

Celebrating Earth Day at This Unusual Time



Wednesday, April 22 marks the 50th anniversary of the first Earth Day! The concept for such a day of environmental awareness and action—conceived and promoted by Senator Gaylord Nelson—was quite innovative at the time, and precipitated significant change in the U.S.

Within just four years of the first Earth Day, Congress created the Environmental Protection Agency, and passed the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Endangered Species Act. Today, Earth Day is celebrated globally and continues to help call attention to the numerous environmental challenges that demand action, from the climate change crisis and pollinator declines to habitat loss and ocean pollution.

We are fortunate to live in a town whose citizens value the environment around us as a gift to be treasured. But Earth Day should inspire us to action as well — to preserve resources and improve our environment in concrete ways. While we can't always influence policies and decisions at the national level, we can take important steps locally. In that spirit, the Easton Energy and Environmental Task Force shares here five ideas for actions that individuals and families can take this year — on Earth Day or any day — while keeping a social distance!

Start a pollinator-friendly garden, and/or introduce native plants to your yard.

Consider reclaiming some lawn for plants that pollinators love. As explained by the Pollinator Pathway initiative: “Without pollinators, we can’t feed ourselves. Pollinators fertilize the plants in our yards and parks but also on our farms and orchards There are over 349 species of bees native to Connecticut and 416 species native to New York, and they play a vital role in pollinating the plants we rely on in our communities.

Pollinator populations are in sharp decline because of pesticide use and loss of habitat.”

Visit our town’s Pollinator Pathway Project

portal—<https://www.pollinator-pathway.org/easton>—to learn how to get started.

Consciously choosing plants native to our region — even starting with one plant or tree — can make a difference and support pollinator health by providing vital food and shelter.

Remove invasive species. Invasive plants crowd out native plants and change native ecosystems in harmful and lasting ways. Use resources like www.invasive.org to identify invasive species on your property. Many can be easily removed by hand, including garlic mustard and mile-a-minute vine. According to Jean Stetz-Puchalski, Master Gardener and founder of Easton’s Pollinator Pathway Project, “By removing invasive plants and re-establishing plants native to our region, we provide essential food and shelter to our native pollinators and wildlife who are dependent on this delicate food web for survival.”



Flowering garlic mustard

Buy local. Before you head to Stop & Shop or Costco, consider supporting the local farms and stores providing the meat, produce, and other supplies you need! This article highlights some of the amazing suppliers right here in Easton.

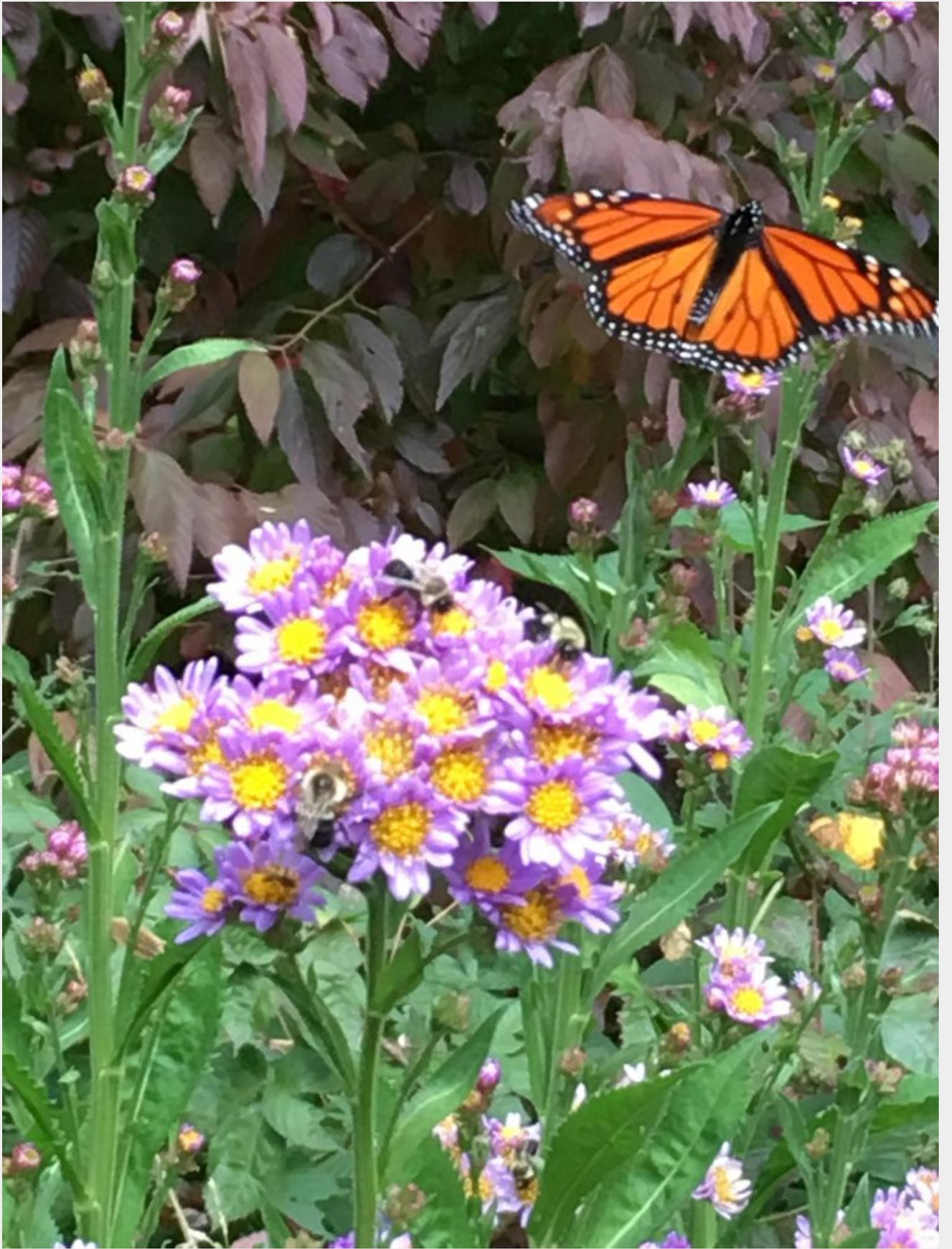
<https://eastoncourier.news/2020/03/25/easton-farms-and-markets-offer-plentiful-food-supplies/> Not only are you supporting your neighbors (now and for the future), you're reducing emissions and avoiding unnecessary contact with other shoppers.

Watch your electricity and water use. With most everyone at home all the time, our household electricity and water usage is much higher than normal. Consider some well-placed notes or other reminders to turn off lights and faucets, optimize appliance loads, and unplug energy-hogging devices and chargers. Now is also a good time to identify bulbs that can be replaced with low-impact LEDs.

Join the Litter Pickup event! A 17-year-old town resident, Teddy Feroletto, has organized the Easton Social Distance Litter Pickup for this Wednesday. As Teddy explains: "I was walking with my family and noticed litter everywhere. I thought that with everyone in quarantine, it was a great opportunity to put something together." Your family and neighbors can sign up here:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090c4faeaa2ea5fe3-easton> Bring your own gloves and garbage bags. And please extend your pickup efforts to local trails when you go hiking.

Earth Day is a reminder to celebrate the environment around us and to do what we can, every day, to take meaningful action. This year, as we shelter in place, we have the opportunity to take action at home, and in our town, to make a lasting difference.





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Start a pollinator-friendly garden, join the Litter Pickup event!