

Village Center Park (Zieglerville CVS)

PHASE 2 – Restoring the Essential Native Woody Plant Community

If you have passed by the Village Center Park (“VCP”) lately, you may have noticed that many of the trees have been removed. Most of the trees in the park were ash and had been destroyed by the emerald ash borers. Lower Frederick Township has removed the trees and prepared the area for the important restoration of the woody canopy.

During a 2019-2020 Phase 1 project, the Parks and Recreation Board constructed three demonstration pollinator gardens along the frontage of the park. These native flowers and shrubs provide essential food web and habitat support to our native and migratory birds, as well as our pollinators. However, these plants alone cannot provide complete support for the life cycles of our birds and beneficial insects.

The 2020 population studies by The Xerces Society estimate that 28% of North American bumble bees and over 19% of Northern American butterflies are in danger of some level of extinction. In addition, a 2019 study led by the Cornell lab of Ornithology found that North American bird populations have plummeted nearly 30%, an estimated 2.9 billion birds, since 1970. This is serious folks!

Native trees are our most important larval host plants for the caterpillars of our beneficial insects. These caterpillars are a key source of protein for the 96% of our local bird species and critical to some migratory birds that feed their young with insects. A single pair of breeding chickadees must find 6,000 to 9,000 caterpillars to rear one clutch of young, according to a study by Dr. Doug Tallamy, professor of entomology and wildlife ecology at the University of Delaware.

Early blooming trees also provide critical food for the arrival of migrating hummingbirds and butterflies.



As part of our native landscape stewardship, the Parks and Recreation Board has initiated a Tree Donation Program to replace the VCP canopy with native trees, understory, and woody shrubs to provide a diverse woody population, supportive of a vital habitat. Our choices will be guided by resources such as the following list of essential host trees for southeastern Pennsylvania.

Some recommended tree species for southeastern Pennsylvania based upon research by entomologist Dr Douglas Tallamy on their ability to host butterfly and moth caterpillars largely needed by songbirds to feed their young.

Tree	Lepidoptera species	Tree	Lepidoptera species
Oak (<i>Quercus</i>)	519	Sumac (<i>Rhus</i>)	55
Cherry, plum (<i>Prunus</i>)	485	Persimmon (<i>Diospyros</i>)	48
Willow (<i>Salix</i>)	386	Hackberry (<i>Celtis</i>)	47
Birch (<i>Betula</i>)	381	Honey Locust (<i>Gleditsia</i>)	44
Aspen, poplar, cottonwood (<i>Populus</i>)	331	Sycamore (<i>Platanus</i>)	44
Maple (<i>Acer</i>)	293	Buckeye (<i>Aesculus</i>)	37
Crabapple (<i>Malus</i>)	287	Blackgum (<i>Nyssa</i>)	36
Hickory (<i>Carya</i>)	244	Sweetgum (<i>Liquidambar</i>)	36
Pine (<i>Pinus</i>)	243	Juniper (<i>Juniperus</i>)	34
Alder (<i>Alnus</i>)	232	Sassafras (<i>Sassafras</i>)	30
Hawthorn (<i>Crataegus</i>)	166	Redbud (<i>Cercis</i>)	24
Basswood, Linden (<i>Tilia</i>)	160	Magnolia (<i>Magnolia</i>)	20
Walnut (<i>Juglans</i>)	141	Tulip Tree (<i>Liriodendron</i>)	20
Beech (<i>Fagus</i>)	134	Fringe Tree (<i>Chionanthus</i>)	10
Spruce (<i>Picea</i>)	128	Pawpaw (<i>Asimina</i>)	10
Dogwood (<i>Cornus</i>)	124	Catalpa (<i>Catalpa</i>)	9
Serviceberry (<i>Amelanchier</i>)	113	Silverbell (<i>Halesia</i>)	9
Ironwood (<i>Ostrya</i>)	97	Smoketree (<i>Cotinus</i>)	5
American Hornbeam (<i>Carpinus</i>)	76	Kentucky Coffee Tree (<i>Gymnocladus</i>)	3

How you can help:

You can help by donating a tree through the township donation program for our parks and by using the list above as guidance when you are planting in your own yard. Of course, the species of tree must be matched with the conditions on your site. However, when choosing trees to plant, try to select one in the green box. The amount of precious bird food these trees host cannot be replaced!

-by Pamela Reich