

Meadowlark

The Newsletter of Genesee Valley Audubon Society
May-June 2019 Vol. 46, No. 5

President's Column

By June Summers

Keeping Our Waters Clean

This summer as you care for your lawn there are things that you can do to help to keep our waters clean and reverse climate change. Keeping the water bodies in Central and Western New York clean helps our economy. People prefer clean water, and water quality has been linked to property value throughout the area. We are not forgetting about the value it has for fish and wildlife as well.

As part of my research on what residents around Cranberry Pond can do to help keep the pond clean, I found things that we can all do to help keep storm water clean. Eventually storm water from our lawns and streets runs into sewers that don't always make it to sewage treatment plants. We can still have green lawns while keeping our water bodies clean.

To minimize runoff, fertilize your lawn once a year in the early fall. Use a fertilizer that does not contain phosphorus. When you read the label, it will look like this 12 - 0 -15, nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. One pound of phosphorus runoff in a pond can produce five hundred pounds of wet algae. In New York State the law now requires that you use a phosphorus-free fertilizer unless soil tests show your soil is low in phosphorus. Make sure you sweep fertilizer off pavement, so it doesn't run down the storm drains.

For those of you who live along any body of surface water—creek, pond, or lake—New York State has new requirements on how close to the water you can fertilize. You may not spread fertilizer within 20 feet of the surface water, except where there is a vegetative buffer of at least 10 feet. More on buffers below.

Cut your lawn at least 2 ½ - 3 inches long, mulch the clippings in if possible. Sweep the clippings off all

pavement to keep them from going down storm drains. As clippings decompose they become nutrients for algae in our waterways and ponds.



Instead of using a broadcast herbicide on your lawn consider spot-treating weeds. Pests can be treated in a more natural way as well; ask about natural solutions or integrated pest management at the garden center.

Instead of allowing the water from your downspout to run directly into the storm drain, consider putting in a rain garden. Dig a hole 10-15 feet wide, 10-12 inches deep, far enough from your basement that it isn't going to cause problems. Replace some of the dirt with sand and rich soil and plant it with native plants that withstand wet/dry conditions. We can help with this.

As I mention earlier, buffers are a great tool to manage nutrient loading if you live next to a body of surface water. Grass has roots that are only 3-4 inches long at the most and can not absorb extra fertilizer the way larger plants with longer roots can. New York State suggests a 10-foot buffer, and in some places a 25-50 foot buffer.

Buffers can be as easy as using the "No Mow Let It Grow" method in a landscaped garden. Just make sure to use native plants so you don't have to use too much fertilizer.



Check out our website for a list of native plants, <https://gvaudubon.org/discover/>; the H2O Hero has more tips on caring for your lawn responsibly, <http://www.h2ohero.org/>; visit <https://www.audubon.org/native-plants> to find more native plants and where to buy them in our area.

Thank You!

Thank you to all who gave to the GVAS 2019 Annual Campaign. We know that each and every gift came from the heart.

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Gather and Sow

By Loretta Morrell

Gathering wildflower seeds may be the surest way of growing hardy native flowers that will bloom consistently in your garden, adapt to varying weather conditions, and attract the insects and birds that make a garden a living organism and not just an ornament.

Spring is here, and wildflowers will begin blooming in our region soon. How about studying those wildflowers to see what growing conditions they require, and then deciding what natives will adapt most readily to the growing conditions in our own yards. Research to see when the seeds will appear for the species you are interested in, or better yet keep checking the plants frequently to not miss the perfect time to gather the seeds.

Harvesting seeds in parks is not allowed. If you know someone with private land or know of land that is going to be developed you can seek the permission of the landowner to explore and locate flowers. Finding the flowers you wish to use for seed harvest is just the beginning. You can use a zip lock bag or sealed container while collecting seeds,

but they are not suitable for seed storage. Seeds stored in airtight containers in humid conditions could grow mold. If storing seeds, keep them in paper sacks in a cool, dark, and dry spot. They need to be protected from insects and rodents as much as possible.

The easiest way to germinate seeds is to have a seed bed prepared, and plant the seeds right away. This does not necessarily mean they will sprout in a couple of weeks. Different seeds have different germination times. By maintaining the seed bed with

regular watering and protecting the area from predators, sprouts will

appear at the correct time for that seed to germinate, be it frosty spring or the heat of summer. With



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Field Trips

Mt Hope Cemetery

Sunday, May 19, 8:00 am

Join us at the North Gate of Mt. Hope Cemetery for birding and history as we stroll through the older section of the historic cemetery for two hours. The large old trees and bushes along the hillsides are very attractive to migrating birds. Bring your binoculars and \$10 for the tour fee to Mt. Hope Cemetery.

The North Gate is located on Mt. Hope Ave. across from Robinson Dr., which runs through Highland Park. (This is NOT the gate that is across from The Distillery.) No advance signup is needed.

Riverside Walk

Tuesday, May 21, 6:00 pm

Join Genesee Valley Audubon Society for a relaxing spring evening walk along the Genesee Riverway Trail in Charlotte on Tuesday, May 21. Meet at the marina parking lot at the end of Petten Street off Lake Avenue. Call (585) 208-6461 for directions.

Cranberry Pond Trail

Saturday, June 1, 8:00 am

We will walk on the east side of Cranberry Pond to see what warblers are there and other forest birds. We will also talk about the upcoming Cranberry Pond Restoration Project.

Meet at the small parking lot on the east side of Lowden Point Rd. north of Ontario State Parkway. To get there take 390 or Long Pond Rd. north to Latta Rd (Rt 18). Go west to Flynn Rd., turn right (north) and continue to Lowden Point Rd. Go over the Parkway and turn into the parking lot. See you then.

Check out RFalconcam.com to watch our Rochester downtown falcons and NewYorkWild.org for a variety of webcams.

1ST SUNDAY NATURE WALKS

The First Sunday walks have been suspended for the summer so that Lisa McKeown can focus on the Falcon watch.

Volunteer opportunities

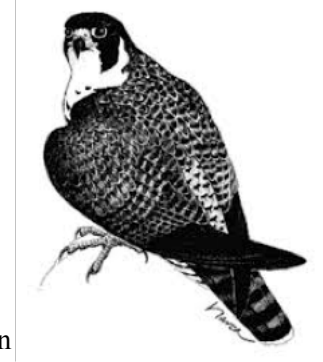
Become a Falcon

Watcher

Join the Falcon Watchers this year for the experience of your life. After the young falcons on **Rfalconcam.com** leave the nest and start to fly, the real family dynamics start. It is an exciting experience to watch the adults catch prey to feed the young and watch the young learn to fly. Sometimes falcon

watchers help rescue the young if they get into trouble while learning to fly.

Contact June Summers, summers@frontiernet.net or (585) 865-6047, if you are interested in participating.

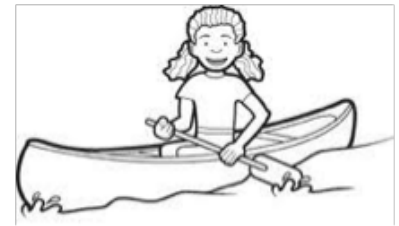


Braddock Bay—Remove invasive plants

This summer GVAS will be working with the DEC to remove the invasive European water chestnut plants from Braddock Bay. We need your help

because we are not going to have as much help from the paid staff of the PRISM. So join us on Saturday July 20 and August 10. Bring your canoe or kayak and dress for the weather. We will meet at the Westpoint Marina at Braddock Bay, 105 E. Manitou Rd.

Contact June Summers, summers@frontiernet.net or (585) 865-6047 if you are interested in participating.



Genesee Valley Audubon Society

Meadowlark

P.O. Box 15512, Rochester, NY 14615-0512

GVAS: A chapter of the National Audubon Society

The vision of Genesee Valley Audubon Society (GVAS) is to promote environmental conservation. Our mission is to educate and advocate for protection of the environment, focusing on birds, wildlife and habitat.

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The Meadowlark is published the 1st of September, November, January, March, and April. Articles for the Meadowlark should be submitted four weeks prior to the date of publication. Send articles to Joanne Mitchell, 169 Black Walnut Dr., Rochester, NY 14615, or at jwmitchell@rochester.rr.com.

Meadowlark staff: *Editor & Layout*, Joanne Mitchell; *Business Editor*, vacant; *Printing*, Minuteman Press; *Distribution*, vacant.

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wildflowers it is recommended to sow thickly at approximately the depth of the seeds. Fine seeds should lie directly on top of the soil. Covering the sown area with a fine layer of coarse sand will help keep the seeds in place during rain. Seedlings can be separated when they get large enough to divide easily. Be sure to label each planting.

The Wild Seed Project recommends that you establish your seed bed area in a shady spot in your lawn out of the way of foot traffic. You can use 4" to 10" pots with at least 3" of soil or a cold frame that is left open. Place hardware cloth or another protective cover over the seeds to prevent predation. For instructions for building a cold frame or a seed bed, go to wildseedproject.net. Look under Seeds & Sowing for How to Grow Natives from Seed. This website also lists the different germination codes, which include the common name of native plants and the time of year that is best for sowing the seeds.

This year I'm challenging myself and you to get out and explore wild spaces. Look to see what flowers are getting the native insect and bird action and let's work on adding more of these beneficial natives to our own landscapes.