

# This Earth Day Pledge to Support the Darien Pollinator Pathway

By CAROLYN BAYNE



April brings showers, flowers and Earth Day. Conceived almost 50 years ago by Senator Gaylord Nelson, Earth Day was born when 20 million Americans demonstrated for clean air and water, the need for green space and to promote a sustainable environment. Infused with conservatism and born

of conservation, the Nixon administration advocated for passage of both the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts. A few years later, the Endangered Species Act was passed. Since then, Earth Day has grown into the largest secular observance in the world and is celebrated by more than a billion people each year.

Over the decades, Darien has embraced Earth Day. The Beautification Commission sponsors a town-wide cleanup of local beaches, roadsides and parks; the Darien Nature Center and the Parks & Recreation Department team up to host a family fun day at Cherry Lawn Park, and the Darien Land Trust hosts an annual event

focusing on trail maintenance. New this year, there will be a compost giveaway at the Darien Recycling Center to celebrate Darien's new focus on food scrap recycling and reducing municipal solid waste.

Spring renews the cycle of life, and Earth Day asks all of us to reexamine our lifestyles and consider ways to reduce our carbon footprint with each step we take. Yet more is required. The theme of this year's Earth Day is "Protect our Species," and in Darien the most effective way to do that is to join the "Pollinator Pathway."

The Pollinator Pathway is a series of continuous pesticide-free corridors of public and private properties that provide a native plant habitat and nutrition for bees, butterflies, hummingbirds and other pollinating species.

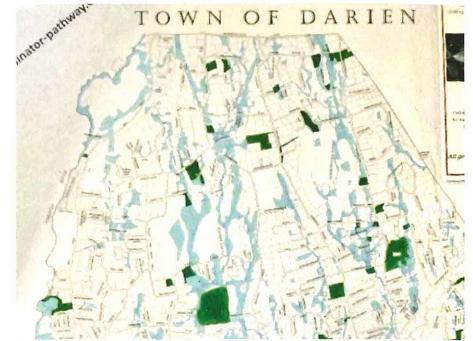
These pollinators play

an essential role in both our food supply and the natural beauty of our community. However, pollinators are dying at an alarming rate primarily due to a loss of habitat from the overuse of fertilizers and chemicals on our lawns and gardens.

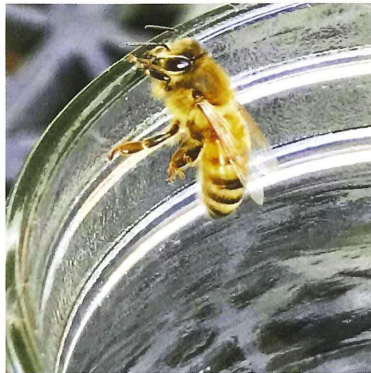
The Pollinator Pathway project is organized by volunteers from various conservation organizations whose goal is to focus attention on how individual efforts can make a difference for pollinators. More than a dozen towns in lower Fairfield County and nearby New York are now part of the Pathway, and Darien is one of them. The Darien Pollinator Pathway was established through collaboration by the Darien Nature Center, the Garden Club of Darien, the Gardener's Center and Florist, and the Darien Library.

Joining the Pathway is simple: include native plants on your property and avoid using pesticides and herbicides. Your commitment can be recognized by taking the pledge online - or visit the Darien Nature Center - and your property will be colored in green on the Pollinator Pathway map. There are also specially-designed yard signs available for those who want to tell the world that they are committed to working today for a better tomorrow. For more information, visit

[www.pollinator-pathway.org/darien](http://www.pollinator-pathway.org/darien). No property is too small or too large. Bee the change!



The Darien Pollinator Pathway map, currently housed at the Darien Nature Center, identifies Darien properties that are pesticide-free



Pollinators like this honey bee are in decline primarily due to the destruction of their habitat



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