



**Sustainable Ringwood/Green Team
End of Year Report
2024
By
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Chairperson**

Sustainable Ringwood’s Green Team is ending the year with a full complement of 7 voting members and 2 alternate members. We still have a vacancy for 1 alternate member. The team has members representing the Borough Council, the Health Department, the Environmental Commission, the Non-Profit New Weis Center and local businesses. Thus, the Green Team is able to represent a variety of local interests and coordinate activities with a variety of businesses, local organizations, municipal commissions and departments.

The Green Team held eleven meetings during 2024 and minutes are posted for each meeting. The team was extremely active throughout the year and members volunteered to participate in a variety of events. We completed our \$10,000 grant awarded by Sustainable Jersey and funded by the PSEG foundation. The funding supported projects and activities during 2023 and 2024.

**Achieving Sustainable Jersey’s Bronze Certification
for the Borough of Ringwood**



The Green Team wrote and submitted an application for certification by Sustainable Jersey on behalf of the Borough of Ringwood. On September 19, 2024, Sustainable Jersey awarded Bronze Certification to the Borough of Ringwood because of the Borough's activities in health, waste management and environmental resources as well as Green Team educational activities related to composting, native plants, pesticide use, pollinators, recycling and plastic use. Obtaining certification was a significant achievement. There are 466 communities that are registered with Sustainable Jersey. Of those, 140 have been awarded Bronze Certification, 67 Silver Certification and 7 Gold Stars.

Educational Outreach and Civic Participation
Earth Day, Caring for Ringwood Day. Volunteer's Day,
Winter Wonderland at the New Weis Center

Green Team members celebrated Earth Day on April 20, 2024 at the New Weis Center, participated in Volunteer's Day on June 22, 2024 and participated in Winter Wonderland at the New Weis Center on December 16, 2024. At Earth Day and Volunteer's Day we offered educational activities for adults that provided information on composting, time for various materials to biodegrade, recycling options and the importance of pollinators. At the Winter Wonderland Event we engaged children in an art activity emphasizing the beauty of our natural surroundings. The children were creative and eager to participate. At all events, children enjoyed decorating reusable cloth bags which they could keep or give to their parents. Educational posters, flyers and the bags



were supported by funding from the \$10,000 grant from Sustainable Jersey.

The Green Team continues to be committed to maintaining the beauty of Ringwood, and our members participated in Caring for Ringwood Day.

Pollinator Garden Project **Maintenance and Educational Posts**

The Green Team continued to maintain the Pollinator Garden which we designed and planted at the Ringwood Public Library on September 16, 2022. Throughout July, August, September and October of 2024, we published a series of posts on the Sustainable Ringwood Facebook page which highlighted the plants that were blooming and provided information on how to care for a pollinator garden in the fall and winter.

Native Plant Garden Project **Presentation Series and Grand Opening of the Native Plant Garden**

A major goal of the Green Team is to educate residents on the importance of native plants in supporting the ecosystem. Our educational program has focused on the role of native plants in increasing sustainability and supporting wildlife. The project had three phases. The first phase was a series of posts on the Sustainable Ringwood Facebook page highlighting native plants that thrive in our area. The second



phase was completed when we planted the pollinator garden on September 16, 2022.

The third phase of the project was planting a Native Plant Demonstration Garden. The garden, that was supported by funding from the \$10,000 Sustainable Jersey grant, was designed by our Green Team member, Tina Yi, and planted in November 2023. A grant funded sign was installed as well.

During 2024, the Native Plant Garden project concluded with a series of presentations on the benefits of native plants. The presentations were supported by the \$10,000 grant from Sustainable Jersey. The presentation series, which was offered in collaboration with the Ringwood Public Library, started on February 21, 2024 with webinar by the renowned scientist, author, and environmentalist, Dr. Douglas Tallamy. The webinar entitled "Homegrown National Park: Building Networks for Life" was viewed by 36 attendees and has had 204 subsequent views on the Library YouTube channel over the last 10 months. Deb Ellis, Chair of the Essex Chapter of the New Jersey Native Plant Society gave the second presentation on April 13, 2024. The presentation which was entitled "Feed Butterflies, Not Bambi: Deer Resistant Native Plants" was held at the Ringwood Public Library. This program was also well attended and received excellent reviews from the audience. On June 1, 2024, Don Torino, President of the Bergen County Audubon Society gave the final presentation which was entitled "Creating a BCAS (Bergen County Audubon Society) Certified Wildlife Garden". The BCAS also certified the Green Team's Native Plant garden. This presentation culminated with the grand opening



of the Native Plant Garden. We had a ribbon cutting ceremony, a reception, speeches and a plant giveaway. In addition to Ringwood residents and members of the Green Team, the opening was attended by Ms. Lamonica Mciver, Regional Public Affairs Manager from PSEG, Councilwoman Michelle Kerr from the Borough of Ringwood and the Directors of the Ringwood Public Library.

Seed Bank and Ringwood Public Library Events **Moth Observation Event and Presentation “Planning Your Fall Vegetable and Flowering Garden”**

The Green Team and the Ringwood Public Library have partnered on many events and projects during the past few years, and we are extremely grateful for the support that we received from the Library. In addition to numerous presentations, the Green Team continues to collaborate with the Ringwood Public Library on maintaining a Seed Bank at the Library. This project was supported by our \$10,000 grant from Sustainable Jersey. Patrons are invited to take a free package of native plant or vegetable seeds to plant and they are also invited to contribute seeds. The Seed Bank is housed at the Ringwood Public Library in a binder that is located behind the circulation desk. The program has been successful, and all seeds purchased through the grant have been distributed. The seed bank is now being used in activities at the Ringwood Public Schools. The activities are supported by a grant obtained by the Ringwood Public Schools where the children will be creating pollinator gardens.



The Green Team also collaborated with the Library on their moth observation event on July 2, 2024, and their presentation entitled "Planning Your Fall Vegetable and Flowering Garden" on June 22, 2024.

Plastic Collection and TREX Bench

During, August, September and October of 2024 the Green Team collected 1000 pounds of plastic to earn a TREX bench for our town. The collection was completed in November 2024, and the bench has arrived. Look for announcements regarding the installation of the bench. The collection of plastic is continuing with a current drive to earn a TREX bench for BASS (Bloomingdale Animal Shelter Society). The Green Team thanks our Ringwood Residents for their participation in the collection of plastic and their efforts to keep this harmful substance out of landfills.

Educational Program - Harm Caused by Pesticides and Fertilizers

The Green Team conducted an educational program on the harm caused by pesticides and fertilizers. We designed informational brochures and printed over 200 copies with funding provided by the \$10,000 grant from Sustainable Jersey. The brochures were distributed at all of our events. In addition, we conducted a pledge drive



which asked Ringwood residents to commit to avoiding the use of pesticides and nitrogen or phosphorus based fertilizers. We collected a total of 127 pledges. The pledge drive is continuing. While supplies last, Individuals who pledge and have a pollinator or native plant garden receive a small aluminum sign designating the yard as a pesticide free zone. The signs were funded by the \$10,000 grant from Sustainable Jersey.

Photo Contest and Photo Exhibit

Our \$10,000 grant from Sustainable Jersey culminated with a photo contest with prizes for children and adults. The theme of the contest was “Native Plants and Their Wildlife Friends”. The contest was advertised throughout the summer, and judging took place at the end of September 2024. A reception and awards ceremony were held at the New Weis Center on October 5, 2024. The photos are on exhibit at the New Weis Center through January 2025. At the end of January, they will be moved to the Ringwood Public Library for a retrospective exhibit during the month of February, 2025. Please visit the library and enjoy this wonderful community effort to capture the beauty of native plants and the creatures that depend on these plants for food and shelter.

The photo contest had a positive impact on both children and adults who participated. Participants reported spending the summer looking for native plants with wildlife visitors. This



was particularly true for the children who participated. The winner of the youth participants reported spending considerable time during the summer photographing native plants and their wildlife friends. The contest and the exhibits have contributed to our educational program emphasizing how native plants support wildlife.

Collaboration with the Ringwood Public Schools

The Ringwood Public Schools received a grant supporting education about climate change. They asked the Green Team to consult on a community based project that is funded by their grant. We met with teachers several times during the fall and provided information to the project coordinators. Many of our recommendations have assisted the teachers in developing a focus and specific plans for the project.

Conclusion

The Green Team has an active group of enthusiastic volunteers who are working hard to build resilience and increase the sustainability of our community. We have on-going education programs and an effective outreach program. As noted in our report, we publish educational posts on a variety of topics and we collaborate with a variety of organizations. The Green Team hopes that the Mayor and Council members will see our Committee as a resource that is willing to collaborate in building a future where the community and its residents thrive. We look forward to working together.