

Newtown's Tammy's Garden: Protecting Pollinators and Commemorating a Long-time Town Employee

By Mary Wilson

Since gardens are a symbol of rebirth and continuity, Newtown's Protect Our Pollinators viewed a pollinator garden as the perfect way to commemorate Tammy Hazen, a long-time town employee who succumbed to breast cancer in 2015. And since October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, an event was held recently at the site of that garden, known as Tammy's Garden, in the courtyard of the Municipal Building.



Sarah Middelmeer and Mary Wilson at Tammy's Garden Event

Protect Our Pollinators had wanted to establish this garden since Tammy's death. However, such a large project seemed to be financially out of reach. As time went on and pollinators gained public interest and support, two Newtown foundations offered funds to establish a garden, which did become a reality in the fall of 2019.

In total 19 beds were planted with 8 new trees, 486 native shrubs and perennials, and 540 flowering spring bulbs. This ambitious project was designed by Sarah Middelmeer, who donated her expertise, and was planted by many volunteers over the course of 5 days, along with much appreciated help from Parks and Recreation personnel. Despite compacted soils and a hot, dry summer, the garden has thrived with help from volunteers who have regularly weeded and watered the garden beds.

This garden is part of a larger effort to provide habitat for pollinators at Fairfield Hills. Important are pollinator-friendly plants at the Fruit Trail, the Victory Garden, and the High Meadow.

The event held on October 2 brought together two very important causes. Despite a light drizzling rain, a theme emerged as we were reminded that positive outcomes for both health and environmental concerns are possible through our actions.

Another good outcome. A donor offered to provide funds for permanent signage for this landmark garden. Many thanks to the generosity of others who have made this garden a reality.