

# *My Conservation Story...*



*Shyamala S. Rajan*

*To improve local biodiversity, to reduce my environmental footprint, and to educate visitors about natural resources conservation, I established organic vegetable gardens and several microhabitats/ecosystems in my family home in northeastern Illinois in 2002.*

*Here, diverse species coexist with humans in mutually beneficial relationships. Through pollination and pest control, they reward us with bountiful harvests of fruits and vegetables from the sustainable gardens that I created within these living labs and outdoor classrooms.*

*This presentation captures some of my efforts over time...*

## ***Locally Sourced Food...***

***As a granddaughter of agriculturists and a descendant of a long line of conservationists, I am proud to carry on the tradition of organic farming albeit on a miniature scale in a suburban backyard!***



***I grow a wide range of vegetables and fruits throughout the year except for the peak winter months and share the bounty with our community and of course with our wildlife!***

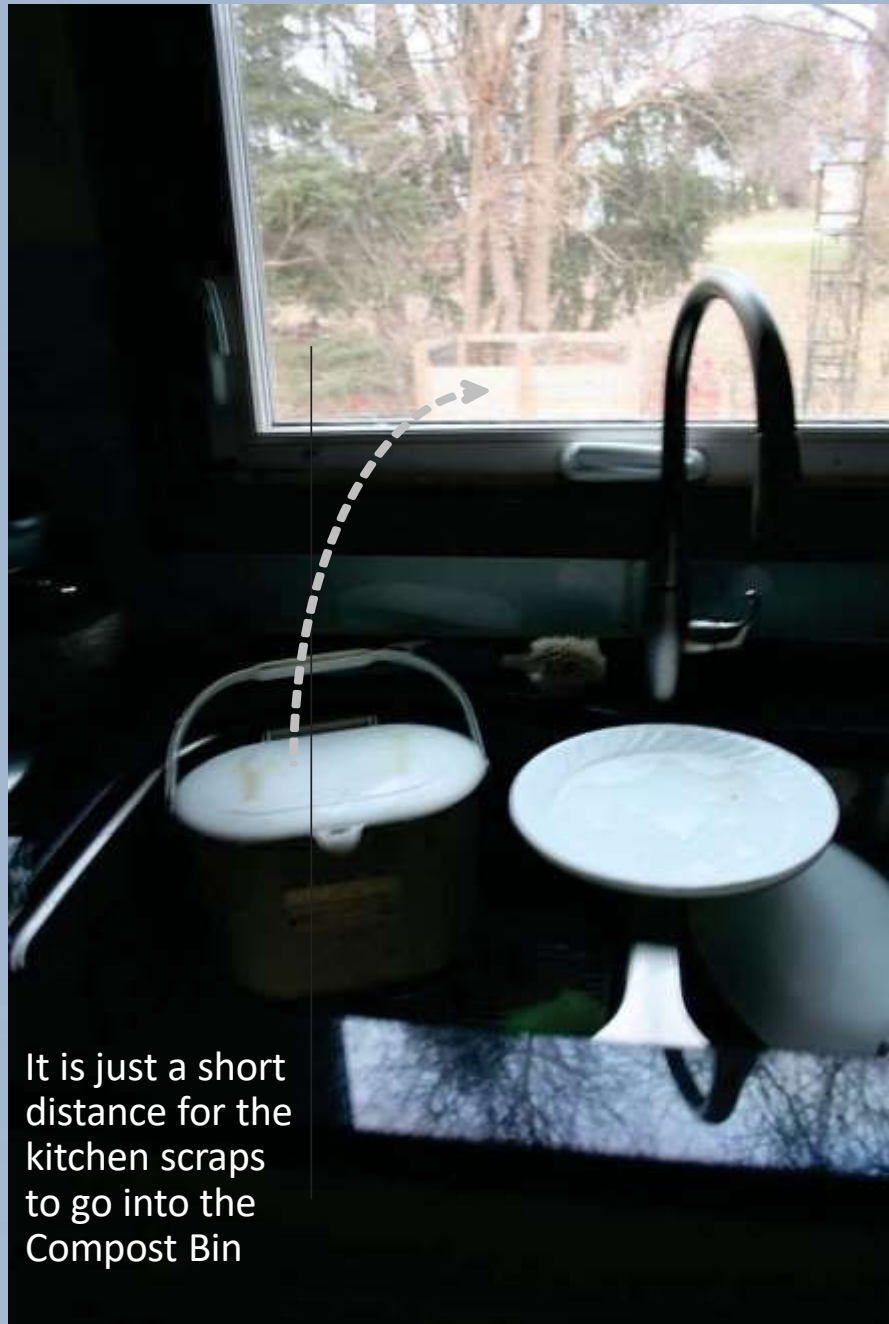
***Raised Bed  
Vegetable  
Plots***



# ***Rain Water Harvesting Systems***



## ***Compost Bins***



2 X (3ft X 3ft X 4ft) Bins





Eggplants



Peppers Galore

Peppers



Butternut Squash



Watermelon



Onion Bed

***Cornucopia!***





## ***Veggie Sampler***



Currants



Gooseberries



Raspberries



Cherries

Grapes



Native Hazelnut



***My Mom With Fresh  
Service Berries & Currants***



# ***Food from My Gardens...***

## ***Nuts & Fruits***

Native Hazelnuts  
Grapes  
Kiwis  
Serviceberries  
Sweet Cherry  
Figs  
Elderberries  
Raspberries  
Blackberries  
Gooseberries  
Jostaberries  
Currants  
Blueberries

## ***Seasonal Vegetables that I generally grow every year***

### **Mustard Family**

Bok Choy  
Broccoli  
Cabbage  
Cauliflower  
Kohlrabi  
Mustard  
Radish  
Turnips

### **Onion Family**

Garlic  
Leeks  
Onions  
Scallions  
Shallots

### **Carrot Family**

Carrots  
Celery  
Coriander  
Cumin  
Dill  
Fennel  
Parsley  
Parsnip

### **Hibiscus Family**

Okra  
Indian Roselle

### **Nightshade Family**

Eggplants  
Pepper  
Potatoes  
Tomatillo  
Tomatoes

### **Amaranth Family**

Beet  
Spinach  
Swiss Chard  
Amaranthus

### **Sunflower Family**

Jerusalem Artichoke  
Lettuce

### **Cucurbit Family**

Ash Gourd  
Bitter Gourd  
Bottle Gourd  
Cucumbers  
Pumpkin  
Ribbed Gourd  
Squashes  
Watermelon  
Zucchini

### **Asparagus**

Beans  
Colocasia  
Corn  
Lentils  
Purslane  
Sweet Potatoes

## ***Herbs***

### **Perennials**

Lavender  
Chives  
Sage  
Parsley  
Oregano  
Thyme  
Horseradish  
Rhubarb  
Horehound

### **Annuals**

Basil  
Dill  
Fennel  
Mint  
Borage  
Lovage  
Cilantro  
Fenugreek  
Shiso (*Perilla  
Frutescens*)

# *My Small Prairie*





*My Small Prairie in Fall*

# ***Some of the Native Flora in & near my Prairie..***

## **Forbs**

Beebalm	Mountain Mint
Black-Eyed Susan	Native Mint
Bluestar	New England Aster
Bugleweed	Obedient Plant
Coneflower	Phlox
Coreopsis	Poppy Mallow
Culver's Root	Rattlesnake Master
Cup Plant	Rosinweed
Eastern Feverfew	Spiderwort
Evening Primrose	Turtlehead
Goldenrods	Vervains
Horseweed	Wild Bergamot
Ironweed	Wild Geranium
Jewelweed	Wild Petunia
Joepyeweed	Wild Senna
Lupine	Windflowers
Mexican Hat	Wingstem
Milkweeds	Yucca

## **Grasses**

American Beak Grass  
Indian Grass  
Northern Sea Oats  
Prairie Dropseed  
Switch Grass

## **Vines**

Dutchman's Pipevine

## **Shrubs/Small Trees**

American Beautyberry  
Buttonbush  
Carolina Allspice  
Chokeberry  
Common Witch Hazel  
Dogwood  
Dwarf Buckeye  
Dwarf Chinkapin Oak

Eastern Redbud  
Fragrant Sumac  
Fringetree  
Snowberry  
Spicebush  
Viburnums  
Virginia Sweetspire  
Winterberry





Eastern Tiger Swallowtail



Mourning Cloak

*Butterflies  
galore*



Red Admiral



Monarch



Red Spotted Purple



Crescent spot

Clearwing Hummingbird Moth



Hornet



Treehopper



***Cool Insects***

White Lined Hummingbird Sphinx Moth



Honeybees

Dog Day  
Cicada





Eastern Pondhawk Dragonfly



Golden-winged Skimmer Dragonfly



Twelve-spotted Skimmer Dragonfly



Beetle

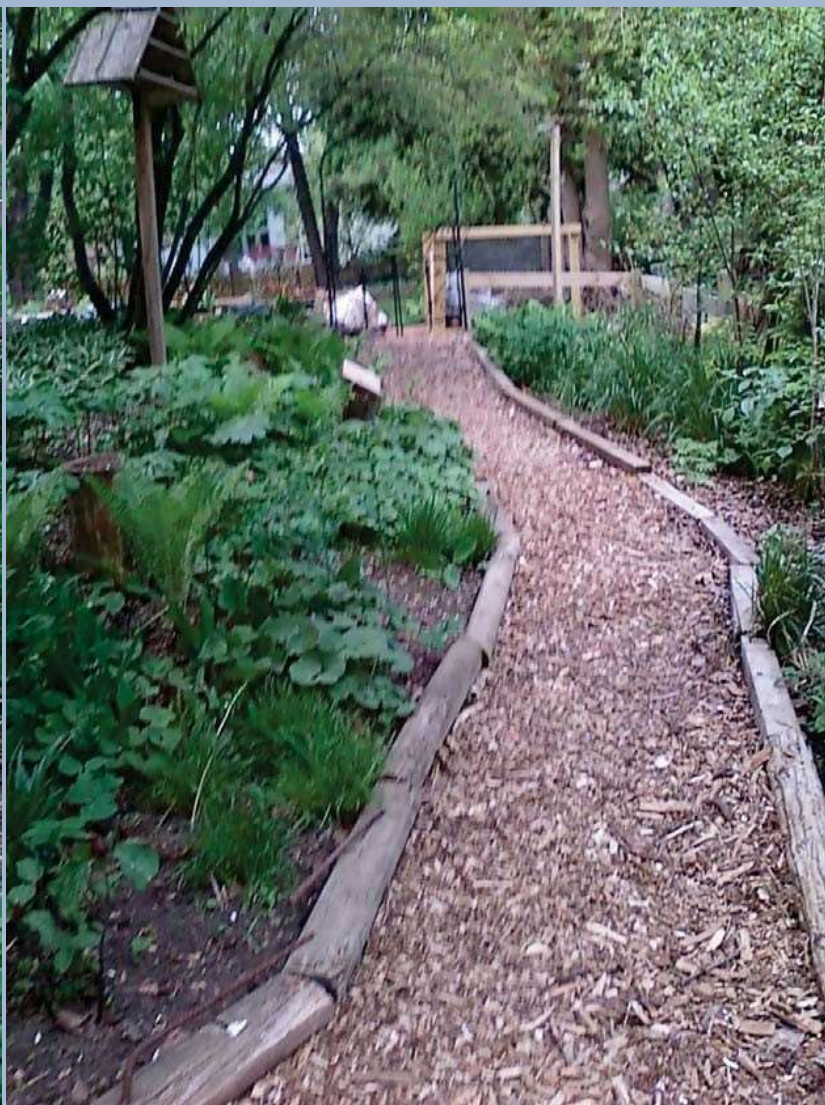


Fly



Hover Fly

# *My Little Woodland*



Prairie Path leading into the Woodland

## Some Species in My Woodland...

### Common Name

White Snakeroot

Nodding Onion

Wild Columbine

Green Dragon

Jack-in-the-Pulpit

Wild Ginger

Indian Hyacinth

Cutleaf Toothwort/Cress

Gray's Sedge

Blue Cohosh

Black Cohosh

Spring Beauty

Fringed Bleeding Heart

Shooting Star

Yellow Trout Lily

Wild Geranium

Sharp-Lobed Hepatica

### Scientific Name

*Ageratina altissima*

*Allium cernuum*

*Aquilegia Canadensis*

*Arisaema dracontium*

*Arisaema triphyllum*

*Asarum canadense reflexum*

*Camassia Esculenta*

*Cardamine concata /Dentaria laciniata*

*Carex grayi*

*Caulophyllum thalictroides*

*Cimicifuga racemosa*

*Claytonia virginica*

*Dicentra eximia*

*Dodecatheon meadia*

*Erythronium americanum*

*Geranium maculatum*

*Hepatica nobilis*

### Common Name

Wild Hydrangea

Virginia Waterleaf

Canada Mayflower

Ostrich Fern

Spring Scorpion Grass

Virginia Bluebells

Sensitive Fern

Mayapple

Solomon's Seal

Swamp Buttercup

Bloodroot

False Solomon's Seal

Rue Anemone

Large-Flowered Trillium

Prairie Trillium

Canada Violet

Common Yellow Violet

Striped White Violet

### Scientific Name

*Hydrangea arborescens*

*Hydrophyllum virginianum*

*Maianthemum canadense*

*Matteuccia struthiopteris*

*Myosotis verna*

*Mertensia virginica*

*Onoclea sensibilis*

*Podophyllum peltatum*

*Polygonatum commutatum*

*Ranunculus septentrionalis*

*Sanguinaria canadensis*

*Smilacina racemosa*

*Thalictrum thalictroides*

*Trillium grandiflorum*

*Trillium recurvatum*

*Viola canadensis*

*Viola pubescens eriocarpa*

*Viola striata*



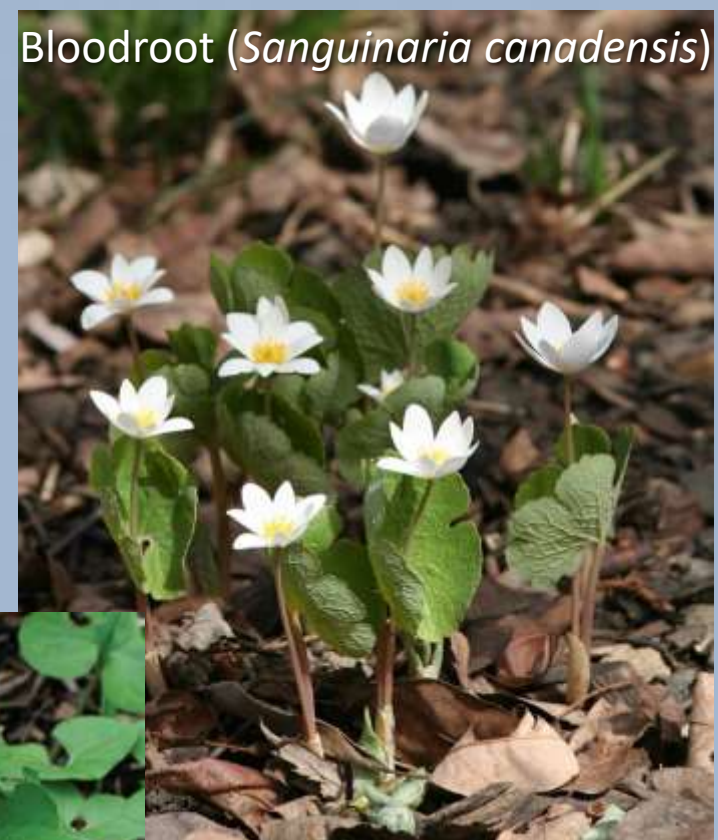


Prairie Trillium *Trillium recurvatum*  
& wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*)



Trillium (*Trillium grandiflorum*)

**Native  
Spring  
Ephemerals**



Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*)



Fritillary (*Fritillaria meleagris*)



Wild Geranium (*Geranium maculatum*)  
False Solomon's Seal (*Maianthemum racemosum*)



Cut-leaved Toothwort  
(*Cardamine concatenata*)



Liverleaf (*Hepatica americana*)



## ***My Tiny Pond...***

*Home to native iris, water plantain,  
mallards, bullfrogs & toads*



***My Tiny Pond in Late Autumn –Water Frozen and Amphibians Hibernating***

*Ready and  
Waiting for  
Migrating  
Avians...*



*It is Spring Time and the Birds are here!*





Rose-breasted Grosbeaks (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*)



Red Bellied Woodpecker (*Melanerpes carolinus*)





House Finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*)



Fox Sparrow (*Passerella iliaca*)



Ruby-Crowned Kinglet  
(*Regulus calendula*)



American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*)



Common Redpolls (*Carduelis flammea*) in Irruptive Migration



Downy Woodpecker  
(*Picoides pubescens*)

***Checking out the  
digs...***

Downy Woodpecker



House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*)



Black-capped Chickadee  
(*Poecile atricapillus*)



Brown-headed Cowbirds (*Molothrus ater*)

House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*)



# Fall Migration along the Mississippi Flyway

## Sandhill Cranes (*Grus canadensis*)



Extremely fortunate to be located on this migratory path and thus able to witness these breathtaking phenological events

# Fall Migration along the Mississippi Flyway

## Cedar Waxwings (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) eating Juniper (Eastern Red Cedar) Berries





Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*)

***Watering hole in freezing temps***



Coyotes (*Canis latrans*)

***Hungry Predators***



Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*)

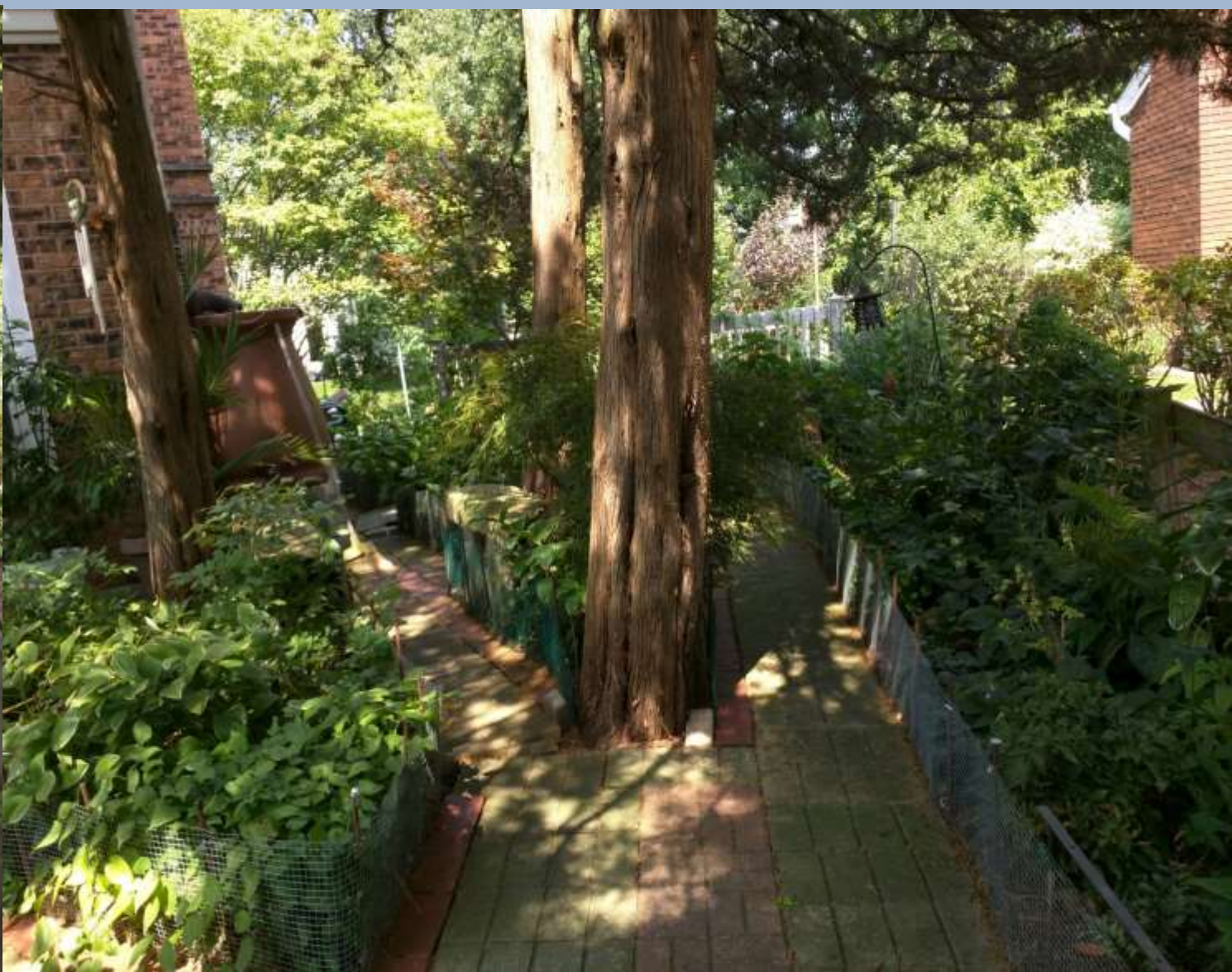


Eastern Fox Squirrel (*Sciurus niger*)



## Autumn in the Prairie

Grey Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) &  
Eastern Cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*)



***Japanese Garden***



***Japanese  
Garden***





American Toad (*Anaxyrus americanus*)  
Chilling in the Japanese Garden

07/02/2012

## ***Plants in the Japanese Garden***

Columbine (*Aquilegia* sp.)

Japanese Maples (*Acer* sp.)

Japanese Anemone (*Anemone japonica*)

Japanese & European Wild Ginger (*Asarum* sp.)

Azaleas (*Rhododendron* sp.)

Oak-leaf Hydrangea

Nikko Blue Hydrangea

Siberian Bugloss (*Brunnera* sp.)

Lady's Mantle (*Alchemilla mollis*)

False Spirea (*Astilbe* Sp.)

Archangel (*Lamiaeum galeobdolon*)

Spiderwort (*Tradescantia ohioensis*)

Barrenwort, Bishop's Hat (*Epimedium* sp.)

Japanese Variegated Solomon Seal (*Polygonatum odoratum*)

Japanese Chocolate Vine (*Akebia quinata*)

Pink & White Bleeding Hearts (*Dicentra formosa* & *D. spectabilis*)

Toad Lily (*Tricyrtis Hirta*)

Coral Bells (*Heuchera* sp.)

Lenten Rose (*Helleborus* sp.)

Leadwort (*Plumbago* sp.)

Lungwort (*Pulmonaria* sp.)

Japanese Painted Fern

Japanese Holly Fern

Fortune's Holly Fern

Ghost Fern

Autumn Fern

Hart's Tongue Fern

Maidenhair Fern

Vidal's Lady Fern

Tassel Fern

Tatting Fern

Parsley Fern

Crisped Broad Buckler Fern

Korean Rock Fern

Soft shield Fern



**Spring Flowers in the Front Yard**

*Anemone blanda* aka Grecian Windflowers



*Hyacinth*



*Colchicum* sp. aka Crocuses







***Welcome Visitors – Children and Pets  
Nikki & Lucy***

Press coverage!

THE VOICE OF THE "NEIGH"BORHOOD

NEWS, EVENTS & INFORMATION FOR HOBSON VILLAGE RESIDENTS

WWW.HOBSONVILLAGE.ORG

## HOBSON VILLAGE POST TIMES

JUNE 2015



### VISIT AND LEARN FROM NEIGHBOR'S SUSTAINABLE GARDENS

Right here in Hobson Village is a "living classroom" which educates us in the fundamentals of biology and also has spiritual and recreational benefits." That is how Shyamala Rajan describes the many sustainable gardens, or ecosystems, that grow throughout her property at 1115 Faireno Court.

She and her mother and siblings, with whom she lives, welcome visitors—particularly parents with children and pets—to stop by their yard. "We always have native plants to share with anyone who is interested in growing them," said Shyamala.

What began as a small front yard garden cultivated by her mother in 1998 now features native trees, shrubs, vines, woodland plants, prairie grasses, meadow flowers, etc., all of which provide food,

shelter and nesting needs for insects, birds, amphibians, and mammals. The gardens are also wildlife habitats certified by the National Wildlife Foundation.

Said Shyamala, "I expanded upon my mother's garden after reading about how the increasing subur-

one among other species, instead of dominating the landscape."

According to Shyamala, an environmental law specialist and Morton Arboretum-certified steward of natural areas, sustainable gardens are extremely useful for plants and animals (including humans) because they preserve biodiversity, provide food, clean the air, conserve and filter water, and reduce landfill waste and energy costs.

Inspired by her parents, who were organic, sustainable farmers with "enormous respect" for our natural resources, Shyamala's passion for the environ-

*"We welcome visitors to our yard...particularly parents with children and pets."*

ban sprawl and chemical pollution of air, land and water were adversely impacting biodiversity

through loss of habitats and toxicity build-up in food chains. I decided to re-create native ecosystems within a suburban garden setting, where humans exist as just

ment is in her DNA.

"Sustainability extends beyond our gardens to all aspects of my life," she said. "With increasing population pressures, dwindling natural resources, and a rapidly changing climate, it is cru-



Birdhouses and mason beehive in the prairie



Perennial prairie flowers



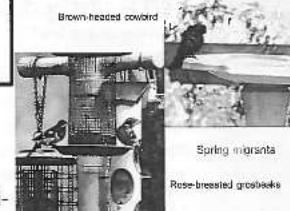
Woodland ephemerals



Marbled pond in summer

American bullfrog

Thyridae



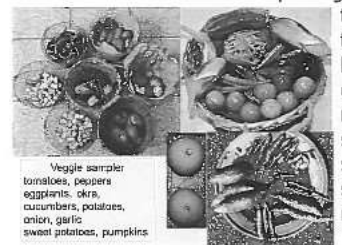
Brown-headed cowbird

Spring migrants

Rose-breasted grosbeaks

food. Sharing your yard with wildlife is relatively simple in this age of information just a click away."

—By Barb Ceruti



Veggie sampler: tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, okra, cucumbers, potatoes, onion, garlic, sweet potatoes, pumpkins



Raised bed vegetable garden

Photos and descriptions courtesy of Shyamala Rajan

Hobson Village Times,  
June 2015

"Visit and Learn from  
Neighbor's Sustainable  
Gardens"

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B7XnP3U4AAzvMXVHR09fbUZIQUc>

## Web Resources

Need advice on how to get started? Need help identifying a plant, insect, bird, or other animal? Have questions on specific plants or types of gardens? Post your question (with pictures) on the gardenweb – your one stop resource for all questions (registration required but it is free): <https://www.gardenweb.com/>

Illinois native plant society: <http://www.ill-inps.org/>

University of Illinois extension service:

<http://extension.illinois.edu/wildflowers/nativeplants.cfm>

Need help identifying a birdcall or want to learn more about birds? Cornell University's ornithology site: <http://www.allaboutbirds.org/Page.aspx?pid=1189>

Free Merlin Bird ID App:

[http://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/#\\_ga=1.102452865.1281619395.1432169749](http://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/#_ga=1.102452865.1281619395.1432169749)

