

ELMORE ROOTS' PERMACULTURE KNOW-HOW

Keeping Local Pollinators Around

David Fried

A flower's main job is to attract pollinators. There are millions of flowers on native American plum trees and wildlife apple seedlings each spring. This gets the bees and wasps and moths and butterflies and so many others out each spring and early summer and keeps them busy and well-nourished. They come back to their nests with the nectar from the blossoms, and the trees get cross-pollinated so they will make a lot of fruit and feed the wildlife and the people fortunate enough to know a good thing.

Even though the black walnut is mostly wind-pollinated, it is a host plant for over 100 species of butterflies and moths including the Luna moth, regal moth, imperial moth, walnut sphinx moth, walnut caloptilia, pecan leafminer moth, monkey slug moth, and more! The walnut it produces is edible and very tasty. Wildlife like flying squirrels will enjoy the delicious nut. Red squirrels may appear to become flying squirrels when the nuts are ready to harvest. The high concentration of fatty acids in the walnut makes it an excellent fall food to gear up for winter.

The reason a flower is so attractive is so that it will be beautiful and tasty to the flying creatures who fly from flower to flower. The male peacock and the male cardinal are two birds that are so stunningly beautiful they attract the female



Courtesy photo of this beautiful peacock: Joyce Dutka.

who will "pollinate" with it and keep their local bird population strong and energized. If you were a female grayish bluebird, wouldn't you want to hang out around a male buffed-up blue eastern blue bird?

Fruit has a range of colors that call attention to them, so they will be eaten and their seeds will be spread far and wide. A persimmon is bright orange, a quince bright yellow, grapes light green or dark purple, and we all know the spectrum of colors in apples. Before a fruit is ripe and ready to make more of itself through its seeds, it is usually a dull green or tan. Only when mature does it have the ability to pass on its splendor to the next generation- it finally turn its full color!

There is a line in a Grateful Dead song

that says, "Don't shake the tree if the fruit ain't ripe." One of the pleasures of living in Vermont and having a backyard fruit grove is that we get to taste our fruit when it is actually ready to be eaten. It has developed its full color, its full fragrance and its best flavor. If we had to ship it across the country or had to store it for months on end, we would have to harvest the fruit before it was ripe. But it would be removing the essence of why fruit ripens and colors up- so it can live on for many generations through its seedlings. Each seedling will have new characteristics

never before seen in its parents. Some will be hardier, tastier, more disease resistant. Some will be yellow, red, striped, russet. Some will be small and hard. A few may be spectacular new examples of how the world keeps working to get better, behind the scenes and up in the treetops.

Keep planting. Keep the vision of a beautiful world in harmony alive in everything you do. The pollinators will thank you. The wildlife will be grateful. And your grandchildren or the kid next door may even think of you as a local hero and be inspired to plant more native flowering trees and shrubs like you did.

David Fried is a writer and propagator of hardy native trees and shrubs at Elmore Roots Nursery in northern Vermont. ♻️

Team G.E.T. Saves the Planet

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Everything had built in switches which were kept off when not in use. The soft-start well pump went to an over-sized pressure tank so it would come on less often. Rain water collection fed the gardens.

Being frugal with energy does not mean giving all that much up. She used a typical Energy Star Amana refrigerator with ice-maker and up to two Energy Star freezers were needed because she grew about 90% of her own food, which she froze and canned or stored in a root cellar. The permaculture landscaping included fruit and nut trees, including blueberries, to hazel nuts, apples, pears, cherries, raspberries, peaches, currants, hardy kiwis and more.

After finding that people were amazed to see how off-grid living could work, in 2009 it was time to share the successful lifestyle experiences with more interested people to give everyone access to the information needed to do it themselves. *Green Energy Times* was born and has grown way faster and further than ever anticipated.

While Mallery currently drives a Prius Hybrid, her next vehicle will be an all-electric small pickup truck which she hopes will be in the near future.

Recently, she sold her homestead in Vermont to be near her family in New York state. Interestingly, the solar system that had served her so well was still operating pretty much the way they did when it was installed. Her new property will go beyond her Vermont low-carbon lifestyle. The new place has a pond-loop geothermal system in place for heating and cooling and swimming, along with solar, organic gardens, apple orchards and is a cross country skier's paradise of trails that will also accommodate hiking, foraging, sugaring and more. Mallery plans to re-create another sustainable lifestyle to meet the future with no fossil fuels. ♻️

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