



BUSY BEE UPDATE

News for Reading Public Library Garden Volunteers



CREATING A WILDLIFE HAVEN

Our April meeting was full of energy and creativity as we mapped out plans to transform the library's parking lot border into a certified Wildlife Habitat!

This project goes beyond simple beautification—it represents RPL's dedication to environmental stewardship while creating a living laboratory for our community.

What makes a certified Wildlife Habitat? How are we adapting our existing landscape? And how might you apply these same principles at home? Read on to discover how our library is becoming a sanctuary for local wildlife and a model for sustainable landscaping practices in our community!

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UPCOMING MEETINGS

APRIL 19 @ 1:00-3:00 PM

- Spring Clean Up
- Pansy Plantings

MAY 17 @ 1:00-3:00 PM

- Maintenance schedule signups
- Action items for Wildlife Habitat
- Summer Event Planning
- Outdoor weeding and watering

JUNE 19 OR 20

TIME TBD

- Summer Event
 - Ice Cream
 - Garden crafts for kids
 - Tabling

RSVP: <https://forms.gle/xCjgGKqAFxTRU9mw9>

Library's Wildlife Habitat Project Taking Root

Our vision for transforming the library grounds into a certified wildlife habitat is blossoming! After a productive planning session, we're excited to share our progress toward creating a natural sanctuary that supports local wildlife while enhancing our community's environmental footprint.



Habitat Zone

We've identified several key areas around the library that will form our primary habitat:

- The welcoming area near the main entrance, anchored by our beautiful weeping cherry tree
- The spaces behind our public benches
- The developing sensory garden nestled between the turret and benches
- The garden beds flanking both sides of the staff entrance
- The narrow, sun-drenched strip along the Deering Street driveway

During our assessment, we noticed we could strengthen our early spring offerings. While our existing bulbs provide lovely color, many hybrid varieties offer limited value to native pollinators. We're considering introducing spring ephemera plants in shadier areas nearby to provide additional support for our local ecosystem throughout the seasons.

Meeting Wildlife Certification Standards

We're making excellent progress toward meeting the National Wildlife Federation's certification requirements:

- **Native Plant Ratio**: We currently maintain 24 plant species plus seasonal bulbs, with a strong proportion of native plants. Moving forward, we're committed to maintaining the 70% requirement with at least a 3:1 ratio of native to non-native species with any new additions.

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- **Food Sources:** Our diverse collection of plants, shrubs, and trees already provides abundant food sources—offering pollen, nectar, seeds, and fruits to attract a wide variety of birds and beneficial insects.
- **Water Access:** Plans are underway to install butterfly puddling stations and possibly a birdbath with a solar-powered fountain to provide essential water sources.
- **Protective Cover:** Wildlife find shelter in our weeping cherry tree, existing perennials (which serve as host plants for insects). We brainstormed additional plants and shrubs that might provide year-round cover.
- **Places to Raise Young:** Our weeping cherry and maturing shrubs offer natural nesting sites, while overwintering dead perennials and organic leaf mulch provide additional shelter. We're also considering adding bee houses that will be need to be replaced annually.
- **Sustainable Practices:** Our commitment to environmental stewardship extends to our maintenance approach:
 - Emphasizing drought-tolerant plants for water conservation
 - Prioritizing native species that support local wildlife
 - Installing water-efficient drip and soaker hose irrigation

This habitat project represents a meaningful step in our library's sustainability journey while creating opportunities for community education and inspiration. We hope our efforts will spark ideas you can bring to your own backyard!



Around Town

- Community Plant Swap @ Reading Public Library (Saturday, April 19 @ 12:30-3:30 PM)
- Town Forest Tree Planting (Saturday, April 26 @ 9:00 AM-3:00 PM)
- Garden Club Plant Sale (Saturday, May 17 @ 9:00 AM-1:00 PM)