Some of the very basic BACKYARD HABITAT Resources OR
★ “Best Books for a Backyard Naturalist’s Library”
recommended by Patricia Sutton
patclaysutton@comcast.net
www.patandclaysutton.com

FOUNDATION of Backyard Habitat

RETHINKING THE AMERICAN LAWN:

★ Any / All of Sara Stein’s books: Noah’s Garden (Restoring the Ecology of our own Back Yards), My Weeds (A Gardener’s Botany), Planting Noah’s Garden (Further Adventures in Backyard Ecology).


★ Wild Ones: Native Plants, Natural Landscapes – www.for-wild.org/ This website addresses problems homeowners have with local weed control ordinances and shares a “model municipal ordinance” and ways to implement it in your community.

★ Cape May Point’s model Landscape Ordinance (http://www.anjec.org/pdfs/CoastalHabitats2007.pdf – see pages 20-21 – or print pages 22-23) has kept stone lawns and cleared lots at a minimum. The result has been a rural seaside community where wildlife has a chance.

NATIVE PLANTS ARE KEY:


★ Designing Gardens with Flora of the American East, by Carolyn Summers. Rutgers University Press, 2010. This excellent guidebook for garden professionals (and the general public) is an in-depth look at our love affair with nonnative plants; showcases eastern native plants that can correct this situation.

BACKGROUND RESOURCES ON BACKYARD HABITAT
There are dozens of books that fall into this category, though many focus on other parts of the country, and, beware, some are actually for gardening in England and Europe.

★ NJ Audubon’s web site: www.njaudubon.org Under “Birds & Nature,” click on “Create a Backyard Habitat” to access a series of pages on “The World of Backyard Habitat.”

★ The following websites network / showcase those teaching about and practicing wildlife habitat gardening: www.ecosystemgardening.com ; www.beautifulwildlifegarden.com ; www.nativeplantwildlifegarden.com

TREES, SHRUBS, VINES, WILDFLOWERS, and WEEDS

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TREES, SHRUBS, VINES, WILDFLOWERS, and WEEDS (continued):

★ American Wildlife & Plants (A Guide to Wildlife Food Habits), by Alexander Martin, Herbert Zim, and Arnold Nelson. Dover Publications, Inc., 1951. One can look up a specific bird and learn the native plants it feeds upon or one can look up a native plant and learn the birds / animals that feed upon it.

★ The Sibley Guide to Trees, by David Allen Sibley. Alfred A. Knopf, 2009. If you wish to ID the trees on your property, in your neighborhood, or anywhere in the U.S., this is THE book that will enable you do so because it covers not only native species, but many non-natives as well.


★ Shrubs & Vines of New Jersey and the Mid-Atlantic States, by Christopher Martine. NJ Forest Service, 2002. Excellent, though does include a number of non-natives interspersed (so read carefully).

★ Newcomb’s Wildflower Guide, by Lawrence Newcomb. Little, Brown and Company, 1997. Users learn different structural features to quickly identify plants, so notice far more than the color of the flower.

★ NJ Audubon’s article, “How to Create a Butterfly and Hummingbird Garden,” and the “Recommended Plantings to Attract Hummingbirds, Butterflies, and Moths,” by Patricia Sutton, are available at:
http://www.njaudubon.org/SectionBackyardHabitat/CreateaGarden.aspx
http://www.njaudubon.org/SectionBackyardHabitat/RecommendedNectarPlants.aspx


★ Weeds of the Northeast, by Richard H. Uva, Joseph C. Neal, Joseph M. Ditomaso. Rutgers University Press, 1997. If you are going to let part of your yard “go wild” and the soil has ever been cultivated, grazed, landscaped, or otherwise disturbed, these “weeds” are the plants that are going to grow there! This book illustrates plants in all stages of their life cycle from seed through first leaves, blooming, and into their winter appearance, so you don’t need to wait for a flower to know what you have.


★ The Well-Tended Perennial Garden: Planting and Pruning Techniques, by Tracy DiSabata-Aust. Timber Press, 2006. Great book for learning about techniques to get the most out of your perennial flowers, extending the blooming season. Beware though ... some of these techniques may lead you to “do in” butterflies in your gardens (chrysalises, caterpillars, or eggs that are hidden on your plants).

INVASIVES


BIRDS


BUTTERFLIES / MOTHS

★ Butterflies Through Binoculars: The East, by Jeffrey Glassberg. Oxford University Press, 1999. The best field guide to help you identify the butterflies in your garden. Illustrated with exceptional photographs of live butterflies as you might see them in the wild, covers the entire east, and has color range maps showing where each species occurs and for how much of the year.


★ Caterpillars of Eastern North America, by David L. Wagner. Princeton University Press. 2005. Covers nearly 700 butterfly and moth caterpillars found east of the Mississippi, with full-page accounts on almost 400 species. 1,200 photographs allow for easy ID. Terrific index to caterpillar food plants (host plants)!
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BUTTERFLIES / MOTHS (continued):

★ North American Butterfly Association (NABA), 4 Delaware Road, Morristown, NJ 07960; (973) 285-0907; www.naba.org/ Tons of excellent information on the website and in publications sent to members.


HUMMINGBIRDS


★ www.hummingbirds.net This site maintains a spring migration map for Ruby-throated Hummingbirds as they journey north, taking the mystery out of when to hang feeders.

DRAGONFLIES


★ WEBSITES: www.njodes.com/, www.odonatacentral.org/

HERPS

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GARDEN INSECTS


CATS INDOORS! CAMPAIGN
In 1997, American Bird Conservancy (ABC) launched the Cats Indoors! Campaign for Safer Birds and Cats. 90 million pet cats in US (majority of which roam outside at least part of the time) plus millions of stray and feral cats kill hundreds of millions of birds, small mammals, reptiles and amphibians each year. Read the website and learn of the damage done to wildlife & ills of outdoor cats:
www.abcbirds.org/abcprograms/policy/cats/index

NATIVE PLANT AND SEED SOURCES
1. The Nature Center of Cape May (609-898-8848) hosts an annual spring Plant Sale and one or two plant swaps each year (where FREE plants can be obtained in trade); www.njaudubon.org/Centers/NCCM/


3. Bowman’s Hill Wildflower Preserve, PO Box 685, 1635 River Road (PA Route 32 -- 2.5 miles south of New Hope), New Hope, PA 18938; (215) 862-2924; www.bhwp.org. Seeds for sale year round; plants for sale for two weekends (Mother’s day and in October) as well as limited supply during the summer.

4. Cicconi Farms, 1005 Farmingdale Road, Jacsokn, NJ 08527; (732) 363-1420; www.cicconifarms.com/

5. Redbud Native Plant Nursery, Middletown Rd, Glen Mills, PA 19342; www.redbudnativeplantnursery.com/


Salt Hay SOURCES – the best mulch for a wildlife garden:
1. Kerry & Wayne Hand, 579 Rt. 47 in Goshen (directly across from the Cape May Bird Observatory, 600 Rt. 47 South, Cape May Court House, NJ) -- They don't live there, so you've got to arrange a pick-up time, but they're very accommodating. -- $10 / bale (in 2011) -- 609-231-9692 (cell) -- 609-886-4716 (home).

2. Jack Sayre in Cape May area (1043 Seashore Rd) -- 609-884-4663 -- call to make sure he's got it

3. Coombs Farm Salt Hay in western Cumberland County -- S. side of Cohanse R / Middle Marsh Road or Seabreeze Rd off Back Neck Rd., Bridgeton, NJ -- last time I heard it was $7 / bale (but if that has changed, let me know & I'll update my info) -- 856-455-2148