native plants and groundcovers.
- Conserve water; a smaller lawn means less maintenance. When you do water your plantings, water early in the morning when evaporation is less. You can avoid watering the lawn altogether and let it go dormant in the summer.
- Reduce water runoff. Install rain barrels on your property to harvest your rainwater. If you have a very wet area in the yard, install a rain garden that will allow water to pool for less than 24 hours, even after a heavy rain. Proper vegetation in a rain garden is the key to a properly functioning garden.
- Consider eliminating non-permeable surfaces in favor of permeable pavers or other "drain through" materials.
- Pick up pet waste; this is a source of pollution when allowed to run off into our waterways.
- Leave grass clippings on the lawn. They decompose quickly and add valuable nutrients that your grass needs to grow.
- Let leaves "winter over" in your planting beds. Many "critters" depend on these leaves to survive the winter months; and the extra layer of leaves keeps your plants well insulated against the elements. The leaves can be shredded and put back on the beds in the Spring; but it is not necessary to do this.
- Compost fruit and vegetable waste and yard trimmings to create a fabulous natural fertilizer.
- Leave flower heads and stems on your plants until early Spring. The seeds and berries will feed a variety of wildlife throughout Fall and Winter.

\*The Xerces Society