

Pollinator Pathway Cape Cod: A Collaborative Partnership

By Carol Alper

A group of people were inspired when they heard about the Pollinator Pathway initiative taking place in the country. We wanted to bring the message to Cape Cod, so we launched the Pollinator Pathway Cape Cod (PPCC) as a collaborative effort of nine organizations with a goal of increasing pollinator-friendly habitats and food sources for bees, butterflies, birds, and other pollinating insects across Cape Cod. The founding members are Association to Preserve Cape Cod, Chatham Conservation Foundation, Garden Club of Harwich, Master Gardeners Association of Cape Cod, Nauset Garden Club, Orleans Conservation Trust, Orleans Improvement Association, Orleans Pond Coalition, and the town of Orleans.



We Are Growing!

Over the two years, Pollinator Pathway Cape Cod has grown to 35 participating organizations that include garden clubs, conservation organizations, and business groups. When organizations join, they are encouraged to have their members register their home gardens that support our PPCC principles on the PPCC map, and if the organization maintains any public gardens, they too should be registered. They are provided a packet of starter materials to assist in beginning their own efforts to promote the PPCC. Sharing resources is one of the benefits of working in this collaboration. The participating members provide their own financing for any project they undertake under the Pollinator Pathway Cape Cod banner. Some of the groups donated brochures, banners, and decals for all to use or duplicate. The steering committee sends out a quarterly newsletter to keep all the groups informed of what each is doing.

So far, six of the participating members have built gardens in their towns and we are displaying them on the PPCC webpage. All are predominantly native gardens and are open to the public. Each participating organization is maintaining their own garden. As we add new organizations, we are asking them to either add a native plant garden to the list or supplement plantings in gardens that they maintain by adding more plants that are native.

Recent Successes

We have had some recent successes. We were fortunate this year to have the Hyannis Main Street business group join the pathway and they converted 140 planters on Main Street with native plants. The Master Gardeners of Cape Cod acted as docents to talk to the public during the [Hydrangea Festival](#) a Cape-wide event of garden tours that benefits non-profits. With the current drought on Cape Cod, there has been tremendous interest in native plants that are drought tolerant and that contribute to the environment. This Hyannis initiative received [wonderful local news coverage](#).



One of our earliest successes was promoting and getting the select board of Orleans to approve [a resolution identifying Orleans as a pollinator-friendly community](#).

This recognition has resulted in the town's DPW working with PPCC members to ensure that recent plantings by the town have been native and more appropriate for our drought-prone environment. We are encouraging other towns on the Cape to pursue similar actions in their communities.

Wider Outreach

We also have members who are active on the [Massachusetts Pollinator Network](#), a recently formed organization that is similarly trying to be a collaboration point across that state for residents forming pollinator supportive organizations in their area. This organization advocates for pollinator issues with the legislature and state government agencies. The PPCC members have talked to interested gardeners in communities from Boston to the Berkshires.

We have also participated in festivals, plant sales, farmers markets, garden tours, and other public events to reach out to the public. The response has been very positive. When people add their property to the map, we send them an e-mail to thank them for their participation and send them our newsletter. We are adding butterflies weekly to the map and have over 200 to date.

We plan to cover the map of Cape Cod with butterflies one property at a time!

