



Wild Seed Project

RETURNING NATIVE PLANTS
TO THE MAINE LANDSCAPE

Diversify Your Lawn

Anna Fialkoff, June 2022



Lawns Suck!

\$\$, time, and resources

- Water
- Fossil fuels
- Pesticides / herbicides
- Fertilizers
- Practically sterile

Shrink Your Lawn


Outdoor
Rooms

Pathways



Why Mow When You Can Meadow?



A person is shown in a park-like setting, applying sheet mulch to the base of a large tree. The person is using a shovel to spread a layer of dark mulch over a cardboard sheet. The tree is a pin oak, and the surrounding area is a mix of grass and dirt. The sky is blue with some clouds.

pin oak,
Quercus palustris

1. Overlapping cardboard
2. 2-4" aged bark mulch or composted leaves
3. Let break down for 3+ months

Sheet Mulch

Native Lawn Alternatives

1. Plant into sheet mulch in spring or fall

Shannon Dry
Nasami Farm in Whately, MA





Kate Brittenham



Kate Brittenham

Sedge Lawn



N
Carex pensylvanica
Pennsylvania sedge
CYPERACEAE
Wildard to E. Covert

Pennsylvania sedge
Carex pensylvanica

Dan Wilder

Edible Ground Cover



wild strawberry,
Fragaria virginiana



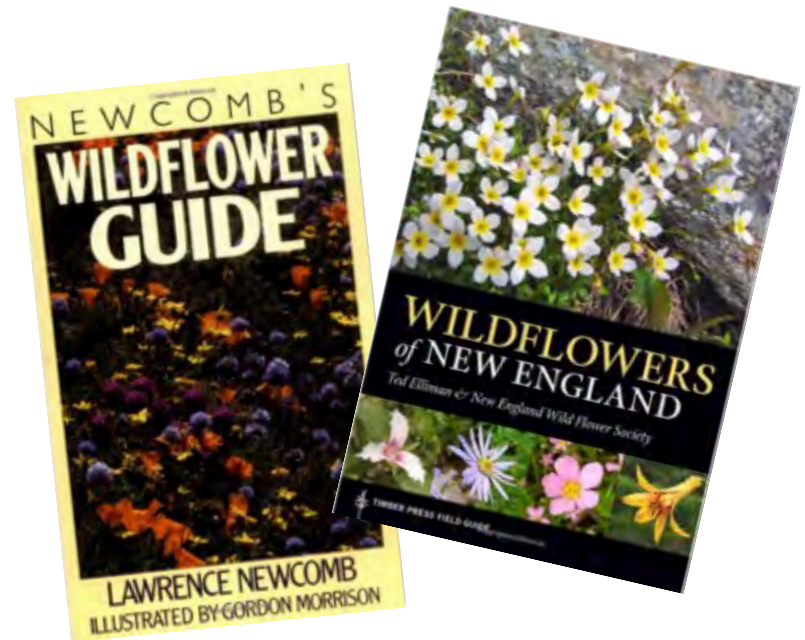
Steps to a Diversified Lawn

1. Observe what's there



gobotany.nativeplanttrust.org/

Inaturalist app



2. Mow higher & less frequently
3. Let the lawn flower. Once identified, cut the flowers off unwanted plants before they go to seed (chop and drop)
4. Let desired plants flower and go to seed

Let your lawn flower



black swallowtail butterfly, *Papilio polyxenes*, on red clover, *Trifolium pratense*



black swallowtail caterpillar, *Papilio polyxenes*, on fennel, *Foeniculum vulgare*

Weeds are in the eye of the beholder

Heal-all,
Prunella vulgaris

Common Lawn “Weeds”

Native

- wild Strawberry,
Fragaria virginiana
- bluets,
Houstonia caerulea
- common cinquefoil,
Potentilla simplex

Native and Non-Native

- violets,
Viola sp.
- heal-all,
Prunella vulgaris
- hawkweeds,
Hieracium spp.

Non-Native & Innocuous

- clovers (white, red, hop,
rabbit-foot),
Trifolium spp.
- yellow wood sorrel,
Oxalis stricta
- common dandelion,
Taraxacum officinale
- creeping thyme,
Thymus serpyllum
- Curly dock,
Rumex crispus
- Plantain,
Plantago spp.
- Chickweed,
Cerastium spp.
- Crabgrass,
Digitaria spp.

Non-Native & Aggressive


- bugleweed,
Ajuga spp.
- gill-over-the-ground,
Glechoma hederacea
- birds-foot trefoil,
Lotus corniculatus

Noxious / Invasive

- sheep sorrel,
Rumex acetosella
- Creeping thistle (Canada
thistle),
Cirsium arvense
- creeping bellflower,
Campanula rapunculoides

Add Valuable Native Species

- Larval hosts
- Pollinator magnets
- Plants with tolerance for drought, poor soils, foot traffic, and mowing.
- Long-lasting bloomers
- Grass-like plants



smooth white
violet, *Viola pallens*

Add Valuable Native Species

- woodland stonecrop,
Sedum ternatum
- nodding onion,
Allium cernuum
- stiff aster,
Ionactis linariifolia
- wavy hairgrass,
Deschampsia flexuosa
- purple lovegrass,
Eragrostis spectabilis
- little bluestem,
Schizachyrium scoparium
- Pennsylvania sedge,
Carex pensylvanica
- bluets,
Houstonia caerulea
- barren strawberry,
Geum fragarioides
- eastern shooting star,
Dodecatheon meadia
- pussytoes,
Antennaria spp.
- harebell,
Campanula rotundifolia
- three-toothed cinquefoil,
Sibbaldiopsis tridentata
- yellow star-grass,
Hypoxis hirsuta
- Canada mayflower,
Maianthemum canadense
- wild strawberry,
Fragaria virginiana
- running groundsel,
Packera obovata
- blue-eyed grass,
Sisyrinchium angustifolium

Cemeteries



white clover,
Trifolium repens



hawkweed,
Hieracium sp.



little blustem,
Schizachyrium scoparium

Matrix



purple
Eragrostis

path rush,
Juncus tenuis

autumn bentgrass,
Agrostis perennans

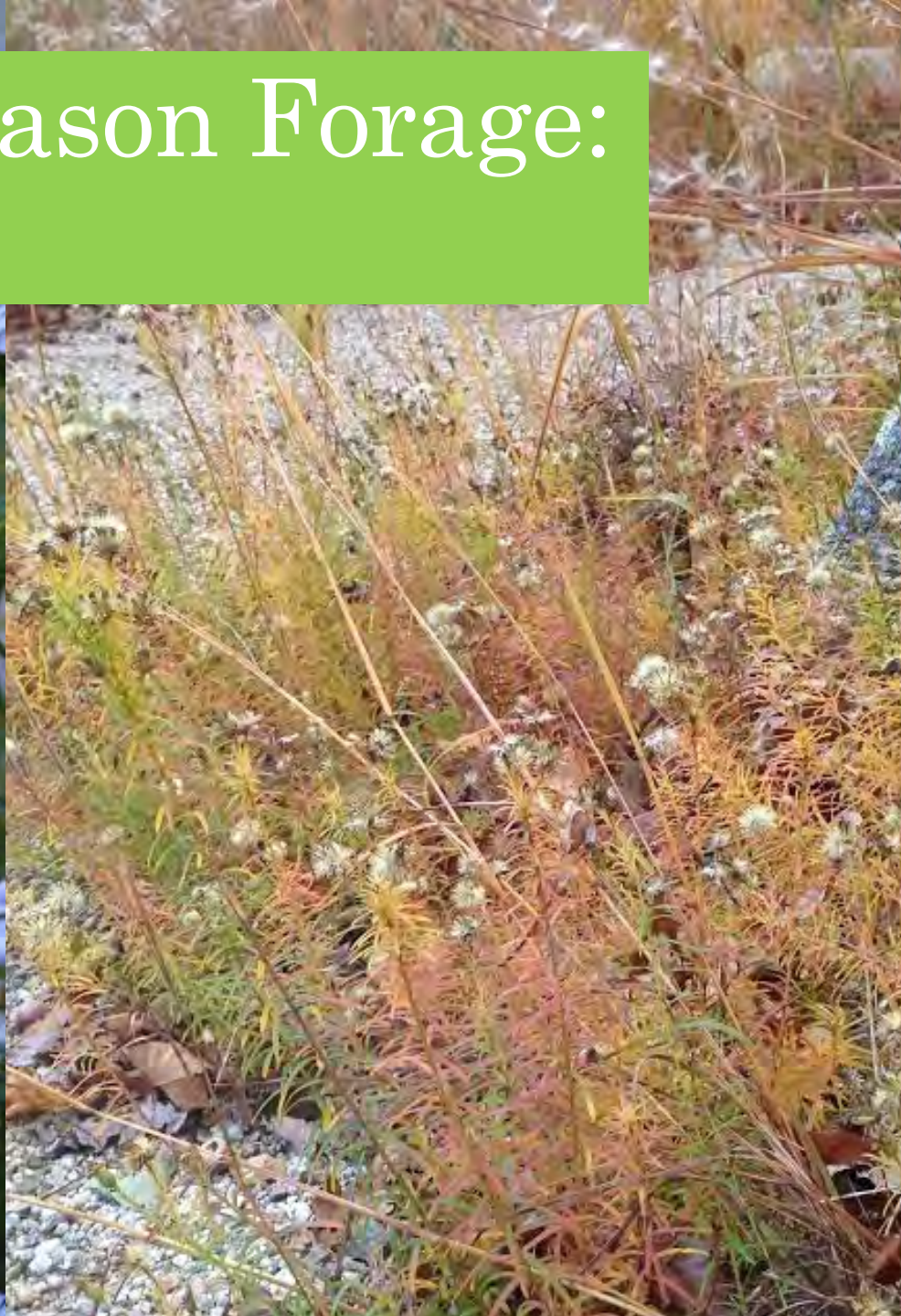


gray goldenrod,
Solidago nemoralis

More Late Season Forage: Asters



Flax-leaved stiff aster,
Ionactis linariifolia






blue-eyed grass,
Sisyrinchium spp.

Lisa Looke



Heather McCargo

A Flowering Grass?



yellow star-grass,
Hypoxis hirsuta

A Flowering Grass?



Path rush,
Juncus tenuis



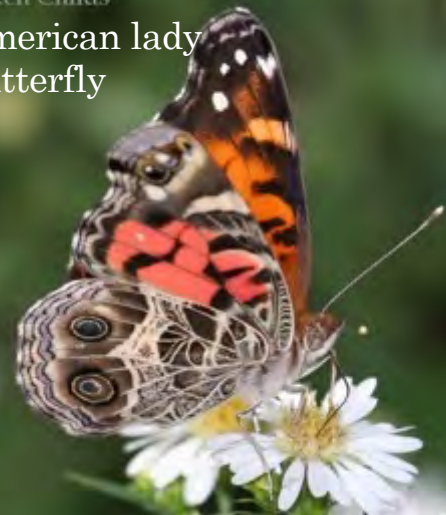
Foot Traffic

Larval Host & Ground Hugger

littleleaf pussytoes
Antennaria microphylla

©Ken Childs

American lady
butterfly



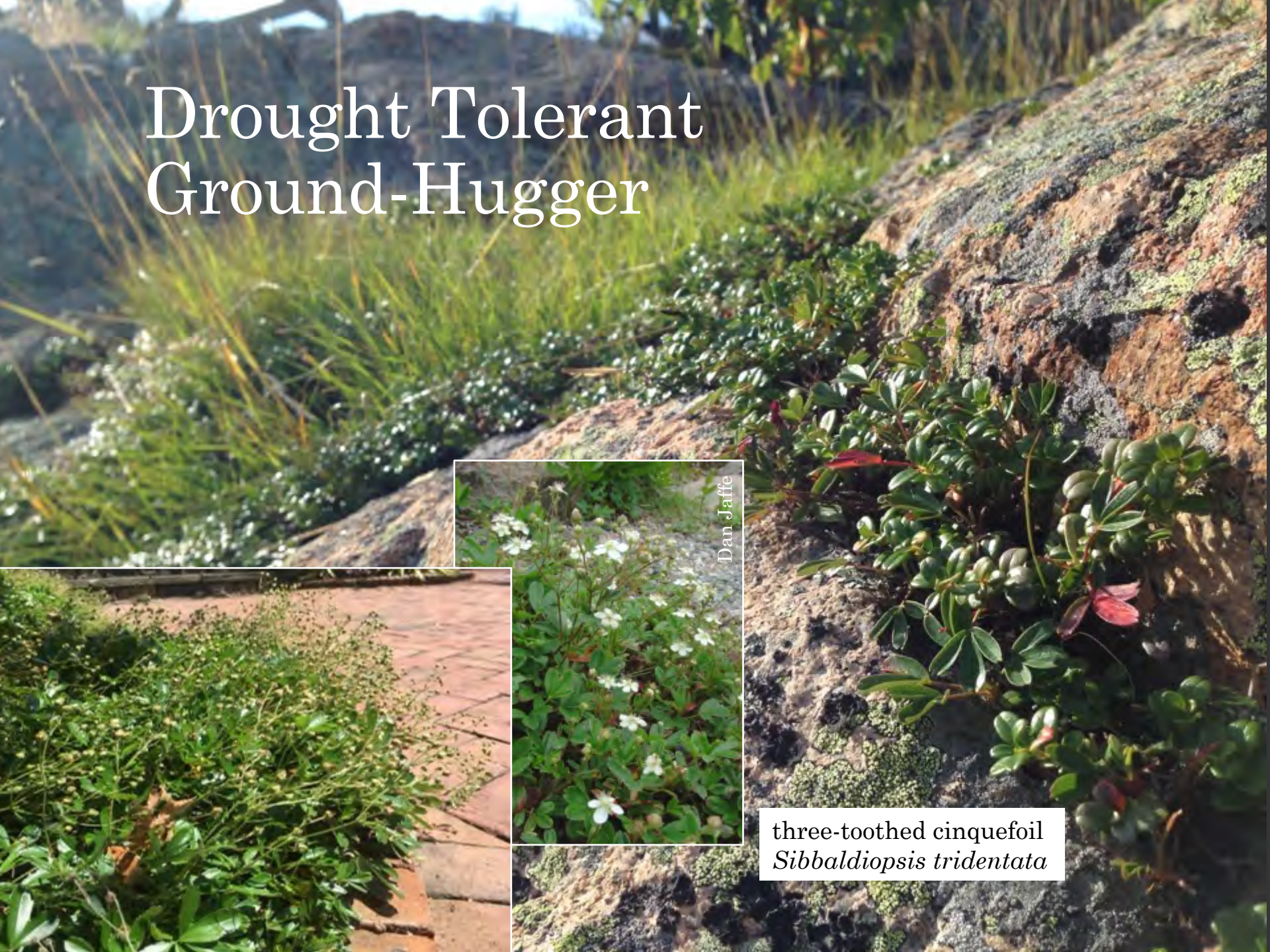


Ephemeral

Goes dormant by
mid-summer

eastern shooting star,
Dodecatheon meadia

Drought Tolerant Ground-Hugger



Dan Jaffe


three-toothed cinquefoil
Sibbaldiopsis tridentata

A close-up photograph of a garden bed. The foreground and middle ground are filled with numerous bright yellow flowers, likely Running Groundsels, with dark centers. In the lower-left corner, there are several red columbines with yellow centers. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting more foliage. A green horizontal banner is overlaid on the top left, and two white text boxes are placed over the flowers.

Versatile Ground Cover

Running groundsel,
Packera obovata

Red columbine,
Aquilegia canadensis



Sugar maple,
Acer saccharum

Woodland phlox,
Phlox divaricata

Lawn to Layers in the Shade

canada mayflower, *Maianthemum canadense*
&
Pennsylvania sedge, *Carex pensylvanica*



Shady Carpet

partridgeberry,
Mitchella repens

Manitoga, NY






yellow star-grass,
Hypoxis hirsuta

Pennsylvania sedge,
Carex pennsylvanica

Common cinquefoil,
Potentilla simplex



bluets,
Houstonia caerulea

Wild strawberry,
Fragaria virginiana

A field of blueets (Houstonia caerulea) with white and light blue flowers among tall green grasses. The flowers are small and star-shaped, with yellow centers. The grasses are long and thin, creating a dense, textured background. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day.

blueets,
Houstonia caerulea

bluets,
Houstonia caerulea



Source Quality Plants

- Avoid plants grown with systemic pesticides (neonicotinoids).
- Find or grow your own from seed!

“Navigating the Nurseries” &
“Where to Buy Native Plants”
wildseedproject.net



Cayte McDonough

Nasami Farm,
Whately, MA
Native Plant Trust's Plug Nursery

Further Reading

- Douglas Tallamy. *Bringing Nature Home. Nature's Best Hope.*
- Rick Darke and Douglas W. Tallamy. *The Living Landscape: Designing for Beauty and Biodiversity in the Home Garden.*
- Thomas Christopher. *The New American Landscape.*
- Claudia West and Thomas Rainer. *Planting in a Post-Wild World.*
- Larry Weaner and Thomas Christopher. *Garden Revolution.*

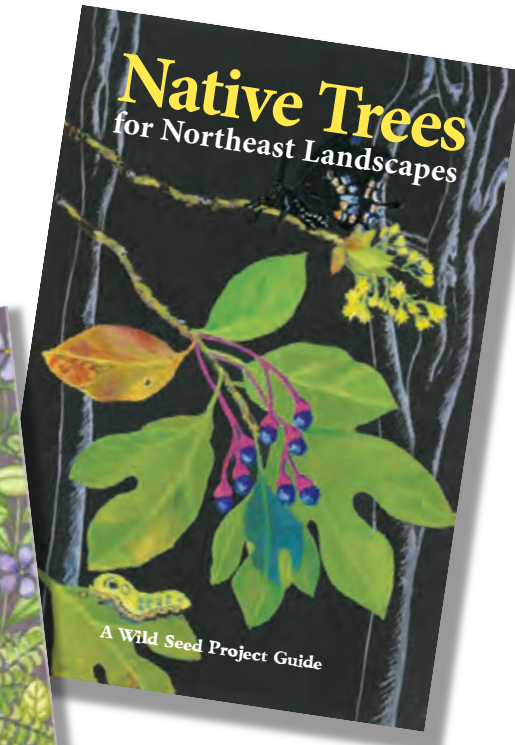
More to Read from Wild Seed

Publications:

- *Native Ground Covers for Northeast Landscapes*
- *Native Trees for Northeast Landscapes*
- *Portland Pollinator Vision Plan*, prepared by students from the Conway School
- *Maine DOT Roadside Guide*

Must Read Online Resources:

- “What is Rewilding?”
- “Leave the Leaves!”
- “Navigating the Nurseries”





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