

The CommUUnicator

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Gardening Ecology, or It All Comes Down to Caterpillars

By Rae Kasdan

Autumn is a time of renewed interest in the garden—a time for cleaning up, planting, and planning. Speaking of planning, I'd like to share some thoughts from a favorite article from the Washington Post that suggests how we gardeners might improve life on the planet at the same time as we are creating our own personal backyard paradises. The article, "Improving your garden's ecology" by Adrian Higgins, is a book review of *The Living Landscape* by Rick Darke and Doug Tallamy.

Why should we care? Aerial photos show that the continued development of cities and new subdivisions, with their asphalt, concrete and lawns, creates a landscape that is bereft of much plant life. The authors assert that "even leafy ...suburbs could be so much more" and that "our natural world is so fragmented that it is difficult for many species to survive." But, by gardening more intensively and more ecologically, we home gardeners can make a difference by providing much more habitat.

What is ecological gardening? In nature, all the layers of vegetation, plants, trees, shrubs and perennials feed the living soil. This layering can be replicated in our gardens at home—if the fallen leaves are not removed. Our present gardening customs rely too much on sterile lawns and mulched beds instead of more plantings. We also could do with fewer

driveways, patios, and walls. Additional plants will be better at slowing storm water, filtering pollutants, cleaning the air and shading our living spaces.

Save money by starting small with seeds, small plants and acorns; and plant for the long haul. Interested in birds? The more caterpillar types that live in a tree, the more bird species will be attracted. (An oak can attract over 500 species of caterpillar!)

The authors' bottom line is that "by planting our landscapes with productive plants, we can create diverse, stable and balanced food webs that meet our own ecological and cultural needs while enabling life around us." Sounds good, doesn't it?

See Higgins article "[Improving your garden's ecology](#)" for many more ways to promote the interdependent web of all existence in our personal spaces.



A brown hooded owl moth caterpillar on asters in the Kasdan's garden.

Save our Coffee Hour!

Refreshment after the service has been a beloved tradition at UUFW for a long time. But lately it seems that fewer and fewer people are signing up to make coffee. The reasons for this drop off are not clear. Maybe there are just too many competing tasks on Sunday mornings. Yet we need to continue this tradition in a reliable way. It facilitates reaching out to visitors and helping them get to know us. And it helps us get to know each other better.

When you sign up for the first time, just follow these easy steps:

- Plug in the coffee maker and let it warm up for at least 20 minutes.
- Using the pre-measured coffee packets make a pot of caffeinated and a pot of decaf. The plastic pitcher shows you how much water to put into the coffee maker.
- Warm two dispensers with hot water and pour in the coffee. One of the dispensers is labeled for decaf.
- Fill the third dispenser with hot water for tea.
- During the last hymn, set out the dispensers, cups, creamer, sweeteners, napkins, tea bags and stirring sticks on the table at the back of the Fellowship Hall.
- If you bring snacks, keep it simple! Some people bring in purchased cookies and cake, others home-made treats. Fruit is a good idea too.
- Afterwards, load the dirty coffee cups into the dishwasher, rinse out the coffee dispensers, tidy up the counters and consolidate the trash from the kitchen and restrooms, then take it to the trash receptacle out back. There will be a person there to close the building after everyone has left.

If you're an old hand at coffee hour, consider asking a newer member to partner with you. It is a great way to get more people familiar with the routine.

Look for the sign-up sheet at the back of the Fellowship Hall. If you have questions about coffee hour, Laura Hiatt, hospitality team leader, will be glad to answer them. Contact her at limetteuk@yahoo.com.

New Member Spotlight



Nancy Sheridan began attending UUFW after a conversation with her sister, a member of a UU congregation in Florida. She looks forward to working with the Fellowship and Hospitality Team as more time becomes available to her. Nancy currently lives in Stuarts Draft and

works in records management at UVA. By the end of the year she will be married to Bo Trimble and living in Afton. Welcome, Nancy!

Member News

Hinda Richards is on the mend after fracturing her ankle. She hopes to be back with us soon. Bill Harouff is also doing well following diagnosis and treatment for atrial fibrillation.

