



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

## From The Editor

"If your knees aren't green by the end of the day, you ought to seriously re-examine your life."

—Calvin, ("Calvin and Hobbes," Bill Watterson)

You wouldn't believe how long I pondered what to write in this letter. These last two years have been a whirlwind of topics addressed and issues given a wide berth. In my work for ELA, I realized that groups of like-minded folks around the country are working to make our environment safer for insects, people, and plants, for which all of us are grateful. Sometimes people lack understanding of the ecological world and how we interconnect with nature and each other, and this causes them to make decisions that aren't in keeping with best ecological practices. But sometimes, we have small victories to celebrate, like when we pick that first ripe berry or when a new garden combination is sublime in its blend of colors and buzz of pollinators. Let's begin this summer with a celebration for all the little creatures and wonders that make our planet so magical.



It's with mixed feelings that I announce that this will be my last letter to you. I can never be sure that anyone reads these letters, but I imagine readers out there skimming over these words. It's been a great honor to write to you every month. Working with Penny and Maureen has been a joy; these women are both supportive and wicked smart. Please see *ELA News* for more detail.

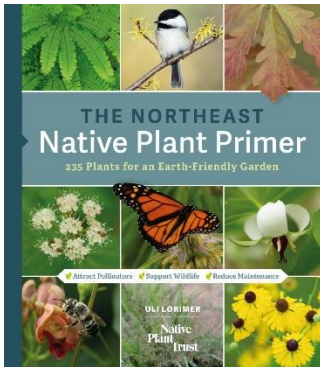
Ecological landscaping's end goal is a paradigm shift from lawns to meadows to embracing insects. In the article "Ecological Amenity or Weedy Pit?" the authors study rain gardens in two different regions of the country and glean how to change people's perceptions of native rain garden plantings. "Lawn to Meadow #2" revisits the 2020 Lawn Murder project to see how the experiment fares. We have an excerpt from Uli Lorimer's new book *Native Plant Primer for the Northeast*. The takeaway, this is a book you will want to own for the photos alone; the advice and snappy prose are an added bonus. In an excerpt from *Wild by Design* by Laura J. Martin, we learn how a group of women in 1901 started The Wildflower Preservation Society. Martin offers us a glimpse into what it means to be a wild ecological restorationist. The challenge will be to find some downtime to enjoy these great reads. Enjoy the summer, the heat, the rain, and the bugs. Happy Gardening! *GRH*



### Ecological Amenity or Weedy Pit?

by Kate Cholakis and Eliza Pennypacker

Rain gardens, a type of green stormwater infrastructure (GSI), can provide habitat while reducing the amount of polluted stormwater runoff leaving a property. Why might a rain garden in the front yard be problematic? Acknowledging key differences between rain gardens and the residential "landscape norm" is key to changing perceptions. [Read the article.](#)



## The Northeast Native Plant Primer

by Uli Lorimer

Do you want a garden that makes a real difference? Choose plants native to our Northeast region. The rewards will benefit you, your yard, and the environment—from reducing maintenance tasks to attracting earth-friendly pollinators such as native birds, butterflies, and bees. We must envision a future in which wild creatures of all shapes and sizes are afforded space in our built environment. [Read the article.](#)



## Wild by Design

by Laura J. Martin

Native wildflower gardening is more popular than ever. But a century ago, this was not the case. Wildflowers persist in the numbers they do today because of the activism and research of a group of women ecologists who in 1901 defied gender norms and founded the discipline of ecological restoration. [Read the article.](#)



## Lawn to Meadow Season Three

by Leslie Duthie

This gardener decided to kill part of her lawn two years ago when we were encouraged to stay home due to the pandemic. The barren lawn has been replaced with a shade and sun meadow with straightforward, manageable steps that even a novice gardener can copy. Now in its third spring, Leslie assesses the project, recounting surprises, successes, and lessons learned. [Read the article.](#)

**In the Field: In-Person Sessions  
on Ecology-based Landscape Design**  
Developed by Larry Weaner



**NDAL** NEW DIRECTIONS IN THE  
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Photo: Kew Gardens at Wakehurst, U.K.

*featuring:*

**Manitoga, Garrison, NY**  
July 7, 2022

**Native Plant Trust,  
Framingham, MA**  
July 22, 2022

**NDAL.org**

# ELA News

## Farewell with a Note of Appreciation

The office team at ELA has always been a small, versatile, and passionate group committed to ELA's mission to promote sustainable and regenerative landscape practices. But, our work could not have been accomplished without the support and help of a larger group.

We take this opportunity to thank ELA's Members. We thank you for your financial support, your many notes of appreciation, your eye for detail (typo, anyone?), and your environmental stewardship efforts.

We also thank the many subject matter experts who continue to further the ELA mission by sharing their knowledge and experience with the ELA community through lectures, webinars, tours, and *ELA Newsletter* articles. By generously sharing your expertise with thousands of event attendees and readers, you make an invaluable contribution to the cause of healthy land practices.

We have enjoyed being part of the ELA community and collaborating with so many amazing people. Next month will see some additional office changes:

- Penny Lewis, ELA's Executive Director, concluded her tenure with the organization at the end of December after over 16 years.
- Maureen Sundberg, ELA's Executive Assistant, former *ELA Newsletter* Editor, and former Board member, completes her time with ELA at the end of June after 15 years.
- Georgia Harris, *ELA Newsletter* Editor and the force that kept the ELA community in-the-know about ELA news, environmental trends, and events for the past two years, will also complete her service with ELA at the end of June.

After June 30th, you may continue to connect with ELA at [Office@Ecolandscaping.org](mailto:Office@Ecolandscaping.org).

We hope ELA remains a critical voice encouraging healthy land choices for people, wildlife, and the planet. Thank you for all you have done and will continue to do to further a vital cause.

With great appreciation and fond memories,  
*Penny Lewis      Maureen Sundberg      Georgia Harris*

## From the Board of Directors

Dear ELA community,

This was a banner year for your Ecological Landscape Alliance. We continued to expand programming with the addition of Eco-Answers for members and continued a robust schedule of webinars. Our Annual Conference and Eco-Marketplace was held virtually for the second year in a row and was an even bigger success than last year. Thank you to those of you who participated and gave feedback about the conference. We aim to continue offering programs that are on the leading edge of ecological topics, research, and practices from a wide range of voices and perspectives.

As many of you know, in December we said goodbye to our long-time Executive Director, Penny Lewis. Penny led ELA to heights many of us could never have anticipated, including double digit membership growth, the impressive slate of educational programs you've come to expect, and a reputation for being at the forefront of ecological approaches to landcare. Later this year, we will also say goodbye to Georgia Harris, our newsletter editor for the past few years, and Maureen Sundberg, our Executive Assistant. Georgia joined ELA's team at the beginning of the pandemic and managed the newsletter during a time when many things felt uncertain. Maureen has been an integral part of the ELA community for more than a decade, serving as a board member, editing the newsletter for 11 years, and stepping in to work as Executive Assistant when it was clear the work required to run ELA had grown beyond what one person could reasonably expect to accomplish on their own. We thank these passionate, talented, and dedicated folks who have shaped ELA in countless ways.



When Penny first announced her departure in 2021, the ELA board looked inward to reflect on where we have been and where the organization is going. We updated our **Vision, Mission, and Values** to ensure we had clear direction about the organization's future, and we plan to complete a new strategic plan over the next year. In the coming weeks, we will introduce our new staff team. We're thrilled to have them join us, and we know they'll ensure that you continue to receive timely updates, quick responses to your questions, and outstanding educational content.

As always, please visit our website to learn more about upcoming events and programs, including the 10th annual Focus on Sustainability webinar series, and our three fall conferences: Season's End Summit, Regenerative Solutions for Resilient Landscapes, and the Ecological Plant Conference.

If you're looking for more ecological information, be sure to check out the website where you can **search for newsletter articles by topic**.

We are excited about what is ahead for ELA and look forward to sharing more with you soon!

Rie Macchiarolo, President  
Mark Richardson, Vice President

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## Gleanings

### Living Tree Bridges

They're not the world's tallest or longest bridges, but a string of humble river crossings sculpted from tree roots in India are engineering marvels that contain lessons for modern architects. The bridges stretch across rivers and ravines in India's mountainous Meghalaya plateau, connecting villages and allowing farmers to access their land. Read more at [NPR](#).

### The Dark Side of Light Pollution

Governments, cities, companies, and communities worldwide are taking action to address a significant and growing threat to wildlife, including many species of migratory birds – light pollution. Artificial light alters natural patterns of light and dark within ecosystems and contributes to the deaths of millions of birds each year. Read more at [Tired Earth](#).



### Best Mulching Practices

Mulching is a practice that many gardeners learn to do by rote: an annual application, following rules with little regard to the various contexts. But ecological gardeners amend soils and mulch only in response to the garden's needs. We must also consider newer research on the benefits of not mulching, such as making space for the many soil-dwelling organisms who can't penetrate shredded woodchips. Read more at [Brooklyn Bridge Park](#).

### How to Manage Weeds on Your Farm

"Manage Weeds on Your Farm" is a definitive guide to understanding agricultural weeds and how to manage them efficiently, effectively, and ecologically – for organic and conventional farmers alike. The ecological approach to weed management seeks first to understand the biology and behavior of problem weeds and then to develop an integrated set of control

strategies that exploit their weaknesses. Read more at [Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education](#).

### **Efforts to Save North America's Most Endangered Bird Species Are Succeeding**

Some good news! A captive breeding program has quickly turned around the precipitous decline of the Florida Grasshopper Sparrow. On June 1, a tiny Florida Grasshopper Sparrow scurried out of an outdoor aviary and onto conservation lands south of Orlando, joining a fragile but recovering population of the most endangered birds on the continent. Read more at [Audubon](#).

### **A Difficult Site Becomes a Lovely Garden**

James Golden's New Jersey garden, Federal Twist, taught him that a gardener must match the plants to the place – however difficult that seems. It had to be an ecological garden, almost by default," he said. "I had to figure out what I could grow – plants that were adapted to this ecology." Read more at [The NY Times](#).

### **Amazon vs. Rusty Patch Bumblebee**

A tiny bee became a big problem for an Amazon-fueled expansion in Illinois. The Chicago Rockford International Airport wants to grow. Standing in its way is an odd slice of remnant prairie, home to the rusty patched bumblebee. Read more at [WBEZ Chicago](#).

### **USDA Kills Thousands of Native Species**

An obscure division of the US government had a busy – and ruthless – year in 2021, killing more than 1.75 million animals across the country, at a rate of about 200 creatures every hour. Activists condemn Wildlife Services, a division of the USDA, which says deaths are necessary to protect farmers and public health. Read more at [The Guardian](#).

### **Piet Oudolf Designs New Garden**

All Oudolf's designs start with the plants. Whichever site he's working on – here it's Hauser & Wirth's new gallery in Minorca, Spain – he first learns about what palette of species will grow well in that climate and soil. A garden isn't like an exhibition, which is installed for just a few months; the plantings must continue to evolve over the years. Read more at [The NY Times](#).

### **Olmsted's 200th Birthday**

It's Frederick Law Olmsted's **200th birthday** this month, and many people are giving the father of American landscape architecture his due. "The enjoyment of scenery employs the mind without fatigue and yet exercises it; tranquilizes it and yet enlivens it; and thus, through the influence of the mind over the body gives the effect of refreshing rest and reinvigoration to the whole system." – Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. Read more at [The Cultural Landscape Foundation](#).

### **Iconic Wildflower in Peril**

Among North American wildflowers, few are as beloved and culturally relevant as Trillium. A new report led by the ABQ BioPark, Nature Serve, and Mt. Cuba Center analyzed risk factors to these plants and found that 32 percent of all North American Trillium species or varieties are threatened with extinction. Read More at [Mt. Cuba Center](#).

### **Invasive Toxic Hammerhead Worm Found in Rhode Island**

The one thing you don't want to do if you find a hammerhead worm is touch it, or let your pets, including backyard chickens, eat it. Hammerhead worms produce a neurotoxin, **tetrodotoxin**, which is also found in puffer fish. Read more at [Eco Rhode Island News](#).

### **Native Garden Tours MetroWest Boston**

The Native Pollinator Task Force (NPTF) is hosting tours of public display Pollination Preservation Gardens (PPG) throughout the month of June. These tours are designed to demonstrate how MCA members and NPTF Ambassadors can design and install their own public display PPG's and how to spread the word in their communities. The goal of the NPTF is to have at least one public display Pollination Preservation Garden in each of the 36 communities in the MCA region. Read more at [Native Pollinator Task Force Garden Tours](#).

# Events to Note

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

Many events continue to be held online; check with organizations to confirm the most up-to-date information.

### June

June 16 **Gardening with the Seasons: Summer**; 7:00-8:30pm PT.

June 17 **Olmstead Bicentennial Gala**; Chicago, IL; 7:00-9:00pm.

June 22 **ELA Eco-Answers**→**Going Electric in the Landscape: Battery-Powered Options**; 6:30-7:30pm ET.

June 24 **Regenerative Agriculture – Berheim’s Edible Garden**; 12:00-1:00pm ET.

June 28 **Microscopy, Vermi-composting & Home Gardening**; 5:00pm ET.

June 29 **Composting: An Ecological Perspective**; 7:00pm ET.

June 30 **Summer Tree Summit – Protection & Management of Mature Urban Trees**; 12:00-2:00pm ET.

### July

July 6 **Traditional Indigenous Knowledge and Ecological Science: A Restorative Pairing**; 2:30-4:45pm ET.

July 14 **Down to Earth, MNLA Summer Conference**; Hopkinton, MA; 7:30am-1:00pm.

July 19 **Landscape Lessons Learned: The Educational Value of “Mistakes”**; 2:30-3:45pm ET.

July 21 **Inclusive Placemaking: Creating Urban Habitats and Sanctuary**; 1:30-3:45pm ET.

July 27 **The Perennial Ground Layer: Context and Creativity**; 9:30-11:45am ET.

July 27 **Cultivating Community Through the Creation of Nourishing Gardens**; 2:30-3:45pm ET.

### August

August 1 **Perennial Plant Association National Symposium**; Lancaster, PA; 9:30am-3:15pm.

August 3 **ELA Eco-Answers**→**Tree Health and Longevity**; 6:30-7:30pm ET.

August 20 **ELA Eco-Tour**→**Flying Trillium Gardens and Preserve**; Liberty, NY; 10:00am-12:00pm.

August 24 **ELA Webinar**→**Native Plant Gardens: Designing for Beauty**; 2:00-3:00pm.

### Anytime

#### URI Cooperative Extension Learn at Home Webinar Series

##### Deep Roots: Native Plants at Noon

FIRST Fridays; 4:00-4:40 ET on **Instagram Live**, experienced Black women farmers answer audience questions about gardening, livestock, agroforestry, plant medicine, and food preservation.

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



ELA shares job posts as a courtesy to our community, no endorsement implied. Postings will run for two months. Employers are asked to notify ELA if jobs fill before the second posting.

**Offshoots** seeks a highly motivated and experienced Landscape Foreman/Field Supervisor to oversee planting installations and run a small horticultural installation crew on residential and commercial landscape and garden

installations. Candidates must have previous field experience working on landscape installation teams. Candidates will be working directly with the Director of Landscape Operations to lead in the installation of projects, do site visits and purchase materials. Jobs will include planting and softscape installations and maintenance. Please visit our website for more information on our horticulture installation services: [www.offshootsinc.com](http://www.offshootsinc.com). Focused on creating productive landscapes that provide ecological, social, and economic benefits, Offshoots, Inc. is a landscape architecture, planning and horticultural installation company in Boston. For more information, contact email [nelle@offshootsinc.com](mailto:nelle@offshootsinc.com).



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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 [office@ecolandscaping.org](mailto:office@ecolandscaping.org). Georgia Harris, ELA Newsletter Editor