

Enjoy this issue as you explore principles and practices that support the living landscape.

January 2021

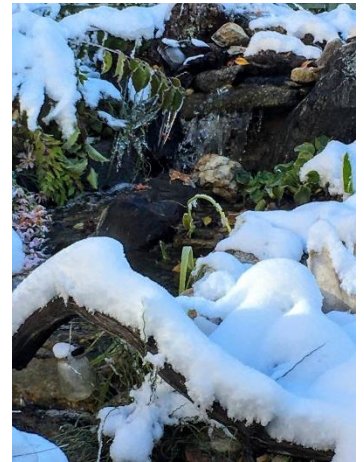


Advocating for ecological landscape practices
through education, collaboration, and outreach.

From The Editor

Happy New Year! Despite the chaotic start to 2021, I find solace in familiar winter routines. I am contemplating last year's garden (the good, the bad, and the, well, that totally didn't work), perusing seed catalogs, and generally trying to jigsaw more plants into my small suburban lot. After listening to Dan Jaffe Wilder's December presentation "How to Grow Food Anywhere," I plan to add more edible plants to my garden.

As ELA's audience expands, we're reaching further afield to bring new and exciting topics to the **Focus on Sustainability webinar series**. In March, **ELA Virtual Conference & Eco-Marketplace** will introduce a diverse group of speakers and a range of topics sure to encourage, tempt, and inspire you to take full advantage of the 2021 gardening season. In this issue of the newsletter, join Trevor Smith on the epic journey that was 2020. Then find out what happens to black plastic pots when the planting is done as Marie Chieppo dives into the dirt on plastic pots. Then follow Barry Draycott as he rediscovers the book *The Closing Circle: Nature, Man & Technology*, written in 1971, and finds it still relevant in 2021. Find a cozy corner, grab a hot beverage, and take a moment to enjoy this issue. *GRH*



COVID's Pendulum

by Trevor Smith

Goodbye 2020 and good riddance!!! Though we are not out of the woods yet, I couldn't help but feel a weight lifted as the ball fell at the stroke of midnight. 2020 started like any other year, with hope and possibility. The anticipation of a new season combined with knowing how crazy things would be in spring felt like I was on a rollercoaster about to hit that big drop. All I could do was hold on as the world rushed past. Little did we know that drop would be less like a rollercoaster and more akin to Niagara Falls. **Read the article.**

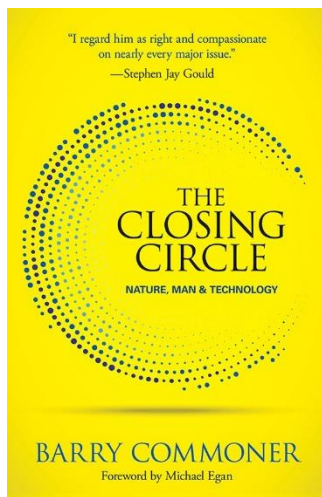


Update

Plastic Pots Used in the Green Industry

by Marie Chieppo

In 2019, the Association of Professional Landscape Designers (APLD) sustainability committee asked me to research and write about plastic horticultural pots use and disposal methods. Because plastic is so easy to use, billions of plastic pots were being produced without a blueprint for what would happen as demand increased. Unfortunately, we've produced so much plastic that we can't possibly recycle it all. **Read the article.**



The Four Laws of Ecology

by Barry Draycott

Last year I found a copy of *The Closing Circle, Nature, Man & Technology* by ecologist Barry Commoner. I started rereading it and was stunned to find in the first chapter, even before he states the Four Laws of Ecology, Commoner discusses the fundamental interaction of nutrients, humus, soil microbes, plant health, and climate! What is amazing is the book was published in 1971!! [Read the article.](#)



Mitigating the Effects of Climate Change on Grassland Butterflies

by Angela Laws

Declining biodiversity has been making its way into the news more and more as researchers continue to record losses in plant and animal populations. Insects are no exception, and several recent studies that use long-term data sets show a marked reduction in insect abundance. A variety of factors contribute to these insect declines, including the loss of habitat, pesticides, invasive species, and, increasingly, climate change. [Read the article.](#)



Five Things I Learned This Year

by Cathy Weston

Back in my professional working days, I relished the quiet time around the holidays. I went into the office and used the time to clean and organize files, make a priority list of the next year's goals, and start my year-end review. Now, as an ecological gardener, I do something similar. I develop next year's planting projects and reflect on what I have learned on the journey to ecological gardening. [Read the article.](#)

Highlighting Our Company Members

Green City Growers is a mission-driven company transforming underutilized spaces into biodiverse food production landscapes, providing our clients with immediate access to hyper-local food while inspiring self-sufficiency through engagement.





Founded in 1910, Brooklyn Botanic Garden (BBG) is an urban botanic garden that connects people to the world of plants, fostering delight and curiosity while inspiring an appreciation and sense of stewardship of the environment. Situated on 52 acres in the heart of Brooklyn, the Garden is home to over 12,000 kinds of plants and hosts over 800,000 visitors annually.

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January - March, 2021

ELA News

Inside ELA

Thank you for all of your support and engagement, especially over the last year. As you know, the pandemic forced us to pivot our programming from being largely in-person and often hands-on to being entirely online and virtual. This work hasn't been easy, but for those of you who attended any of the fall conferences (Season's End Summit, Regenerative Designs for Resilient Landscapes, and the Ecological Plant Conference) you know that these have been truly wonderful educational events.

Though nothing can replace the networking and social contact many of us look for in an in-person conference, the virtual events create an experience with opportunities for both group and one-on-one interactions. Each participant can decide their level of engagement – camera on or off (though we love to see your faces!), listen and take notes, speak up and ask questions, stay in one "room" or move from around – just like at an in-person conference. For those of you who will attend the **27th ELA Conference and Virtual Eco-Marketplace** on March 3 & 4th, I am certain you'll appreciate this new system, because there are so many excellent talks on the menu!

Our industry has long been led and dominated by the voices of white men. For the last several years the ELA intentionally worked to promote and amplify voices of women and people of color in the industry. The more voices and perspectives we hear, the better able we are to understand one another in this world. This year's annual conference features a diverse

group of speakers from all over the country with a range of backgrounds and areas of expertise. We are honored to have so many incredibly talented people sharing their knowledge, experience, research, and insight with us in March. Join us on Wednesday March 3rd and hear experts talk about Climate Change and its effect on invasive species, carbon sequestration, and forest ecology, or about Building Resilience with food justice, regenerative land care, and water infiltration. Thursday March 4th offers three concurrent tracks – Focus on Design, Focus on Practice and Idea Exchanges – with many interesting topics and experts, including a lunchtime panel on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Horticulture. We encourage you to join us with open hearts and open minds for this important conversation.

Rie Macchiarolo

President, Board of Directors

Wednesday Walks Are Back March 31

The Ecological Landscape Alliance (ELA) announces a return of the **Wednesday Walks in the Garden**. For 12 weeks beginning on March 31st, ELA will again offer free webinar presentations as respite to gardeners across the country and beyond who continue to struggle with the stress of the COVID pandemic. Presentations will cover a wide range of gardening topics from the mysteries of soil microbes to foliage-framed focal points. This series will inform, delight, and inspire gardeners and designers of all backgrounds. We hope that you'll join our Wednesday Walks in the Garden for a nature-filled diversion as we introduce new plants, new practices, and inspiration to get outdoors – a sanctuary in the midst of continuing lockdowns. More information and registration will be available on February 1st.

Thank you to all who generously donated on Giving Tuesday and throughout 2020.

Membership Milestone

Congratulations to ELA's 1000th member, Karen Lavin. And thank you to all of our members as we continue to grow our ecological community and expand the reach of nature-based stewardship.

Virtual Coffee January 20

ELA's Virtual Volunteer Coffee continues on Wednesday, January 20, 12:30-1:00. Call in to tell us your idea for a program, or about the great speaker you heard or book you read. To get the call-in number email Maureen@ecolandscaping.org.

Enjoy all the ELA Membership Benefits - including free and discounted events.

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Gleanings

Feds Delay Legal Protection for Monarchs

Federal officials on December 15 declared the monarch butterfly “a candidate” for threatened or endangered status but said no action would be taken for several years because of the many other species awaiting that designation. Read more at [AP News](#).

Greening Pakistan with Seed Balls

Pakistan has one of the highest deforestation rates in Asia, but these residents are hoping to change that with a little bit of ingenuity — and a ball of fun. Read more at [Temasek](#).

Books and Films to While Away the Winter Blues

Join the Garden Conservancy for their fall 2020 Literary Webinar Series. Books highlighted are filled with horticultural and design inspiration, stories of garden creation, and portraits of the people who are changing the way we think about the world of plants. Read more at [The Garden Conservancy](#). Then be sure to check out their [Gardens for a Changing World](#) film series.

Is Plastic Changing the New England Coastline?

Forget about sharks. The real menace in marine waters is plastic. Southern New England, like the rest of the globe, has a plastic problem. Some local activists have ideas on how to solve it. Read more at [EcoRI News](#).

Insomniac Bees

Insomnia weighs heavily on humans, and the same is true of bees. After just three days of low-level exposure to pesticides, bees became relative insomniacs, staying up late into the night. One result is that bees get tired and confused and lose their way back to the hive. Read more in [Sierra](#).

Can Breeding Program Save North American Ash Tree?

The Asian emerald ash borer is the most devastating insect ever to strike a North American tree. Forest geneticist Jennifer Koch is working to create ash varieties that can fend off the emerald ash borer so that the species can reclaim its historic place in North American forests. Read more at [Science Magazine](#).

A New Fertilizer, Can It Be Pee?

Manufacturing the fertilizer on which much of modern agriculture depends takes a heavy environmental toll. Commercial fertilizer consists of nitrogen and phosphorus, but there's an endless stream of renewable phosphorus and nitrogen available: yes, we're talking about urine. Read more at [Anthropocene Magazine](#).

Urban Greening as Simple as Sowing Seeds

Many cities are working to create new green spaces, but success is mixed. A new study found the most effective and least expensive way of greening vacant urban lots is with broadcast seeding. Read more at [Cary Institute](#).

RI Wild Plant Society Grant Opportunity

The Rhode Island Wild Plant Society offers an annual grant to aid individuals in the study of wild plants and their habitats. To qualify, you must be an educator, a member of a Rhode Island botanical or environmental association, or a student in a field related to botany or environmental studies. Read more at [Rhode Island Wild Plant Society](#).

Does Climate Change Worry Drop During a Global Pandemic?

Apparently, humans have an infinite capacity to worry. Two new studies one in the UK and one in the US, showed that COVID-19 wasn't reducing people's climate concerns. This is good news for climate activists, but the question remains: How do we increase people's concern about the climate crisis? Read more at [Anthropocene Magazine](#).

Man's Best Friend Sniffs Out Spotted Lanternfly

Spotted Lanternflies are an invasive insect that can devastate vineyards or destroy crops. Their eggs are odorless and hard for humans to spot, but dogs can be trained to find them. Read more at [NPR](#).

Non-Native Plants are Contributing to Insect Decline

The impact of introduced plants on native biodiversity has emerged as a hot-button issue in ecology. But recent research provides new evidence that the displacement of native plant communities is a key cause of a collapse in insect populations and is affecting birds as well. Read more at [Yale 360](#).

Photographer Captures Urban Birds of Prey

Rhode Island Photographer Peter Green spent hours photographing Providence, RI birds of prey, for his new book, which tells the stories of these urban birds and the people who work to protect them. Read more at [EcoRI News](#).

Landscape Story Slam

Native Plant Trust presents *Tales from the Field*. Have a story to tell? Join fellow plant geeks as they share their most riveting and hilarious tales from the field, then cast your vote for the night's best storyteller! [Submit your story](#) by January 20. Read more at [Native Plant Trust](#).

Calling All Artists

Tower Hill Botanic Garden is soliciting proposals for Wild Hideaways: Designed for Adventure, a temporary outdoor exhibit showcasing artistic, interactive, outdoor structures, that bring joy, inspire imaginative play, and spark a curiosity for the natural world and its connections to the built environment. Wild Hideaways will run June 1-September 30, 2021. Read more at [Tower Hill Botanic Garden](#).

Events to Note

Events to Note (listings indicate local time unless otherwise noted)

At this time, most events are being held online; however, check with organizations to confirm the most up-to-date information.

January

January 15 - **Building Pollinator Habitat in Towns and Cities: Pacific Northwest Region**; 10:00am PT.

January 16-24 - **Northeast Organic Seed Conference**; times vary.

January 19 - **Pesticides & Pollinators in the Landscape: Understanding the Risks, Choosing Solutions**; 8:30-10:30 PT.

January 19 - **Woodland Connections for Women, New England Forest Ecology**; 7:00-8:00pm ET.

January 19 - **Invasive Insect Webinar Series: Invasive Earthworms in MA and Forest Health Updates**; 10:00am-12:10pm ET.

January 19, 26, February 2, 9, 16, 23 - **Garden Design for Homeowners 101**; 7:00-8:30pm ET.

January 19, 26, February 2 - **QGIS for ALL: From LiDAR to Topos with QGIS**; 3:00-4:30pm ET.

January 20&27; February 3&10 **ELA Class**→**History and Principles of Landscape Design**; 1:30-4:30pm ET.

January 21&22 - **Guiding Theory into Reality: It Don't Mean a Thing if the Landscape Don't Sing**; 1:00-4:30pm ET.

January 21&22 - **Habitat Landscaping: Landscape Design Choices That Support Biodiversity**; 9:30am-12:00noon ET.

January 21 - **Efficiency in Greenhouse Growing**; 4:00-5:00pm ET.

January 22 **ELA Webinar**→**Grassroot Seed Propagation of Native Plants**; 12:00-1:00pm ET.

January 23 - **All the Best About Blueberries**; 10:30am-12:00pm ET.

January 25, March 1, May 15 - **Natural Landscape Design**; 9:30am-12:30pm.

January 25-27 - **Great Lakes Trade Exposition**; 8:00am-5:30pm ET.

January 26 - **Spotted Lanternfly and Successful Biological Control of Winter Moth in Eastern New England**; 10:00am-12:10pm.

January 27 **ELA Webinar**→**Expanding Biodiversity – Attracting Birds to Your Yard**; 12:00-1:00pm ET.

January 27 - **Building Greener Futures: Green Jobs Training and Bioswales in New Haven**; 1:00-2:30pm ET.

January 28 - **Restoring Resilient Tropical Forests**; 7:00-8:00pm ET.

January 28 - **Landscaping with Wild Edibles**; 4:00-5:00pm ET.

January 28&29 - **Guiding Theory into Reality: It Don't Mean a Thing if the Landscape Don't Sing**; 9:00am-12:30pm ET.

January 30 - **Growing Grapes in New England**; 10:30am-12:00pm ET.

February

February 1-22 **ELA Class**→**NGICP: National Green Infrastructure Certification Program**; 7 days 12:00-5:00pm ET.

February 3 **ELA Webinar**→**The American Oaks: Diversity, Ecology, and Identification**; 12:00-1:00pm ET.

February 5&12 **ELA Class**→**Garden Design for Child Development**; 10:30am-1:30pm ET.

February 7,14,21 **ELA Class**→**Plant Nutrients**; 10:30am-12:00pm ET.

February 8 **ELA Webinar**→**Regenerative Design – How Living in Agreement with Nature Helps Organizations Thrive**; 1:00-2:00pm ET.

February 9 - **Restoration for Yourself and the Landscape: Connecting with Good Medicine**; 3:00-4:30pm ET.

February 9 - **Exploring Land Protection Tools**; 6:30-8:30pm ET.

February 9 - **The 1-2-3 Approach for Spotted-Wing Drosophila, Brown Marmorated Stinkbug Management, and Spotted Lanternfly Monitoring**; 10:00am-12:10pm ET.

February 10 **ELA Webinar**→**Oak Red-List Project – Main Threats to Oaks and Saving Oaks from Extinction**; 12:30-1:30pm ET.

February 11 - **Nature's Best Hope: An Introduction with Doug Tallamy**; 4:00-5:00pm.

February 13 - **Home Orchard Pruning**; 10:30am-12:00pm ET.

February 20 - **Home Orchard Pruning**; 10:30am-12:00pm ET.

February 27 - **(Micro) Organisms in the Orchard**; 10:30am-12:00pm ET.

March

March 3-4 **ELA Conference & Eco-Marketplace**; 8:00am-5:30pm ET.

March 5,6,13 **CT&RI NOFA Winter Conference**; all virtual.

March 6 - **Insects: Pests and Pollinators**; 10:30am-12:00pm ET.

March 13 - **Backyard Brambles**; 10:30am-12:00pm ET.

March 7,14,21,28, April 11 - **Site Grading Fundamentals: Go Back to Basics and Sharpen Your Skills**; 3:00-5:00pm ET.

March 9 - **Environmental Art in the Landscape: Connecting People to Place**; 3:00-4:30pm ET.

March 19-20 - **Land Conservation Conference: Building a Stronger Land Movement through Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**; online both days.

Anytime

URI Cooperative Extension Learn at Home Webinar Series

Submit events by the 10th of the month for inclusion in the upcoming newsletter.



Perfect Earth Project

Head Gardener/Educator The Perfect Earth Project, an East Hampton based 501 (c)(3) nonprofit that promotes toxic-free, nature-based lawns and landscapes is looking to hire an experienced gardener to care for our 4-acre experimental/teaching landscape in Springs (East Hampton) NY and to assist with educational and outreach activities. Position is year-round, full time and includes nearby housing. [Click for more information.](#)



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Whether you are located in the area of our upcoming events or in some distant landscape, you are invited to participate in ELA collaborations and discussions by joining the Ecological Landscape Alliance discussion group on LinkedIn. The ELA discussion group is open to both ELA members and non-members from around the world and participation is growing each week. Through these discussions you can share information, get answers to landscape problems, and learn new perspectives on challenging ecological issues. Joining LinkedIn is free and it is easy to join. [Join the ELA LinkedIn Discussion.](#) We look forward to hearing from you soon!

We hope that you enjoy this edition of the ELA newsletter and welcome your comments at ela.info@comcast.net. Georgia Harris, ELA Newsletter Editor

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