



November 2025 Newsletter

Please let us know about your connections, your plants and your activities for our next newsletter at projectswallowtail@gmail.com. Our **Facebook Group** has lots of postings on members activities and inspiring nature photos.

Nov 22: When Bees and Other Pollinators Go to Bed With special guest Junaid Khan



Nov 22, 3-5pm

Anishnawbe Nibi Gitigan

225 Dunn Ave, Toronto, ON M6K 2S1

Join us for a fascinating talk about what happens in our gardens and habitats over the winter. What's going on in the soil, under the leaves, and within stems and wood? What becomes of the seeds and plants during this quiet season?

Many of us met Junaid as a member of the Project Swallowtail collective or while he was coordinating the Pollinator Stewardship Certification, and we couldn't get enough of his teaching, knowledge, and insight - or the way he shared them.

Junaid is a Muslim-Canadian from the Indus Valley, in the region now known as Pakistan. He has worked as an ecologist for more than 12 years, focusing on habitat revitalization, invasive species, insect conservation, and bird education. Over the past four years, Junaid has dedicated himself to understanding the ecologies embedded within Indigenous cultures.

Through his ongoing study of Anishinaabemowin and his collaborations with community members working to rejuvenate Anishinaabek cultural practices, he hopes to support efforts toward Indigenous land sovereignty across Turtle Island.

Learn more: <https://www.creatorsgardenmarket.ca/our-story>

This event will be held mostly indoors, with a visit to our gardens during the last 30 minutes or so. There will be plenty of time for questions and discussion.

ACCESSIBILITY:

- The building is wheelchair accessible
- Live transcription may be available; please let us know if you are interested and require this
- PWYC on a sliding scale \$1-\$20

Register by emailing spcommunitypollinatorgardens@gmail.com

or this link: <https://forms.gle/9LPyrmSHteZ5BywP9>

Creating Wildlife and Pollinator Habitat one Garden at a Time By Sharon Lovett



This photo from November 10 shows the first snowfall of the year. As you can see, I have left the leaves (with a few bare spots for overwintering bees) and the seed heads and there is a brush pile next to the fence at the back of the garden. I will be putting out my heated birdbath soon.

The snowfall has reminded me how beautiful my own backyard is and I'd like to share how it came to be. I moved into my very narrow downtown Victorian house that is well over 100 years old in 1997 and started planting many different types of native and non-native plants and bulbs in the empty, mostly sunny yard that is 15'x50' (4.5x50 meters). I have a large collection of plant nametags to remind me of those that became "annuals" due to changing conditions but I didn't get too distressed by "failures", they were lovely while they lasted.

In 2000 I hired LEAF to turn my backyard into a bird sanctuary. They looked at the conditions and we chose trees that would provide shelter and berries as a theme. I have Eastern white cedars, Nannyberry, Serviceberry, Elderberry, Hackberry, Choke Cherry, Mountain Ash and lilacs (already there). At first I was able to have flowering plants as there was enough sun but now it is like being in a green cocoon during the summer, with temperatures well over 10 degrees cooler than in the front yard.

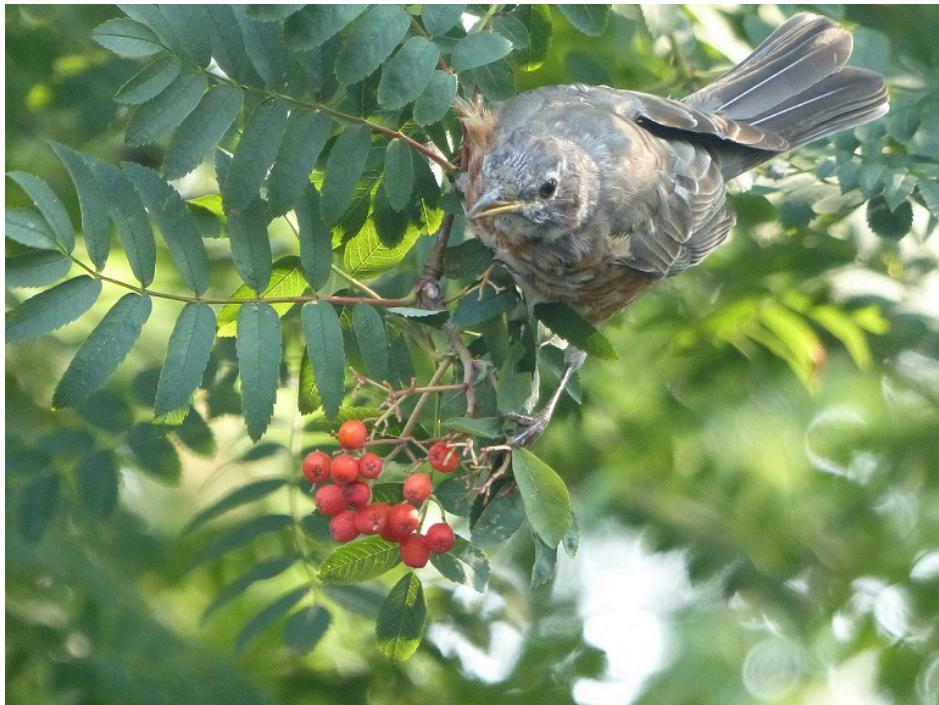


photo: Robins are very fond of Mountain Ash berries that ripen in September and October.

I have a few bird feeders: suet, sunflower hearts (no shells) and peanuts that are very popular. It has been a wonderful day for bird watching including a flock of 20 house sparrows, mourning doves, several pigeons, a pair of cardinals and blue jays, a grackle, a hairy woodpecker and the real harbinger of winter, a dark-eyed junco.

I am really pleased that our members have access to many different types of native plants and trees now as that was a real problem in the past. I hope that you will connect with your neighbours, seed sit and expand native plant habits everywhere. Winter is a great time to reflect on what we have created and to plan for the spring. It is true that if you build it they will come.

As a gardener and the newsletter editor I really look forward to other stories from our members to publish in our future issues. We need to celebrate what we do, it's important work.

“NoFrills” Native Plant Garden

748 The Queensway (at Royal York Road)

By Rhonda Richardson

The project of converting a neglected 3x3 metre raised bed to a native pollinator habitat began in the summer of 2024 when I noticed the sad state of an 'abandoned' flower bed located between the sidewalk and the parking lot of my local “NoFrills”, 748 The Queensway (at Royal York Road). It was filled with masses of thistles, dandelions and invasive reed canary grass as well as gravel from the parking lot.

I showed it to 3 Project Swallowtail members: Dougles Counter, Fern Kako and Barbara Keaveney. They are very experienced in native habitat stewardship and encouraged me to approach Cosimo Pietromonaco, the “NoFrills” Manager, with a proposal to convert this neglected bed to native habitat. He thought about it and gave the go ahead in April 2025!



16 Oct 2024 - Raised bed (3x3 metres) – 1 year ago this photo of the weed-filled neglected bed helped to launch the above project



26 Aug 2025 - First pollinator sighting at NoFrills: Monarch on Ironweed!



7 Sep 2025 - Douglas Counter, Project Swallowtail Block Ambassador & David Suzuki Foundation Butterfly Ranger

Generous donations from our team of 7 gardeners, especially Project Swallowtail members Douglas, Fern, Barbara & Kathy Rucska (who joined the team later included:

- . 78 Native perennial seedlings
(19 species with bloom times covering spring, summer and fall)
- . Design concept including 4 stepping stones

Cosimo, the store manager, provided:

- . Lilac tree that was planted 2 years ago as the bed's focal point
- . Ample supply of cardboard to cover the soil
- . 7 bags of mulch
- . Convenient source of water



16 Oct 2025 - Non-native European Blue butterfly on a Smooth Blue Aster.

16 Oct 2025 - Bee on a New England Aster. They were tiny (2 cm tall) seedlings when planted in June. They are 150-175 cm tall and have purple flowers that bloom in late October.

16 Oct 2025 - 1-year comparison to the first photo above.

Support from Lorraine Johnson and the Etobicoke Horticultural Society is also much appreciated. Lorraine finds the retail parking lot site of particular interest and may use its photo(s) in her presentations. The EHS donated 4 plants and has promoted the project in a couple of their newsletters sent to over 300 members.

October 18: Native Plant Give-Away at Karma Co-op Update



Our native plant give-away at Karma Co-op was a success for over 40 members who were able to pick up plants and seeds for their gardens.

Grow Wild in Omemee, Ontario was the vendor of the 900 plants we purchased and those that were extra were brought to Black Creek Community Farm.

Thanks to Junaid Khan for organizing all of the plants and to the volunteers, Adam, Ryan, Sharon, Gabby, Karma Co-op and others} who assisted in sending them to their new homes.

**Pollinator Steward Certification
deadline for completing virtual training module forms is Dec 31**

Last winter Pollinator Partnership Canada offered 50 Project Swallowtail Block Ambassadors the opportunity to obtain their Pollinator Steward Certification free of charge. The training consisted of either attending or watching a series of virtual sessions and performing one garden and one community outreach project. For those of you who attended, part 1, filling in the forms with your learnings from the sessions is due on Dec. 31. The other projects have a deadline of Sept. 30, 2026. Please see the information sent to you by P2C for instructions.



POLLINATORPARTNERSHIP.CA

We will inform Block Ambassadors if this offer is available for 2026 and if it is, provide you with the code to use on sign-up.

Any Gardening Questions?

Part of looking back on our gardens this past summer and in planning next year is to reflect on what went wrong as well as right. There must be many questions that you have on a variety of topics. I would like to post them in our next newsletter and hope that readers have suggestions. Please send an email to us by Dec 1 as well as sending stories about your gardens and connections. If you received/purchased plants from us in the past or this year we'd like to know how they did. You can upload your photos (please keep under 500k in size) in [Photos of Gardens to Share](#). Please put your name in the photo title and also upload anything you would like to say about it in a txt, doc or google doc file and include your name and email.

I'd like to share them at the end of the year. projectswallowtail@gmail.com You may also use the newsletter content form below if you prefer.

We'd Love to Hear From You!

We're looking for more stories, events, photos, and updates to share with the Project Swallowtail community in our newsletters!

- To share an event, please add it to the [Event Form](#).
- To contribute articles or messages, use the [Newsletter Content Form](#).
- Feedback on our interactive maps. (available only to map participants)
- Gardening and plant info on our [Google Drive](#)
- Our new [Project Swallowtail website](#) available
- Project Swallowtail [Sign-Up form](#) (for friends and family you are signed up)





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