

Westchester Fairfield Horticultural Society

Founded 1910

An Educational and Community Service Organization

www.westfairhort.org

West Fair Hort News

April 2008

March Meeting

The Environmental Symposium was held on March 11, 2008, at the Cole Auditorium, Greenwich Library. It was well attended by approximately 225 persons and was very successful. The theme was: Nature at Home in Your Garden: Suburban Landscapes to Help the Planet.

The Environmental Symposium was organized by the Westchester Fairfield Horticultural Society and co-sponsored with Audubon Greenwich, Greenwich Conservation Commission, Garden Education Center, Greenwich Land Trust and Greenwich Tree Conservancy. Working together was the key to our success.

Attendees viewed the eleven educational exhibits in the lobby from 6:30 PM to 7:00 PM. They included: Westchester Fairfield Horticultural Society, Audubon Greenwich, Backyard Beekeepers, Greenwich Conservation Commission, Garden Education Center, Greenwich Green and Clean/Greenwich Recycling Advisory Board (GRAB), Greenwich Land Trust, Greenwich Tree Conservancy, Native Plant Center, Northeast Organic Farmers Association and The Litchfield Garden Club. In addition, each attendee received a cloth green bag filled with educational materials from the sponsors.

The program started at 7:00 PM. First on the agenda was the presentation of the Millennium Trophy. Kate Liba presented the trophy to Greenwich Land Trust, accepted by Ginny Gwynn, and Westchester Land Trust, accepted by Muriel Ten Dyke and Evelyn Tapani.

Loretta Stagen introduced the first speaker, Barry Boyd, M.D., who gave a PowerPoint presentation, "The Dangers Pesticides Pose to Human Health." It was a reminder that the pesticides, herbicides and other chemicals we use cause cancers. Dr. Boyd's talk was very impressive.

Our keynote speaker, Douglas Tallamy, Ph.D., of the University of Delaware, was introduced by Eleanor Hoffman. Professor Tallamy's PowerPoint presentation was based on his book *Bringing Nature Home: How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens*. Everyone was listening carefully as he spoke about the importance insects play in the balance of our ecosystem...and how important it is to plant natives in our gardens as habitat for the insects.

Following the lectures, Barry Boyd and Doug Tallamy answered questions from the audience.

Then the audience was invited to come forward to the stage for book signing by Professor Tallamy. The supply of two dozen books quickly sold out!!

The speakers and the committee members were invited to a cocktail reception at the end of the evening. It was a wonderful way to end the evening!!!

Behind the scenes, many volunteers made this evening happen. Westchester Fairfield Horticultural Society committee member volunteers who worked for many weeks on the event included: Loretta Stagen, chairperson; Sharon Reekstin, event coordinator; Eleanor Hoffman, program; Mary Coan, hospitality; and D J Haverkamp, publicity. Other WFHS members who helped that evening included Kate Liba, Nerida Bogdanovic, Sharon Shisler, Janice Calkin, Stuart Coan, Ron Reekstin, and Mary Jo Palmer. Audubon volunteers (Allison Bourke, Jeff Cordulack, Jane Moffat, Christy Pennoyer and Mary Ann Tucker) were very, very helpful with publicity. Additional volunteers who served on the committee for the Environmental Symposium included Nanny Cannon, Garden Education Center; Denise Savageau, Greenwich Conservation Commission; Ginny Gwynn, Greenwich Land Trust; JoAnn Messina, Greenwich Tree Conservancy; and Joanne Clarke, GRAB.

Bringing Nature Home: How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens, Timber Press, 2007

Professor Tallamy gives compelling reasons for planting native species. In his book *Bringing Nature Home: How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens*, he presents results of research - his and the work of others, including his students - that is put forth in a straightforward manner. The data compare numbers of native insects and birds that depend on native plants with those of exotic plants. The findings overwhelmingly display the benefits of native plant species, whereas most exotic species don't support insects.

Native plants and animals co-evolved over millions of years, with plants providing the natural sources of food for insects and as shelter and nesting sites for birds. Native trees and shrubs are profiled and described as hosts for their particular birds and insects. The insects, in turn, that feed the birds, are introduced. The book provides listings of native woody and herbaceous plants that attract wildlife, and compares *Lepidoptera* (butterflies and moths) and their host plants.

By continually planting exotic species, we increase species loss. Add this to habitat destruction, and environmental degradation is the result. By replacing exotic plants with native species, we are supporting habitats, species diversity, and helping to replace diminished species.

Westchester Fairfield Horticultural Society, Inc. www.westfairhort.org

For information, contact: Mary Jo Palmer (203) 661-8626

Newsletter Editor: Eleanor Hoffman; Contributor: Loretta Stagen (meeting report), Eleanor Hoffman (book review)
2008 Board Members: Cora Burnham, Strickland Brook Park Garden; DJ Haverkamp, Publicity; Mary Ann Hoberman, At-Large; Eleanor Hoffman, Program & Editor; Kate Liba, President; Dinsa Mehta, Vice President; Serle Mosoff, Treasurer; Mary Jo Palmer, Horticulture; John Shalvoy, Hort Events; Sharon Shisler, Planning; Loretta Stagen, Conservation