

## Your Yard Can Enhance the Pinelands Environment

**1. Conserve and Protect Water:** By reducing impervious surfaces, more water will penetrate the ground and replenish ground water. Eliminate the use of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers, and properly dispose of pet waste to reduce the amount of contaminants that infiltrate the soil and enter the ground water.

**2. Preserve and Maintain Biodiversity:** Preserve natural habitat to provide food, water and shelter that local and migrating animals need to survive. You can attract and provide refuge for birds, butterflies, and other wildlife by landscaping your yard with native plants. Plants that grow to varied heights support a greater diversity of birds and other animals by providing layers of shelter. These steps will make your yard part of the surrounding ecosystem.



Pine Barrens Treefrog



Summer Tanager

Michael Hoagland thegreatphoto.com

**3. Work with Natural Resources:** Learning about your yard's soil structure and chemical composition can help you save valuable maintenance time, energy, and money. Test your soil and plant native vegetation. Many Pinelands plants tend to be drought-tolerant and require less water and little or no fertilization. Use mulch to retain soil moisture, reduce water consumption and discourage weed growth. Only amend the soil in targeted areas, such as vegetable gardens, and use organic compost.



Orange Butterfly Milkweed - July flower

## A Checklist for an Environmentally-friendly Backyard

- Work with the naturally acidic, low-nutrient conditions of the soil, which support a diversity of plants that grow naturally in the Pinelands region.
- Keep soil enrichment to a minimum except in targeted areas of the yard, such as vegetable gardens.
- Evaluate each plant's water, sun, and soil requirements when choosing its location in your yard, and group plants with similar requirements together.
- Include a mix of ground covers, wildflowers, shrubs, and canopy trees in the landscape with a minimum of lawn area.
- Use mulched planting beds to retard weed growth and retain moisture.
- Use the topography of the land to allow storm water to run off from rooftops, driveways and other impermeable surfaces and flow to areas of the yard where water can soak into the soil to recharge the underlying aquifer.
- Minimize the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides, and collect pet waste to avoid contaminating the soil and water. This will contribute to a healthy environment for humans and wildlife.



Pat & Clay Stratton

Cedar Waxwing eating Red Cedar berries

**For more information contact:**  
The Pinelands Commission  
P.O. Box 359, New Lisbon, NJ 08064  
(609) 894-7300

Or log on to [www.nj.gov/pinelands](http://www.nj.gov/pinelands)

April 2010



## Living and Landscaping In New Jersey's Pinelands



P. Leakan

### Information for Homeowners and Realtors

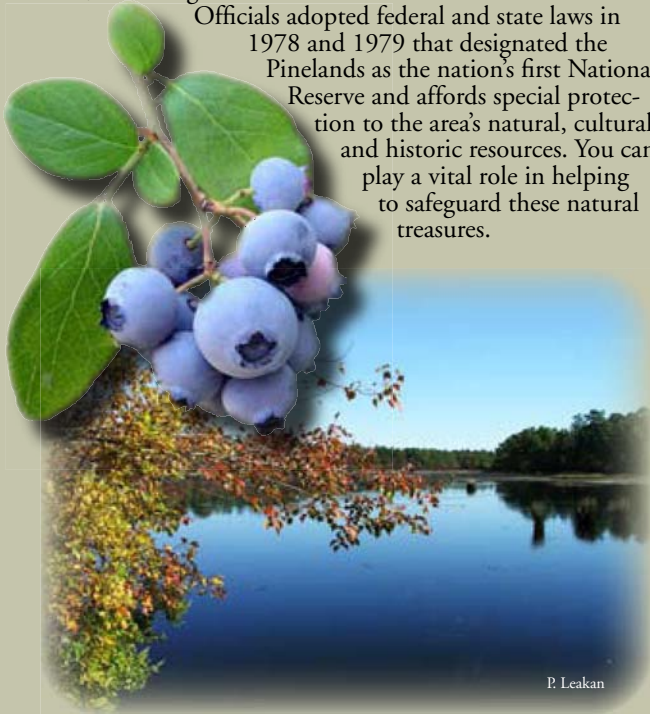
*What Makes the Pinelands Special*  
*Creating a Plan for Your Backyard*  
*Your Yard Can Enhance the Pinelands Environment*  
*Checklist For Environmentally-Friendly Backyards*



## WHAT MAKES THE PINELANDS SPECIAL?

Featuring a mosaic of dense forests, serene rivers and marshes, expansive farms, and scenic towns, the New Jersey Pinelands is the largest area of open space on the mid-Atlantic seaboard. The 1.1-million-acre region covers 22 percent of the state, and teems with a diverse population of plants and animals, including some that are found nowhere else on Earth.

Officials adopted federal and state laws in 1978 and 1979 that designated the Pinelands as the nation's first National Reserve and affords special protection to the area's natural, cultural and historic resources. You can play a vital role in helping to safeguard these natural treasures.



P. Leakan

### Do You Know That

1. A vast aquifer that contains approximately 17 trillion gallons of fresh water lies just below the surface of the Pinelands. It is the region's primary water source, serving more than 1 million residents.
2. The Pinelands ecosystem provides habitat for about 144 different birds, 34 species of mammals, 30 kinds of reptiles, 24 types of amphibians, and 850 plant species, including wild orchids and insect-eating plants. Many of these species are rare, and at least three plants are found only in the Pinelands.
3. Pinelands soil and water are naturally highly acidic and low in nutrients. Native plants and animals are well-adapted to these conditions.

To protect these resources, it's important to avoid adding nutrients by using fertilizers or neutralizing soil acidity by adding lime. Fertilizer and lime disrupt the conditions native plants and animals need to thrive. Adding such chemicals can invite non-native and often invasive species to move in. Fertilizers and pesticides can easily pass through the region's porous, sandy soils and be carried into and contaminate the ground water.

## How to Create a Plan For Your Backyard

1. *Look at your yard:* Decide how much space you need for outdoor activities such as play areas, decks, and patios. Where possible use porous materials for these areas. Minimize the amount of lawn, and choose native plantings that require far less maintenance and are better suited to a Pinelands yard than turf grasses. Visit [www.nj.gov/pinelands](http://www.nj.gov/pinelands) or read "The Sibley Guide to Trees", by David Sibley (2009) for backyard habitat ideas.

2. *Become familiar with local natural areas and use them as models:* Visit nearby preserved sites, such as state parks and forests in the Pinelands, and take note of the native wildflowers, shrubs, and trees. Visit <http://www.state.nj.us/pinelands/pastimes/> for links to state parks and forests in the Pinelands. Take along field guides to help you identify plant species you would like to add to your yard. Notice the vegetation structure - the groundcover, understory, and canopy - that can support a diversity of birds and other animals. Try to use this tiered structure as you plan your yard.

3. *Inventory what is growing on your property:* Your yard may be a blank slate or contain years of managed and unmanaged vegetation, but you need to know what grows there. You are likely to find non-native and invasive plants. You should remove these plants so the soils can return to their natural state. Log on to [www.npsnj.org](http://www.npsnj.org) for more information about invasive plants in New Jersey.

4. *Right plant, right spot:* Notice the areas of your yard in sunlight and shade, those that stay wet after a rainfall and those that dry out quickly. Native plants, such as those shown in this brochure, are available and should be selected to fit these conditions. Follow recommended guidelines for plant growth and



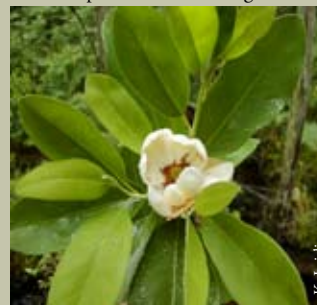
D. McBride

Sandmyrtle - low, compact evergreen



J. Bunnell

Sheep Laurel - low, evergreen



K. Landig

Sweet Bay Magnolia - fragrant, tree



Pat & Clay Sutton

Winged Sumac - shrub

spacing. Visit [www.npsnj.org/lists\\_njplants.htm](http://www.npsnj.org/lists_njplants.htm) for information on native plant species. You may want to have your soil tested to determine its pH to see how it compares to typical Pinelands soil. Log on to <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/services/> for information on soil testing.

5. *Add key components to accomplish the goal:* When creating a Pinelands-friendly backyard habitat, think more about the "Do's" than the "Don'ts." Since fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides aren't needed, you do save time and money, and once established, well-chosen native plants typically do require less water than non-natives. Do concentrate on planting native, arranging vegetation in layers, and adding a water source. Access <http://www.npsnj.org/> for information on ways to add a water source to your Pinelands-friendly backyard habitat.



P. Leakan

Aster - perennial daisy

*Remember, gardening is a gradual, evolving process of discovery. Take your time, enjoy it and have fun!*



Michael Hogan/hoganphoto.com

Yellow Warbler with Dragonfly