



# The Kingfisher

S U M M E R / F A L L 2 0 2 0

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[www.northforkaudubon.org](http://www.northforkaudubon.org)

## Autumn is Best for Planting Perennials

by Robin Simmen

Looking now at the luxuriant rain garden in front of the Red House—towering Joe Pye weed, switchgrass fountains, fragrant summersweet shrubs, flashy cardinal flowers, and butterfly weed—it might seem surprising to learn it was planted three years ago in mid-October. Back then, the little native plants and plugs in their nursery pots were looking a bit forlorn as we transplanted them into the garden to soak up the autumn rain.

Why is autumn planting such a good strategy? Because perennials don't die in winter; their green growth withers, but they spend the "off season" growing strong roots. Planting perennials at the end of the growing season allows them to focus all their energy on building infrastructure below ground. The following spring and summer, they can jump into



*Fall 2017 - Rain Garden Planted*

photosynthesis and reproduction without scrambling to set up root systems during the hottest, driest time of the year. And autumn planting saves precious groundwater used for irrigation during the summer struggle to keep plants from frying before their roots are well established. So it's a win/win strategy for people and plants!

Soil temperature plays a big role in helping new plants settle into the ground. Like saltwater, once soil warms up it stays warm longer than many people realize. Spring soil is typically much colder and may not warm up until late April or May. Planting perennials into warm soil encourages root growth, and many native specimens can be planted up to six weeks before the ground freezes solid. Note that freezing solid is different from frost: Frost doesn't freeze the soil, rather it freezes plant growth above the ground but not root growth, which continues until the ground is frozen solid.



*July 2019*

Our first frost can happen as early as October 16, but in recent years the ground hasn't frozen solid until late January or February. So planting perennials in October or even November isn't as risky as it sounds. Perennials do need at least six weeks of root growth to get well established before the soil freezes, and if you're planting early-spring bloomers, it's best to get them in the ground in early autumn. When we planted the rain garden in October, it was quite warm: tee-shirts and shorts weather. And then it rained all November and December, perfect for a new perennial garden.

[\*continued on page 11\*](#)

## Message from the President

It's no secret—the beaches on Long Island, especially on the North Fork, are coveted by locals and by tourists from afar. As summer unfolds and people venture to these sandy sanctuaries, we need to remind ourselves and others to share the shore safely with beach-nesting birds.

Join North Fork Audubon Society (NFAS) in our conservation, policy and education efforts by donating to protect birds and the habitats they need. Please click [here](#) to make a gift today to NFAS, your local Audubon chapter.

As visitors physically distance from other beachgoers, it's crucial we utilize these same principles towards fenced and posted beach areas since terns, skimmers, oystercatchers and other shorebirds rely on these habitats to raise their young or find shelter during migration. You can help these coastal species thrive by limiting disturbances to their nesting areas. This means leashing your pet and keeping your dog(s) off nesting beaches as well as reducing litter by properly disposing of all trash. Single-use plastics—like straws, rubber gloves and bottle-caps—pose a great threat to wildlife and our oceans. Trash on the beach can entangle birds, be mistaken for food and ingested, and can attract predators. Please support our ongoing campaign to reduce our dependency on plastic by contributing a gift [online](#). Your donations will help protect and preserve the natural beauty of our North Fork.

In addition to a generous donation, you can assist NFAS by volunteering, including for our Fall Native Plant Sale this September. For more information, please visit the NFAS website at <https://www.northforkaudubon.org/how-you-can-help>. On behalf of our board, we appreciate your commitment to make a difference when it's needed most.

Again, thanks for all you do to support our organization! We hope you continue to be stewards of Long Island beaches and enjoy sharing the shore with nesting birds this summer. Please be safe and healthy as you recreate outdoors.

Debbie O'Kane  
NFAS President

## Upcoming Programs and Events



### Envision Plum Island

with Louise Harrison

Wednesday, August 26

6:30 PM

via ZOOM

To register, please email

[info@northforkaudubon.org](mailto:info@northforkaudubon.org)

Louise Harrison is the N.Y. Natural Areas Coordinator for *Save the Sound*, a member organization in the [Preserve Plum Island Coalition](#). Louise is part of the team who conducted the two year envisioning process and produced the [report](#). Co-sponsored by NFEC.

**SAVE the DATE!**  
**NFAS Fall Native Plant Sale**  
**September 12 & 13**  
**more info to follow via email!**



*Amorpha canescens*



## Borneo: Haze, Rhinos and ‘the Forest People’

By Bill White, DVM

In September last year our group of three North Forkers traveled to Borneo to meet the orangutan, which translates as ‘people of the forest’ in local Malay and Indonesian dialects. We had no idea when reaching Malaysia and then Borneo that we would be plunged into gray, smoke-filled skies that burned the eyes and ruined lush tropical views. Locals referred to this as the ‘haze,’ and it was a terrible side effect of Bornean commercial interests burning old growth forests and replacing them with plantations of tropical palm oil trees. The haze had even caused schools and airports in both Malaysia and Borneo to close down. So, as you can imagine, we were a little unsettled after arriving in Kuala Lumpur.

The next day we drove to Taman Negara National Park, Peninsular Malaysia’s major national park, and the first destination on our four-week journey. The next morning we meandered by foot on the boardwalk that coursed the perimeter of the forest, and we noticed a peculiar silence and stillness. Had the haze crashed local insect populations and driven off the songbirds? Or had the boardwalk, noisy from tourists, made these parts of the park less desirable for local wildlife? No way to know, but our subsequent visit to Sarawak state in Borneo would continue like this... lush tropical views spoiled by haze and a curious lack of wildlife, even bird life. But there were plenty of other things to do in Sarawak, like exploring world-class caves and visiting local tribes in their longhouses.



*Orangutan, Male, Sepilok Orangutan Rehab Center, Sabah, Borneo, Malaysia*

[Continued on Page 6](#)

## NEW BLUEBIRD NEST BOX TRAILS ON THE NORTH FORK IN 2020

by Peggy Lauber

In early 2020, North Fork Audubon Society received grant money from National Audubon Society to set up new nest box trails on the North Fork, primarily for the Eastern Bluebirds, which are strictly cavity nesters. Other birds that might use the same nest boxes are Tree Swallows, House Wrens and Chickadees – and also House Sparrows, which are invasive and known to attack birds in their nest boxes and kill them. Because of this, the boxes require regular monitoring, to ensure that House Sparrows do not build nests and raise their young in them. Other predators, such as Raccoons, Red-Tailed Hawks and even Flying Squirrels might also attack nesting birds – another reason to check boxes at least once per



*Rob McGinness with new Blue Bird box*

week during nesting season, which lasts from about early April through the middle to end of August. Given that male Bluebirds are known to start scouting for nesting locations as early as mid-March, we had a short window in which to find suitable locations, build nest boxes and get them put up in time.

As the project manager for this endeavor, I knew I was not going to be able to do this alone – as they say, “it takes a village.” Thanks to local carpenters and bird enthusiasts Rob McGinness and Bob Sorenson, the boxes were built according to specifications available on the New York State Bluebird Society website. These gentlemen also had some great suggestions as to local farm owners who might have suitable Bluebird habitats and would let us put nest box trails on their property – and also monitor the trails. Three private property owners in Orient ultimately granted us permission. In addition, Bob Aviano, a new resident of Peconic Landing, as well as John Holzapfel, a renowned local naturalist, teacher and fellow Peconic Landing resident, were able to secure the secure permission to put up a trail on that property. Both Bob and John offered to mount the boxes and monitor them at Peconic Landing.

[Continued on page 7](#)

# Saving Cold Stunned Sea Turtles - What You can Do

By Rick Kedenburg, NYS Licensed Wildlife Rehabilitator

Now is the time of year that most sea turtles leave this area and head south for the winter. A number of them, lulled by the relatively warmer waters of our Sound and Bays, linger too long and are trapped by a sudden cold snap that brings water temperatures down below sustainable levels for reptiles. September through December is the critical time for saving these trapped turtles. Anyone who walks the beach during this time can play a crucial role in saving them. As water temperatures drop into the 50's-60's °F level the turtle's body starts to shut down. Later in the winter when water temps are below 50 °F it's too late as hypothermia kills the turtles.

Finding a turtle during the critical four-month period can save its life. If you see a sea turtle on the beach, it's in trouble and needs help.

Here's what to do and not do:

**First call the NY Marine Rescue Center 24-hour Rescue Hotline at 631-369-9829.** It's a good idea to write this # down and keep it in your wallet. Call immediately for further instructions and to arrange for a team to pick up live live or dead sea turtles. Give them the exact location of the turtle.

**IMPORTANT: DO NOT ATTEMPT TO WARM THE TURTLE!!!** Rapid warming may cause irreversible damage to a Turtle. Time is a factor in raising body temperature and rehabilitation. Do not try to return the turtle to the sea as it could drown.

**DO NOT PLACE TURTLE IN WATER - PROTECT FROM FREEZING!!!**



Remove smaller turtles from the beach and hold in a COOL sheltered area such as an unheated car or truck bed. Or cover the Turtle to protect from the elements - until the response team arrives for pick-up. If any turtle is left on the beach, your presence will help to protect it from predators. Larger turtles that are too heavy should be protected by placing a blanket on them and clearly marking the area for the pick-up team.

You can patrol at anytime, but chances are greater at finding a cold-stunned Turtle at low tide, particularly after storms or cold snaps. As you walk, check the beach from the dune to the water line. Check the water for floating turtles, and check for turtles beneath dried seaweed.



The NY Marine Rescue center is also interested in data on any sightings of other marine mammals such as seals (Pinnipeds), dolphins, whales, and porpoises. Please call 631-369-9840 EX# 24 to leave your phone number and a message.

Here are the three types of sea turtles you are likely to see. Green (brown shell, oval, small head), Kemp's Ridley (heart-shaped shell, large head), Loggerhead (oval-shaped, very large head).



## Osprey Nesting Platform



In early May, North Fork Audubon Society received a phone call about an Osprey pair that was attempting to build a nest on a homeowner's dock in Cutchogue. We took a look, and with Paul Romanelli, the homeowner, we chose an adequate site in his salt meadow to install a nesting platform. We had to act quickly as the pair was eager to begin egg-laying. Amidst a pandemic, we managed to coordinate a crew of volunteers. The homeowner, was able to get the necessary materials from Riverhead Building Supply delivered to his home promptly. Following a fairly easy plan, we assembled it in his driveway and installed the platform within a couple of hours. We moved all the nesting materials (except the crab trap the Osprey pair had collected)

to the new platform and within the hour the pair was rearranging all the familiar materials. As of mid-July, Paul reports the pair is currently raising chicks. "Thanks so much for your help coordinating everyone. They are definitely loving their new penthouse." He hopes to install a camera over the winter to monitor the pair in the 2021 season. A huge thank you to our volunteers: Evan, Beth, Dan, Bill Dawn and family! We couldn't have made this happen without you!

If you think you have a suitable site for a platform, please contact us. We can come by and assess your property. We plan to have Osprey Nesting Platform Kits ready to go before next season.



### Ecological Lawn Care and Landscaping—It's the Right Thing to Do!

Maintaining your lawn and landscape can be done without toxic chemicals and synthetic fertilizers. Pesticides can be lethal to birds and other wildlife, especially pollinators. "Weed and feed" and Roundup may seem benign, but they still contain poisons that can do substantial ecological damage and impact human health as well. Planting native plants and trees instead of ornamental plants and shrubs is also the right thing to do. They provide food and shelter for birds and insects and are meant to thrive in our local environs. You can learn more from the recorded online event we co-hosted with the North Fork Environmental Council in May. The "Virtual Organic Lawn and Landscaping Workshop" video along with other related resources can be found as a link on the NFEC website at [www.nfec1.org](http://www.nfec1.org). A link to our second virtual workshop "Local and Sustainable Agriculture" featuring local organic farmers and sustainable wine growers can be found there as well.



On day nine, with us now in the Islamic state of Brunei, things changed! That morning when opening the blinds of my rustic dwelling, I had to do a double take. Blue skies! Yes, totally unexpected, and so sweet as a result. It hadn't seemed windy that night, so had the gods engineered this? Beth, Keith and I decided to celebrate the day by hiking Ulu Temburong National Park with our guide. The climax of the hike is visiting the Temburong canopy walk, with spectacular views of hills and valleys above the sky-high canopy. There was only one trick: hiking to the canopy walk required climbing a steep set of 750 steps, and then once reaching the crest of the mountain, climbing a 15 story metal scaffolding that suspended the actual canopy. Beth wisely chose not to climb the steps or scaffolding; Keith and I, on the other hand, were not so wise. Did I mention that Keith is 85 years old and completely fearless? He bolted up the metal tower like a jack rabbit, leaving the guide behind and me really far behind.



With the haze now lifted our visit to Brunei and then Sabah state was remarkable. Wildlife and birdlife were plentiful, and tropical views were stunning. At Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Center, Keith and I had a confrontation with a young male orangutan who had arrived for the free



food and a chance to strut his stuff to the local females. He mock-charged our group of local tourists, scattering them to the winds. However, Keith and I managed to stay in the breach for a few seconds and take some nice photos. (*See above*) The Orangutan Center is unique in that it cares for young, abandoned and rescued orangutans while remaining an integral and un-walled part of the surrounding tropical forest. Animals freely come and go as they wish.

At Tabin National Park we watched a romp of smooth otters playfully descend along the river bed, and we nearly had a chance to visit Malaysia's last surviving Sumatran Rhino, a female by the name of Iman. We had arranged with the park veterinarian to visit Iman in her outside enclosure, but unfortunately she was too sick from uterine cancer to have visitors. She would die two months later in November 2019. This means that Sumatran rhinos are now extinct in Malaysia, and they remain critically endangered in Indonesia. Only 80 or fewer are thought to still be alive, mainly on Sumatra and Kalimantan



(Indonesian portion of Borneo). However, regarding survival of this gentle species, there may be room for hope. Indonesian and Malaysian scientists are now collaborating on in vitro fertilization projects, and implantation techniques in surrogate mothers. However, with so few remaining animals, survival might best be handled by developing captive breeding programs with live animals.



If you get a chance to visit Borneo, by all means please go. There is a remarkable diversity of plant and animal life that will keep you endlessly fascinated, and the ecotourism industry there is well developed, safe and reliable. In addition, you will be supporting wildlife conservation efforts that administer to orangutan and other wildlife species. What more could one ask? Perhaps,

less haze is all.

When planning your trip to Borneo, check with your travel agent to avoid periods of haze. And if observing bird and wildlife is your main focus, plan to spend more time in Sabah state, which has a natural abundance.

*Bill White is a North Fork Audubon Society board member and retired veterinarian from the Plum Island Animal Disease Center.*

*Photos, top to bottom: Proboscis Monkey, Male, Labuk Bay Proboscis Monkey Sanctuary, Sabah, Borneo; Red Leaf Langur, Female, Danum Valley Conservation Area, Sabah, Rhinoceros Hornbill (National Bird of Malaysia), Tabin National Park, Sabah; Black-and-Yellow Broadbill, Tabin National Park, Sabah; Green Sea Turtle, Laying eggs, Turtle Islands Marine Park, Selingan Island, Sabah, Borneo, Malaysia*



Our next challenge was to find a way to mount the boxes securely, and also construct predator guards to keep Raccoons at bay. Fellow NFAS Board member Nancy Pearson has maintained a Bluebird nest box trail on her farm for decades, and her advice was very specific – only a strong signpost at least 5’ high will do the job – and for a predator guard, she suggested 2’ lengths of 24” diameter PVC piping. When I ordered the PVC pipes to be cut this way, the manager of the plumbing supply store couldn’t resist asking why – he had never received a request for this! The signposts were a bigger challenge – I could not find them at any local stores or Home Depot. At husband Paul’s suggestion, I went straight to the Greenport, Southold and Riverhead Highway Department headquarters, and all 3 locations generously donated used signposts.



*Tree Swallows*

In early March, all came together, and Rob McGinness and I installed 16 boxes at the three Orient locations. This was no easy task, as pounding in the signposts required a great deal of muscle power, along with a pile driving tool, which Rob, who is 6’ 5” tall was able to accomplish by standing on the back of his pick-up truck. Permission from Peconic Landing came through later, and Bob Aviano had a different idea about mounting them – he had successfully set up Bluebird nest box trails in Vermont before moving to Peconic Landing. As it turns out, Bob and John Holzapfel managed to get 5 boxes up at Peconic Landing, the week before an outbreak of COVID there resulted in a lockdown of the facility. Timing is everything!

We now have 21 nest boxes at the 4 locations, and as I write this, our first nesting season is winding down, with activity in all boxes. However, only one box has successfully fledged a clutch of 3 Bluebirds. We have had a few boxes occupied by Tree Swallows, and a few that fledged Chickadees, who built the loveliest nests out of moss, lined with a thin layer of horsehair! But to our surprise, the vast majority of boxes have been occupied by House Wrens. We had tried to discourage this (because

we wanted plenty of vacant boxes to attract Bluebirds) by setting up the boxes away from brushy areas that are preferred by House Wrens. Nevertheless, the House Wrens prevailed.



*Chickadee babies*



*Banded Bluebird mom with eggs*

Exciting news though about our one Bluebird box – the mother Bluebird was banded! I submitted the band number to the National Bird Banding Lab, but as of this writing, they have been unable to confirm where this bird was banded. We hope to receive news within the next few months.

So, our new Bluebird nest box trails are off to a good start. It can take years for the Bluebirds to discover the boxes – but once they do, they and their young are likely to return in the years to come to breed again. Once you have seen the gorgeous, neon blue of a male Bluebird in the sunlight, you will understand our enthusiasm for providing them with a safe nesting habitat!

## NYS Endangered Shorebird: Piping Plovers at Orient Beach State Park

By Jennifer Murray

It was a rocky start for the piping plover season when the coronavirus forced many environmental organizations and government agencies to close. Just when the symbolic fencing needed to go up to protect threatened and endangered shorebird species, people were flooding the beaches in unusually large numbers for that time of the year. But thanks to the Orient Beach State Park staff and NFAS Board Members, we were able to fence off the largest section in the park at the most critical time for piping plovers beginning to nest.



The challenge didn't end there, however. With many different ethnic backgrounds using the park 24/7 due to night fishing, the restricted area signs could not be seen nor understood and the symbolic fencing was not effective. Garbage, discarded fishing line, and fish carcasses became an issue. The park staff ended up installing snow fencing to protect the nesting plover pairs incubating their clutches, and trash cans in an attempt to keep refuse at bay. If this wasn't enough to contend with, the plovers also endured an unusually chilly spring.

As nests hatched and the chicks became mobile, the plover parents did their best to direct their young away from the continuous fishing activity. Unfortunately, this led to intense and drawn out territorial disputes and chicks left unmonitored by their parents. Now vulnerable to being accidentally stepped on by a fisherman or plucked by an opportunistic gull, the chances of survival was looking grim.

Somehow, the eight nesting pairs made it through. They endured the cold April and May temperatures, started laying eggs around Mother's Day, incubated successfully through mid-June, and fledged over a dozen chicks by mid-July. These NYS endangered shorebirds are truly tough despite their diminutive size. I hope their trip back down to the Bahamas and Carolinas is a bit more easy-going for them!

A big thank you to the OBSP staff and NFAS Board members. This season would not have been as successful without the leadership and guidance of NFAS President Debbie O'Kane. It was not an easy task to navigate the monitoring project through a pandemic.

## Beyond "The Story of Plastic"

By Mark Haubner

We are immersed in a culture which is out of balance. We base our daily functioning on the Linear Consumption Model in which we extract, manufacture, sell, buy, use and toss. More simply, it is the path of take, make, use, waste.

In the extraction phase, the process of removing raw materials from the planet (water, trees, rare earth/heavy metals, fish) only calculates the labor, materials invested, and fossil carbons burned as the cost side of the business. There is absolutely no regard for replacing these materials or making the planet whole after extraction—the costs are externalized, made a part not of the extractor's business but of the planet and the people remaining. Profits are privatized.

*[Continued on Page 10](#)*



## **Attention National Audubon Members: Please Support North Fork Audubon Society (NFAS)**

Many of you receiving our newsletter and email updates do so by virtue of your membership in National Audubon, which works to connect donors with local chapters. Local chapters are the lifeblood of Audubon, providing programs, lectures and birding hikes, all designed to connect people with nature.

To adapt to the pandemic, in late June, NFAS hosted a Purple Martin colony tour with limited onsite participants, but we were able to invite our members to participate through a Facebook Live event. We are planning more events like this in addition to programs via ZOOM.

Local chapters also advocate for policies and laws that protect our environment, habitat, and native flora and fauna, including birds. For example, recently NFAS worked with Suffolk County Legislator Tom Cilmi, (R) Islip, to improve legislation he sponsored which would create a local law prohibiting the feeding of wild animals in the county. NFAS made substantial recommendations that were incorporated into the proposed bill, resulting in much better legislation.

In addition, we are the stewards of Inlet Pond Suffolk County Park, where we maintain the trails and the grounds, as well as the recently renamed “Roy Latham Nature Center” (previously known as the Red House). The park is visited by hundreds of people every year, and most of the work done by board members and other volunteers.

If you are a National Audubon member who supports NFAS, we thank you. But if you haven't previously contributed to NFAS, please consider doing so. Click [here](#) to make a donation today. Thank you!

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### **NFAS Speaks Out Against Proposal to Divert Environmental Funds**

North Fork Audubon Society joined several environmental groups, as well as hundreds of individuals from across Suffolk County, in speaking out against a county proposal to divert funds from environmental programs for the next three years, ostensibly, to ease the county's budget deficit created by the coronavirus pandemic.

Introductory Resolution 1413, which would have diverted monies from the very successful Suffolk County Land Preservation Program, was withdrawn by the County Executive thanks to pressure from opponents of the bill and the inability to garner enough votes in the Legislature. The County's program has preserved hundreds of acres of open space and farmland on the North Fork, but there is much more land to preserve and development pressures continue unabated.

[Introductory Resolution 1414](#) was passed by the Legislature, and if approved by the voters in November, would divert funds from the Sewer Assessment Stabilization Fund (SASF). As an example of the importance this program, about six years ago, this fund provided \$8 million in subsidies to upgrade the Riverhead Sewerage Treatment Plant, which discharges into the Peconic River, which in turn flows into the Peconic Bay. The upgrade allowed a good portion of the highly treated and safe effluent generated from the plant to be used to irrigate the adjacent S.C. golf course and recharge our sole-source aquifer. And of course, the effluent being discharged into the Peconic River is now much cleaner as well. Had these funds not been available, the project may never have come to fruition.

Recently, the Legislature also approved the use of \$3.7 million from the SASF to award grants to homeowners who are upgrading their aging, ineffective cesspools, by installing Innovative Alternative/Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (IA/OWTS), which are considerably more effective in removing nitrogen from wastewater. For more information about the County's program and to find out if you are eligible for a grant, please click [here](#).

Examples of extractive industries are manifold—Nestle, whose CEO has stated publicly that water should be commoditized and owned (by Nestle), Poland Spring and Coca Cola which take billions of gallons of water from the aquifers (not really springs) without any regard for recharging, replenishing or regenerating those aquifers. Their costs are only direct expenses, and their profits are theirs alone. Especially egregious are the extractions of entire populations of fish which goes unregulated and unenforced in the Wild West of the open ocean which belong to all of us—[the Commons](#).

Should corporations be required to recover all the plastic produced, the cost of true recovery is estimated to be in the US\$120 Billion range, which far exceeds the profits of all the plastic industry. They cannot afford to recover their own waste.

“Their own waste?” you ask. Look at the position of Coca Cola and the oil companies (which make plastic) for a moment: Consumers buy products, they are responsible for recycling, they are fouling their own nests. Corporations have convinced us that we are morally bound to take responsibility for our consumption of a completely non-biodegradable product. Since 1951, corporations have created 80 Billion tons of plastic—only 10% (or less) has been truly recycled, the next 15% is being incinerated, and the other 75% is simply dumped into landfills, in front of poor peoples’ front doors, or into the ocean. Plastic is falling in the snow in the Great Pyrenees Mountains, found in the Tonga and Mariana Trenches, in the alimentary canals of very small ocean creatures and everywhere on land that you look—plastic is in our air, our water, our land. When small fish in the tens of millions eat plastic, it is called bioaccumulation. When larger fish eat them and larger fish eat those fish, then we eat all the plastic in that chain, it is biomagnification. The effects of all of this are still largely unknown, but it is people who must clean up the mess and suffer the effects of poor health. Costs are socialized.

When China instituted their National Sword policy in 2018, it only took 4 months to refuse all future waste, especially from the U.S. They blocked some ships already in port and on the sea on their way to dump millions of tons of plastic on them. Ships then turned midcourse and sailed on to Malaysia, Philippines, Viet Nam and started dumping there. When the Malaysian Prime Minister got involved, she turned ships away from their ports and the ships simply went back out to sea with a completely worthless ‘product’ and dumped their loads into the open waters of the Pacific Ocean.

We are now faced with taking responsibility for our own 80 million tons per year of plastic, packaging and paper products (PPP). With the overwhelming cost of dealing with this volume of waste and pollution, no corporation is willing to sacrifice their profits for the benefit of people or the planet. Add to this direct pollution the immense output of carbon pollution from the burning of fossil carbons, the human costs of living in the filthy conditions created and we have a humanitarian disaster of cosmic proportions.

We must accelerate our shift to a whole system of a circular economy to match our own planet’s miracle of regeneration, which is now in its billionth year.

It is time to bend the curve where life cycles of everything we produce goes back to the manufacturer, not as a by-product, but a part of the system which demands its own production back with some sort of value. This concept is called [Extended Product Responsibility](#) and will not happen by waiting for your friendly multinational corporation to volunteer to do the right thing.

We must demand responsibility at every level: social, economic and environmental—with global, national, community and personal engagement. Nothing less will do.

To view the documentary, *The Story of Plastic*, please visit <https://www.storyofplastic.org/> or click [here](#). To view the short film, *The Story of Stuff*, which illustrates the Linear Consumption Model, please visit <https://www.storyofstuff.org/movies/story-of-stuff/> or click [here](#).

*Mark Haubner is a former NFAS board member and is currently the vice president of North Fork Environmental Council. He sits on Riverhead Town’s Environment Committee and is active in Drawdown East End.*



Watering newly planted perennials is vital, even when it's cold outside, because they're still alive and growing underground. If the weather goes dry but temperatures are above freezing, don't neglect to water baby perennials after they're first planted. In future years your native plants won't require irrigation, but they do need support until their root systems develop. So don't put the hose away too early if you're going to plant perennials this year.

Frost heave can also be a challenge for newly-planted perennials. When the ground freezes, thaws, and refreezes, it thrusts plants that aren't well anchored up into the cold air, which kills them. One way to protect new plants is not to mulch around them until after the ground freezes hard. Then spread mulch, such as leaf litter or straw, around the plants to keep the ground from thawing and then heaving plants up.



*Iris versicolor*

The mulch is to keep the ground frozen, which may seem counterintuitive, but it protects the plants from frost heave. An easy rule of thumb is never to mulch until night temperatures drop below 32 degrees.

Another nice benefit of planting in autumn is that your garden is still visible, revealing the spots where a new plant or two would enhance its design. This year take advantage of the NFAS Native Plant Sale coming up in September to order some new native perennials for your garden. Next spring and summer, you'll be glad you did!

*Robin Simmen, a board member of NFAS, is a landscape designer and former director of community horticulture for Brooklyn Botanic Garden and Cornell Cooperative Extension.*

North Fork Audubon Board of Directors:

- Debbie O’Kane, President
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Roy Latham Nature Center & Inlet Pond Park  
Stewards and Educators

- Tom Damiani
- Jennifer Murray

*Many thanks to Dr. Nancy Conradi, who served as a director for many years and as the chair of many of our native plant sales. Nancy recently retired from the board, and although we will miss her at meetings, we know she will continue to be an active member of NFAS.*

## The Nature School

*by Jennifer Murray*

We return for another year of Turtleback Farm’s The Nature School, an outdoor education program. Through experiential learning students discover the natural world around them and their relationship within it. Our conservation education model teaches core principles of stewardship and involves scientific study, conservation projects, and environmental education games.

The Nature School was initially designed as an enrichment program for homeschooled children, and now extends to remote learners. This year, in partnership with North Fork Audubon Society, the program will be held exclusively outdoors at the Roy Latham Nature Center at Inlet Pond County Park in Greenport, NY. Face masks are required when social distancing is not possible. Temperature scans and screenings are done daily at drop off from the car.

The Nature School will run Monday-Thursday, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm, and students may attend one or more days. This program is geared for ages 7-12 and limited to 12 students per day. For more information and to sign up, please send an email to [NFASprograms@gmail.com](mailto:NFASprograms@gmail.com), thank you!