

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Grow  Native
massachusetts

“People across time and space have partnered with plants of their places to grow their lives better—for food, utility, medicine, economic trade, and for spirit. But gardening (tending plants in our places) has also always been so much more. When Gardeners do it well, they serve as intersectional agents, growing together everything that matters. Increasingly, gardens and gardeners are keystones reintegrating humans into the natural world around them, restoring biodiversity, nurturing healthy habitats, and renewing age-old connections.



Since 2010, the critically important, purpose-driven, keystone work of Grow Native Massachusetts reminds us all that every garden matters, and every landscape counts to grow the world better, and together: the plants, the animals, the places.”

—Jennifer Jewell, 2025 Evenings with Experts Speaker
Executive Director/Founder/Host, Cultivating Place Foundation

Dear Friends and Supporters of Grow Native Massachusetts,

As I reflect on 2025, I am filled with gratitude for the vibrant community that surrounds Grow Native Massachusetts and continues to grow. With increases in new and returning members and the demand to support an increased number and variety of programs, we are observing that more and more people are eager to take part in protecting and encouraging biodiversity right where they live.

Through education, partnerships, and outreach, we continued to inspire individuals and communities to incorporate native plants into their landscapes and provide them with the support to do so. We were able to offer 77% of our programs free of charge, making it possible for more people to get involved and learn more about restoring ecological balance across the state.

A highlight of our year was the integration of the Massachusetts Pollinator Network and their popular Habitat Chats and monthly presentations, which, in addition to their active community, bring people together to take meaningful action in support of declining insect populations. We were also excited to strengthen the Massachusetts Native Plant Nursery Network, a Grow Native Massachusetts initiative to increase access to native plants by supporting the growers who make this work possible.

I'm continually reminded by interactions and experiences big and small that care for the natural world often comes with moments of surprise and connection, and I'm grateful to share so many of them with you.

Thank you for being part of this work.



Heather Pruiksma
Executive Director
Grow Native Massachusetts



Heather Pruiksma, Executive Director, with Poe "Dwelly" Pruiksma, rescued during a 2025 Ecology Action with Grow Native Massachusetts volunteers at the North County Land Trust's Dwelly Conservation Area.

NATIVE PLANT ACCESS

Plant Sale/Pop-Up Markets

In 2025, we were able to offer **8 Native Plant Pop-Up Markets** in addition to our **Annual Native Plant Sale**, bringing native plants to gardeners in all 6 regions* of Massachusetts.

Our June Native Plant Sale in Lexington featured more than 6,000 native plants, shrubs, trees, ferns, and grasses. Attendance was free, with early registration access for members. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation joined us for native plant palette conversations and examples. We also enjoyed the help of 125 volunteers, an all-time high! It was a joyful weekend full of learning, community, and going home with new plants.

Our Native Plant Pop-Up Markets brought native plant growers to locations across the state.



Locations (and regions) we visited:

Brookline (Greater Boston)
Fairhaven (Southeast Massachusetts,
Cape Cod, and the Islands)
Fitchburg (Central)
Lexington (MetroWest)
Newburyport (Northeast)
Newton (MetroWest)
Somerville (MetroWest)
Springfield (West)



Vendors who joined us throughout the season:

Blue Stem Natives
Checkerspot Farm
Green Blossom Painting
Lady Fern Farm
Red Trillium Gardens
The Monarch Gardener
Tree Talk Natives



Collaborators and hosts who made these events possible:

Alltown Fresh Ayer
Bigelow Nursery
Brookline Farmers Market
City of Fitchburg (Fitchburg Celebrates Earth Day)
DCR (Massachusetts Native Plant Palette)
KG Pure Pastry
Lexington Farmers' Market
Mass Farmers Markets

New England Wetland Plants
Newton Farmers Market
North Fairhaven Open Air Market
Resilient Newburyport
Russ Cohen
The Farmers Market at Forest Park
Trader Joe's Arlington
Van Berkum Nursery



Thank you to all our hosts, vendors, collaborators, volunteers, and community members who showed up, asked questions, planted native, and helped grow this movement across the state. Here's to an even stronger year ahead!

*MassGIS Data: MA Executive Office of Health & Human Services Regions

Plastic Recycling

We filled critical gaps in the gardening community, such as running our INCREDIBLY popular garden plastic recycling program in Lexington for the second year in a row—a free community service made possible through collaboration with Van Berkum Nursery and East Jordan Plastics.

Our plastic recycling diverted 440 cubic feet of densely packed plastic pots and trays from the landfill.



MASSACHUSETTS POLLINATOR NETWORK

In 2025, the Massachusetts Pollinator Network (MAPN) continued to make great strides in supporting pollinators, native plants, and community action across the Commonwealth.

Joining Grow Native Massachusetts as an integrated program at the end of 2024, they hit the ground buzzing and offered 11 free monthly presentations. These presentations included researchers, restoration practitioners, environmental advocates. Representing such organizations as UMass Extension, Friends of the Earth, Xerces Society, and local municipalities, presenters shared practical tools for ecological landscaping, cultivating biodiversity, pesticide reduction, native plant policy, reforestation efforts, and sustainable campus and community practices.

MAPN also hosted Habitat Chats—informal monthly meet-ups where advocates swap ideas, ask questions, and find inspiration. They celebrated Pollinator Week with daily tips and overhauled their website to make resources easier to find and use. They did all this while amplifying important state and federal policy updates, including the Municipal Reforestation Bill and ecologically based mosquito management legislation—encouraging supporters to take action for pollinators.



EVENINGS WITH EXPERTS

Our popular mainstay Evenings with Experts brings experts and their work to popular, free lectures in the late winter and spring as we gear up for gardening season.

We look forward to this series every year, which frequently serves as an entry point for people new to Grow Native Massachusetts and our message in addition to providing our existing community opportunities to deepen their knowledge.

The 2025 Evenings with Experts series offered an exceptional lineup of lectures that brought some of the nation's foremost experts in native plant ecology and sustainable landscaping to our community. Over four sessions, we provided two virtual events, one hybrid, and one exclusively in-person presentation, creating accessible opportunities for participants across Massachusetts. Each lecture offered a unique lens on how we can steward our gardens and neighborhoods to support biodiversity, climate resilience, and human connection to the natural world.

Evan Abramson provided insights on designing biodiversity across gardens and landscapes.

Sara Weaner Cooper detailed a practical approach to converting a suburban lawn into a thriving wildflower meadow.

Jennifer Jewell explored gardeners as catalysts for ecological and cultural Change.

Sara Lewis illuminated the magical world of fireflies.

This series not only educates, but also inspires our community, equipping attendees with actionable knowledge, practical strategies, and a deeper appreciation for the ecological roles that gardens, plants, and even tiny insects play in the health of our ecosystems.



Evan Abramson



Sara Weaner



Jennifer Jewell



Sara Lewis

[Recordings Available Online](#)

Thank you to our Evenings with Experts Community Partners:



MASSACHUSETTS NATIVE PLANT NURSERIES NETWORK

Grow Native Massachusetts is deepening its commitment to native plant nurseries, recognizing that increasing access to native plants begins with supporting the growers who make that access possible. These nurseries—often small, locally owned businesses—form the backbone native plant availability. By investing in their success, we are helping to ensure that gardeners, landowners, and landscape professionals across the state can more easily find and afford a diverse range of native species.

We established the Massachusetts Native Plant Nurseries Network, which currently has 31 member nurseries, to expand opportunities for connection and collaboration among nursery professionals. Our online discussion group is a space for growers to exchange knowledge, troubleshoot challenges, and build relationships with peers who understand the unique aspects of native plant propagation and sales. We also hosted and facilitated in-person gatherings like seed and seedling swaps to create valuable opportunities for participants to share plant material, learn from one another, and strengthen the sense of community within the network.

To help increase visibility and sales opportunities, we invited native plant nurseries to participate in pop-up markets across the state. These provided direct access to customers and helped raise public awareness about the importance of native plants. In parallel, we continue to maintain and expand our online listings of native plant sellers, making it easier for individuals and organizations to locate nurseries that align with their needs and goals.

By focusing on this critical link in the supply chain, Grow Native Massachusetts is helping to lay the groundwork for broader ecological impact—enabling more landscapes to be planted with species that support biodiversity and ecosystem health. This work represents an important step forward, and we are energized by the momentum we are building as we continue to grow and strengthen this network.





Grow Native Mass Volunteer Team

We established a new Google Group that regularly connects our volunteers with opportunities to help Grow Native Mass, community partners across the state, and the planet!

WORKSHOPS



Bethany Nichols: Nurturing Healthy Soils



Jana Harris: Essex Forays Mushroom Walk



Meredith Gallogly: Floral Ecology of the Olde Burying Ground

With a full-time, dedicated Program Manager, we have increased and diversified our series of workshops. In 2025, we hosted 11 workshops with a rich mix of seven virtual workshops and four in-person experiences across Massachusetts.

Workshops allow us to provide small group opportunities for community members to learn from and interact with experts at affordable prices. They are an opportunity to learn something new or build on existing knowledge.

Programming covered an incredible range of topics—from soil health and fungal networks to historical landscape ecology and the unique ecosystems of Cape Cod. Participants joined expert facilitators like ecological designers, restoration practitioners, and horticulture specialists who shared practical tools, scientific insights, and hands-on approaches for stewarding resilient, biodiverse landscapes.

Whether we were walking through an old cemetery's remnant flora, exploring fungi in the woods, or gathering online to understand winter garden ecology from the warmth of our homes, each workshop offered something new and inspiring. Together, these sessions supported gardeners, land stewards, and nature enthusiasts in making thoughtful, ecologically grounded decisions in their own backyards and communities.



Zach Navarro: Large-Scale Coastal Restoration

HELPING GROW OUR COMMUNITY

Growing with Our Community

Grow Native Mass donated over \$6,800 worth of native plants to the restoration and garden projects of Andover Pollinator Pathway, Lexington Field & Garden Club, Devens Enterprise Commission, Diamond Middle School Green Team, North County Land Trust, Westfield State University, and Worcester Native Plant Initiative.



Partner Spotlight: North County Land Trust

North County Land Trust is a non-profit, regional land conservation organization founded in 1992. Our Mission is to conserve the farms, forests and landscapes that define the character of our region.

We are so fortunate to benefit from a great partnership with North County Land Trust, whose mission aligns with ours so well. We are delighted to help NCLT get the right plants for their ecological restoration projects, creating excellent volunteer opportunities at the same time.

“Through our partnership with Grow Native Massachusetts, native plants were donated to NCLT and installed by volunteers to improve native pollinator habitat in Templeton. We hope that continued partnership will bring more interest to improving native habitat and more volunteers onto the land in our region.”

—Emily Merlino, Director of Land Programs
at North County Land Trust

CREATING CONNECTION

We continue to cultivate new ways to spread the word about native plants. In 2025, an art show and a conversation with a popular author helped us approach native plants through creativity and emotion, welcoming fresh perspectives and inviting more people into our community.

Native Plants & Northeast Ecosystems Art Exhibition

In summer 2025, our Lexington office became a vibrant gallery featuring nine local artists—Julie C. Baer, Steve Bennett, Paula Pitman Brown, Mike DeRosa, Daisy Hebb, Barbara Kibler, Michaela Nielsen, Michele O’Neil, and Bella Rozza—each offering a unique expression of the natural world and our place within it.

This free exhibition, with family-friendly activities, invited audiences to explore what it means to be of nature, honoring the native species and ecosystems right where we live.

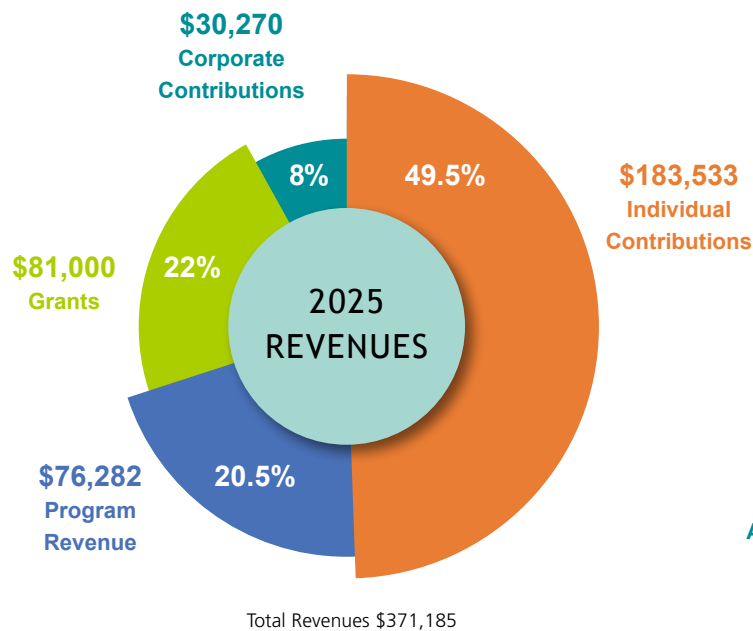
(IGs: @jcbaer_natureart • @sjbennettvisualartist
@brownpaulapitman • @mikederosa_fineart
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A Reading & Conversation with Margaret Renkl

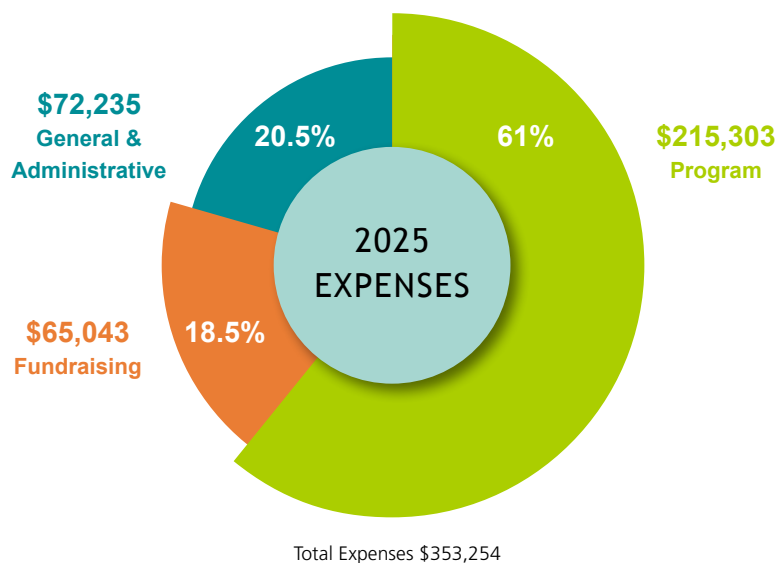
We hosted an intimate brunch conversation with Margaret Renkl at The Bull Run Restaurant. The bestselling author of *The Comfort of Crows* read from her work and reflected on joy, grief, noticing the natural world, and finding hope amid ecological change. With books available courtesy of Little Bee Bookshop, attendees enjoyed a thoughtful, heartfelt discussion about personal action, shifting landscapes, and the deep ties between people and place.



FINANCIALS AT A GLANCE



2025	
Revenue	\$371,185
Expenses	\$353,254
Net Surplus	\$17,930



- 50% of our revenue comes from individual supporters, and 80% overall comes from contributed income.
- In 2025, each dollar spent on fundraising produced 3.5 dollars of net income for an ROI of 350%.
- 64% of program expenses are covered by philanthropy, with the majority of Grow Native Massachusetts programming provided free of charge.

GRANT FUNDING

We are grateful for the significant 2025 grant funding provided by:



**GROW
NATIVE MA
BY THE
NUMBERS**

368
WORKSHOP
ATTENDEES

6,183
PLANTS SOLD AT
OUR NATIVE
PLANT SALE

8,023
NEWSLETTER
SUBSCRIBERS

78,000
ANNUAL WEBSITE
VISITORS

950+
PLANT SALE
VOLUNTEER
HOURS

1,036
EVENINGS WITH
EXPERTS
ATTENDEES

987
MA POLLINATOR
NETWORK MONTHLY
AND SPECIAL EVENTS
ATTENDEES

MEET THE TEAM

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Ani Sarkisian, *Program Manager*
Meredith Gallogly, *Operations Manager*
Helene Sroat, *Membership & Development Associate*
Renée Scott, *Coordinator, Massachusetts Pollinator Network*
Briana Bensenouci, *Fundraising & Strategy Consultant*



Neal Sanders 2025 Volunteer of the Year

Thank you to Neal for taking on many invaluable roles as a stalwart plant sale volunteer. Neal has lent a hand at more than half a dozen of these annual sales, helping us unload plants in the blazing sun, set up tents, direct traffic in parking lot. In early years of the sale when we were still figuring out crowd flow, he worked as our “gentle bouncer” with long lines of people waiting to get into the sale.

At our 2025 sale Neal was an all-star, working multiple days and taking on several different roles, including helping us set up a wifi hotspot at checkout. Then, he came back a few weeks later and worked all day during a heat wave to help us organize hundreds of plastic plant pots to be picked up for recycling. Thank you so much Neal!

Read more about us [here](#).



2025 Grow Native Massachusetts Staff



Erica Smiley,
Summer Intern 2025



Every garden matters ~ Every landscape counts®

We inspire people to action across the Commonwealth, on behalf of native plants and the diversity of life they support.

Our human footprint is everywhere, and conservation no longer works by focusing on only a small percentage of total land area. Consider this—over 90% of the lands in Massachusetts are privately owned, and much of that is in parcels smaller than one acre. More than 90% of our population lives in the cities and suburbs that extend over half of the state's land area.

What we all do matters, quite simply—everywhere.

Stay in Touch

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Facebook: @grownativemass

Instagram: @grow_native

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