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biodiversity • conservation • lawn care  
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## August 2012

By this time every summer, I start noticing the problems in my landscape. Rabbits have nibbled the hostas and coneflower to nubbins; a squash plant has succumbed to squash vine borer; some phlox has developed powdery mildew. Fortunately, the problems I'm seeing are small in the grand scheme. And on the plus side, I'm seeing lots of bees and butterflies this year.

The creatures that visit our gardens, both the pests and the beneficials, are the topic of this month's Newsletter. From duck and voles, to bees and bats, articles examine the state of the critters that harry us and those that help. This month's lead Newsletter article, "Ducks as Effective (and Entertaining) Pest Control," hatched the topic for this week's LinkedIn discussion. ELA's Executive Director's experience introducing ducks into her gardens for pest control this summer was not what she expected. Do you have experience sharing your landscape with ducks? Share your expertise, or see what others might suggest, by following the [ELA LinkedIn conversation](#).

It's free and easy to join LinkedIn. You can learn more at the following links: [Learn More About LinkedIn](#), [Create a LinkedIn Account](#), or [Join the ELA LinkedIn Discussion](#). We hope you'll join in sometime soon. *MS, Editor*



### **Ducks as Effective (and Entertaining) Pest Control** ***Beware of the Fine Print*** **by Penny Lewis**

It comes as no surprise to ELA Newsletter readers that edible landscapes and ecological pest control are both on the rise. Taking nature's lead, more gardeners and farmers are exploring creative solutions beyond drowning slugs or handpicking potato beetles to solve pest problems. In recent years, free range chickens have been welcomed into ornamental and edible landscapes where they assisted with pest control but often damaged the plant material they were tasked with protecting - and they were noisy, very noisy. There had to be a better solution. Enter the adorable ducks. [Read the article.](#)



### **Landscaping for Butterflies and Other Pollinators:** **Exotics can be Useful** **by Sharon Stichter**

Constructed landscapes can provide excellent habitat for many butterflies and other beneficial insects. For butterflies, a complete habitat includes both nectar sources for the adults and larval host plants for the next generation. There are many good sources of information about which plants to use. What is not generally known is that many of our butterfly species here in the northeast and elsewhere have adapted to using non-native and sometimes even invasive plants. In some cases the butterflies no longer use their original native host or nectar plant because it is not easily available or because it is in fact a less robust food source. [Read the article.](#)



### **Compost Tea: Reaping the Organic Rewards by Nate McCullin**

When entering the 2011 growing season I had many questions floating around in my mind regarding the impact of compost and compost tea on the soil and plant health at Garden in the Woods. I was skeptical about believing all the claims being made in the industry as to its benefits, especially the impact it has in this Garden. Within the realm of any organic product there are many variables to consider due to the fact that organic products thrive on biological processes which hinge on factors such as light, temperature and moisture. [Read the article.](#)

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### **Conserving Bumble Bees Guidelines for Creating and Managing Habitat for America's Declining Pollinators by Rich Hatfield, Sarina Jepsen, Eric Mader, Scott Hoffman Black, and Matthew Shepherd**

The use of insecticides and herbicides is detrimental to a healthy community of pollinators. Insecticides by design kill insects, and herbicides reduce floral diversity. Although pesticide use on crops and rangelands is often the primary concern, they are also widely used on natural areas to control invasive species and on recreation sites and gardens. Indeed, the greatest pesticide use (measured as pounds of active ingredient applied per acre) takes place in urban and suburban landscapes. Homeowners have access to a wide array of pesticides with little regulation of their use, and few opportunities for education about the effects of these chemicals. [Read the article.](#)

*This excerpt is reproduced, with permission, from [Conserving Bumble Bees: Guidelines for Creating and Managing Habitat for America's Declining Pollinators](#), published by the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, Portland, OR. For more information or to obtain a copy of the guidelines, please visit <http://www.xerces.org/bumblebees/guidelines/>.*



### **Bats Losing the Battle against White-nose Syndrome by Maureen Sundberg**

Summer evenings in many parts of New England are missing something this year - the swoop of a bat over yards at dusk. Though some might rejoice at a local reduction in the bat population, particularly if the population resides in one's attic, the loss of millions of bats since 2006 comes with a price tag. Reduced numbers of these incredibly efficient insect predators leaves growers with one fewer ecological tools for natural pest control. [Read the article.](#)



### **Little-known Voles Could Be Cause of Your Garden Woes by Sharon Hull**

We all think we know when we have gophers in our gardens, don't we? We see the chewed-off plants, the openings to the tunnels and often, mounds of loose dirt. However, I recently learned that we should also consider the possibility that what we actually have are voles. [Read the article.](#)

*This article was first published in the [Santa Cruz Sentinel](#) on July 13, 2012 and is reprinted with permission from the author.*

### **Emerald Ash Borer Confirmed in CT**

According to Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station and the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, presence of the emerald ash borer (*Agrilus planipennis*) has been confirmed in the Prospect, CT. Introduced in the United States and Canada in the 1990s, the emerald ash borer is now present in 16 states and responsible for killing millions of ash trees. Read details on the [CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection website](#). Photo provided by Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources - Forestry Archive

### **Grab Your Camera**

Sudbury Weed Education and Eradication Team is sponsoring a contest featuring scenes in the Sudbury, Assabet, or Concord River watershed. If you have a great photo from that area, [click for details](#).

### **Researchers Discover the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug's Winter Hideout**

Researchers believe they have identified where brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB) gathers in natural landscapes during winter, and their findings could help farmers manage this invasive insect. Doo-Hyung Lee, a postdoctoral research associate with USDA's Agricultural Research Service, wants to understand precisely what the risks are to growers from BMSB overwintering in natural landscapes. Lee works with a team of scientists led by Tracy Leskey at the Appalachian Fruit Research Station in West Virginia. "We know BMSB aggregate inside human-made structures in very high numbers," Lee explains. "However, in the natural landscape, BMSB are spread out. They can be anywhere. They can remain unchecked by any management strategies, spreading randomly and building their population." [Read the full article online...](#)

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### **ELA Annual Meeting**

ELA celebrated 20 years of providing ecological education at its annual meeting on July 24th. During the past year, in addition to its hallmark annual Conference & Eco-Marketplace, ELA hosted a 2nd Annual Summit, organized over 20 Eco-tours and Roundtable discussions, continued to publish the monthly online Newsletter, and worked collaboratively on projects with a number of organizations including the Boston Flower & Garden Show and New England Wild Flower Society.

We would also like to welcome two new members to the ELA Board of Directors for the upcoming year. Scott Kleekamp, is an associate at the Massachusetts based law firm of Bingham McCutchen with a background and interest in landscaping that goes back decades. Golden Love, is a garden ecologist, a certified ARSCA Rainwater Catchment Professional, Greywater Action certified installer, landscape contractor, California Community College credentialed instructor, and principle of Love's Gardens based in Santa Cruz, CA.

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### **August Gleanings**

- [UMass Extension](#) offers pest alerts and plant diagnostics. Check their website for a complete list.
- [The Propane Education Research Council](#) has an incentive program for landscaping professionals to purchase and use propane lawn equipment and participate in data collection.
- Northeastern IPM Center has released a new [Guide for Integrated Pest Management](#) for affordable housing.
- [First Annual Edible Garden Tour](#); Santa Cruz; August 25.
- [Urban/Altered/Disturbed Soil Workshop](#); Augusta Bond Brook Trail System Site at the end of the Augusta Airport, Augusta, ME; Thursday, September 6, 9am - 3pm.

- New England Nursery Association Centennial Celebration; Tower Hill Botanic Garden, Boylston, MA; Thursday, September 13, 10am - 2pm.
- Defusing Landowner/Conservation Conflicts: Protecting Habitat for Endangered Species & Other Wildlife with Conservation Design; Thursday, September 13, 7 - 9pm.
- St. Anne's Wetland Restoration Workshop; Melbourne, KY; September 7 & 8.
- Lakeshore Avenue Plant Exchange; 3811 Lakeshore Ave, Oakland, CA; Saturday, October 20, noon -4 pm.
- 2012 Green Industry Conference; Louisville, KY; October 24-26.

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We hope that you enjoy this edition of the ELA newsletter.

We welcome your comments at [ela.info@comcast.net](mailto:ela.info@comcast.net).

Maureen Sundberg, ELA Newsletter Editor