

May 2026 Newsletter

Native plants, Vegetables and Fruit Trees, the Perfect Combination



We usually speak about native plants supporting wildlife and pollination. This issue has information on using native plants to grow vegetables and support fruit trees. See the article at the end and the attached report with charts and references. This photo is from a garden near Minden Ontario that incorporates these principles.

We want to share all the wonderful work that people are doing and let Project Swallowtail members know about other groups they can get involved with or just learn from. See the links on our [website](#), the previous newsletters and our [Facebook](#) group.

Updated! [Project Swallowtail Website Calendar of Events](#)

Our website has pages with **full details** for these plant sales, member events and more.

Please let us know of your events and we will post them there. Here are a few items.

North American Native Plant Society Native Plant Sale – May 9 10am to 2pm

Toronto Botanical Garden, 777 Lawrence Ave. E. Toronto ON M3C 1P2

Spring Plant Sale at Allan Gardens – May 17 10am to 4pm

Allan Gardens Children's Conservatory 19 Horticultural Ave, Toronto, Ontario

Parkdale Horticultural Society Plant Fair – May 23 10am to 1pm

Roncy United Church 240 Roncesvalles Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Roncy REmarket - 10am to 3pm

Roncesvalles United Church, 240 Roncesvalles Avenue, Toronto, ON M6R 2L6

Featured Member Events

Douglas Counter Garden Tours

There are 4 upcoming Garden Tours: **May 1, May 24, May 30, June 6**



Tour 1: Wednesday, May 20, 1:00pm to 2:30pm



Tour 2: Sunday, May 24, 2:00pm to 3:30pm



Tour 3: Saturday, May 30, 11:00am to 12:30pm



Tour 4: Saturday, June 6, 1:00pm to 2:30pm

New this year, Block Ambassador Douglas Counter is kindly offering Project Swallowtail members free **SPRING TOURS** of his native habitat gardens located near the Etobicoke Civic Centre. This 1.5-hour tour includes tips on increasing the habitat value of your garden, minimal spring maintenance sympathetic to pollinators, spring plant identification, choosing species, and more.

Douglas brings 29 years of practical, hands-on experience gardening with native plants to these tours of his prairie, woodland, and storm water infiltration boulevard gardens, which together cover 84% of his property, contain over 110 species of plants, shrubs and trees, and are beautiful examples of what's possible in an urban setting.

Spaces are limited, so please RSVP to Douglas today at dcu.humanature@rogers.com and include your tour date in the subject line of your email. Douglas will confirm location details with guests.

[Register](#)

Spring clean up for pollinators

Key Spring Pollinator Cleanup Tips

Delay spring cleanup until temperatures are consistently above 10°C (50°F) to protect emerging pollinators. Instead of removing debris, leave leaf litter to decompose as mulch and keep dead plant stems 12-15 inches high for cavity-nesting bees. Prioritize “doing as little as possible,” reducing or eliminating pesticide use, and avoiding early, heavy mowing to ensure beneficial insects survive.

Save the Pollinator Garden at Trinity Bellwoods Park

[Sign this petition](#) (submitted by Block Ambassador Heidi Pospisil)

We are calling on the City of Toronto to halt plans to remove a native pollinator garden located at the northwest edge of Trinity Bellwoods Park, near the dog bowl. The garden has transformed a neglected area into a vibrant and well-maintained part of the park. It supports pollinators and urban biodiversity, and has been appreciated by many park users. It is

maintained entirely at private cost, with no burden to the City. Sign this petition to help protect this garden and support thoughtful, community-driven improvements to our public spaces.

Say No to spraying for Mosquitos

[Say No to Spraying Brochure](#) (please circulate to your networks)

Written by the Project Swallowtail Advocacy Committee and partners



Keep your yard safe for people, pets, and pollinators.
Say no to mosquito spraying and chemical tick control!
Use these safe and effective methods instead

How 're-wilding' can make Canada's cityscapes more climate resilient and bee friendly

[Full Article CTV News](#) and [Video on Youtube](#)

By Jordan Omstead, The Canadian Press April 22, 2026



Adam Barnes, founder of Rewilders Toronto, a community-based ecological initiative, tends to a planted pollinator garden in Toronto, on Thursday, April 16, 2026. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Chris Young

Since 2023, he has built a network of thirteen public gardens forming a 1km Pollinator Pathway, transforming underused urban spaces into vibrant ecosystems that support biodiversity and community wellbeing. Alongside these community projects, Rewilders now offers native garden services for homeowners, schools, organizations, and businesses. Whether you want to create a new habitat garden, learn through hands-on workshops, or bring native plants into your own space, we're here to help. [Rewilders](#)

Adam Barnes is also one of Project Swallowtail's primary leaders and has led many of our educational, signage and garden projects.



Thank you to the Garden Club of Toronto

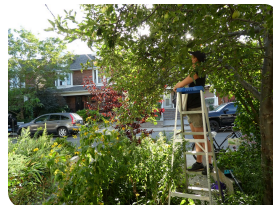
Project Swallowtail and The Garden Club of Toronto are celebrating their first year of partnership, now working together for more pollinator gardens and a more sustainable natural environment in the City. Project Swallowtail is pleased to receive a recent donation from The Garden Club to support its work.

Vegetables, Fruit Trees and Native Plants Make Great Companions

One topic we haven't explored in our newsletter is using native plants to grow vegetables and assist in fruit tree production. It's an enormous topic with lots of reference material.

"Integrating native Ontario plants into your fruit and vegetable gardens creates a "living mulit-tool" for your landscape. Beyond just looking beautiful, these plants actively boost your food production by attracting essential pollinators, preying on pests, and naturally fertilizing the soil."

See the attached article for an extensive report on growing vegetables and fruit trees with native plants. There is a [.pdf](#) and a [.docx](#) version to download if you want to edit your own document.



How this report was written

After researching in my normal way by looking at books and articles online I decided to try using AI to compile a report. I found that being careful with how you phrase your question is very important as is reviewing what references are used in the report. One interesting aspect of this is that after answering each question a suggestion was made about another followup question. I also found that asking the same question the next day brought similar but not exact results. Because AI sometimes does not provide correct information it is important to know basically what results you want.

To do my search I used my Google Chrome browser. As I entered my query in the URL bar at the top, an option appeared on the right hand side called "AI Mode" or just see the AI answer.

“Write an article on specific native plants in Ontario that are useful when growing vegetables and fruit trees. What insects, birds and pollinators do these plants support? What positive effects do they have on soil?”

A second question was

“Create a chart of vegetables and native plants that support them in Ontario”

The results are organized very differently

I finished with "provide references for this article"

The right hand panel showed images with links of plants and resources. Clicking on an image may take you to the source or else you may ask “tell me about this image” to get more information and links.

| Native Ontario Plant [1] | Supported Vegetable(s) | Primary Support Benefit |
|---|------------------------------|---|
| Yarrow (<i>Achillea millefolium</i>) | Tomatoes, Peppers, Brassicas | Attracts hoverflies and lacewings that eat aphids and thrips. |

Companion Planting Chart for the Vegetable Garden
Mar 21, 2026 — Table_title: Companion Planting Chart by Vegetable...
The Old Farmer's Almanac

Companion Gardening in Canada: Best Plant Pairings for a ...
Jul 31, 2025 — Table_title: Common Companion Planting Combinations...
Circle Farms Seeds

Plants For Fruit Guilds
Have you ever considered planting a fruit tree guild? You may have heard about...
GILLIAN

41 sites

Coneflower
Pale Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea pallida* (Pale Purple Coneflower)) is Ontario's truly native coneflower and can...
Coneflower

Flowering dogwood
Flowering Dogwood, *Cornus florida* The flowering dogwood is a small deciduous forest understorey tree that is native to...
Flowering dogwood

Aster
Aster, Smooth Blue Smooth blue aster is a native plant of northwestern Ontario and will grow to about 4 ft. It likes...

A Guide to Companion Planting in Ontario | Georgina Garden ...
Mar 29, 2023 — Here are some of the key benefits that companion planting...
Georgina Garden Centre

12 Edible native plants | Southern great lakes region - In Our Nature
12 Edible Native Plants For Your Garden * Wild Leek/Ramps (*Allium tricoccum*) *...
In Our Nature

Companion Planting for Increased Garden Success!
Nov 19, 2021 — Some of these plants repel insects on their own, prior to...

I had an enormous amount of fun generating different types of responses. I hope that you will as well. Although there are many warnings about misinformation, the links provided to the sources should help you decide what is valuable to you. (Sharon Lovett editor)



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