

Maine Coast Heritage Trust

Take-Along Wildflower Guide

Botanist and Maine Coast Heritage Trust director of stewardship Amanda Devine is passionate about plants. She encourages those new to botanizing to get up close and personal with a hand lens. "You want to look really closely at the flower structure," she says. "It's so much more complicated than you see from afar." You can find some of Amanda's favorite late-summer and fall-blooming wildflowers at MCHT preserves throughout the coast.

Did you know . . . ?

People often blame goldenrods for their allergies, but it's a case of mistaken identity! Goldenrod pollen is typically too heavy to become airborne. The plant whose yellow pollen irritates eyes and noses is usually ragweed – a different species.

Flip over to learn more fun plant facts and where to find Maine wildflowers at MCHT preserves.



GOLDENROD

"There are a lot of species of goldenrod in Maine," Amanda says. "It's a big genus, and they occupy many different habitats. They're incredibly prolific and an important source of food for pollinators."

Canada goldenrod

(*Solidago canadensis*)

grows in anthropogenic habitats, meadows, and fields. **Seaside goldenrod**

(*Solidago sempervirens*) is

a salt-tolerant goldenrod that grows on beaches, coastal headlands, and in salt marshes. The seaside goldenrod's leaves are waxy and fleshy in comparison to Canada goldenrod, which help it retain water in salt spray.



ASTER

New England American aster

(*Symphotrichum novae-angliae*) is an

adaptable species that can be used to fill less managed spaces when landscaping. "I planted a ton of it around my land," Amanda says.

"I cut it back hard in more formal beds so it doesn't get too tall, and then let it go to seed in order to attract birds." The flowers are dark pink and purple and especially attractive to goldfinches. **Flat-topped aster** (*Doellingeria umbellata*) is also prolific, with white, daisy-like flowers.



JOE-PYE WEED

There are three species of joe-pye weed native to Maine. **Coastal joe-pye weed** (*Eutrochium dubium*) and **hollow joe-pye weed** (*Eutrochium fistulosum*) are

found in the southwestern corner of the state, while **spotted joe-pye weed**

(*Eutrochium maculatum*)

is common statewide. The plant tends to be found in wetter areas. Spotted

joe-pye weed can grow four to five feet tall, and its soft pink flower provides a great food source for birds once it goes to seed.

Joe-pye weed has a whorled leaf arrangement, meaning the leaves emerge from a single point on the stem in a circular arrangement.

"The way that leaves are arranged on a plant is often diagnostic of who they are and who they're related to," Amanda says.

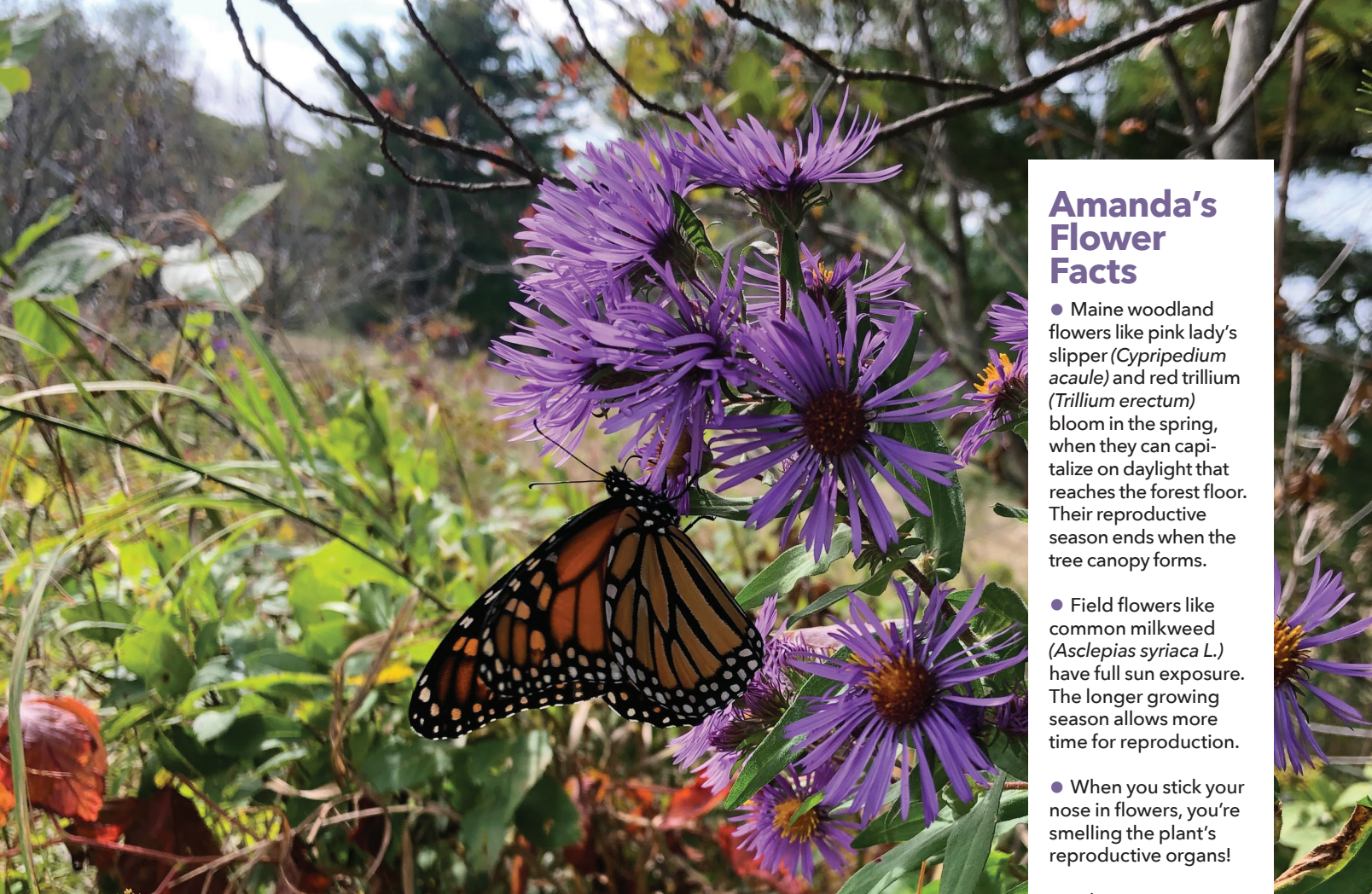


SILVERWEED

Another coastal plant,

Pacific silverweed

(*Argentina egedii*) – sometimes known simply as silverweed – is common on coastal beaches and marshes. "If you look at the underside, it has a silvery look," Amanda says. "Very fine hairs give it that appearance." The plant's yellow flowers, with five petals and five sepals, resemble buttercups.



Amanda's Flower Facts

- Maine woodland flowers like pink lady's slipper (*Cypripedium acaule*) and red trillium (*Trillium erectum*) bloom in the spring, when they can capitalize on daylight that reaches the forest floor. Their reproductive season ends when the tree canopy forms.

- Field flowers like common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca* L.) have full sun exposure. The longer growing season allows more time for reproduction.

- When you stick your nose in flowers, you're smelling the plant's reproductive organs!

- What a person sees as a single flower may actually be hundreds! Each individual field-daisy stem, for example, holds a yellow disc made up of tiny disc florets, and surrounding white "petals" are called ray florets, all of which are considered flowers.

POLLINATOR POWERHOUSES

People often hear about the important role pollinators play in producing the food we eat. But what exactly is a pollinator? It's any animal or force that helps transfer pollen from the male part of a flower to the female part, either within the same flower or between different flowers, enabling plant reproduction. Once fertilized, the plant can produce fruit and seeds. Common pollinators in Maine include birds, bees, butterflies, and even wind.

While pollinators are essential for plant reproduction, plants are also critical in the life cycle of certain

pollinator species, like butterflies and moths. Plants that support a proportionately large number of these species are considered pollinator powerhouses – a designation earned by New England aster, Canada goldenrod, and spotted joe-pye weed. "Flowers are pretty, but they also serve a purpose," MCHT director of stewardship Amanda Devine says. "Conservation is important, but protecting biodiversity starts in your backyard. Even if you live in an urban environment and only have room for one pot on your deck, you can still benefit wildlife with the plants you choose."

Find pollinator powerhouses and other native wildflowers at these MCHT nature preserves:

COUSINS RIVER FIELDS & MARSH

YARMOUTH

This 82-acre preserve, located on the Cousins River Marsh, consists of a tidal wetland and a 25-acre field.

ERICKSON FIELDS

ROCKPORT

This preserve includes a family- and dog-friendly 1.4-mile trail that loops through fields and forest.

LONG POINT

MACHIASPORT

This scenic point, with views to the islands of outer Machias Bay, has a rugged, 3-mile hiking trail that loops around it.

To learn more about Maine Coast Heritage Trust and download this guide, visit mcht.org/nature-guide.



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