



- [Home](#)
 - [News](#)
 - [Arts](#)
 - [Opinion](#)
 - [Events](#)
 - [Outside](#)
 - [Classies](#)
- [Advertise](#)

[Home](#) » [Environment](#) » [News](#) » Native plant revolution brewing

[LATEST](#) [POPULAR](#) [COMMENTS](#)

TAGS

Native plant revolution brewing

Posted by [Beth Young](#) • [June 19, 2013](#) • [Environment](#), [News](#) • [Add Comment](#)

Down a dirt road behind the horticulture department at the Eastern Campus of Suffolk County Community College, there's a revolution brewing.

It's a revolution of native seeds, which are collected, planted and cared for by a group of volunteers called the Long Island Native Plant Initiative. LINPI is on a mission to save the genetic history of plants on Long Island.



LINPI director Polly Weigand with native grasses planted by her group's volunteers

Soil technician Polly Weigand, who works for the Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District by day, founded LINPI in 2011, in an effort to preserve the original strains of grasses and plants that grew on Long Island before settlers began importing plants here from around the world.

The group has been holding plant sales in their greenhouse at the college for the past two weekends. This Saturday, Ms. Weigand was busy with a crew of volunteers teaching the public about the importance of native plants.

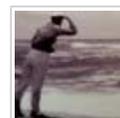
LINPI started its work primarily with seeds of native grasses with names like purple lovegrass, little bluestem and switchgrass. It's not only important to save the species of grass, said Ms. Weigand, it's also important to save the



New East End Arts Band Brings Together Beginning Musicians Over 50
[January 11, 2016](#)



Southampton Weighs Switch to Single Stream Recycling
[January 11, 2016](#)



Farewell to Richard Hendrickson, Bridgehampton's Stalwart Weather

[Observer](#) [January 11, 2016](#)



This Morning's Bulletin
— 1.11.15 [January 11, 2016](#)



East End Events

- [Art](#)
- [Film](#)
- [Music](#)
- [Nature](#)
- [Hikes](#)



U.S. Fish and Wildlife interns Nicole Gabelman and Amara Huddleston transplant native grasses.

specific strain that had adapted over centuries to conditions on Long Island.

“We’re doing this with a foundation in genetics,” she said. “If the seed is collected in Kansas, it’s not genetically native. Seed grown in Kansas will not have the salt tolerance that seed grown here has.”

The group stores its seed at the [Millenium Seed Bank Project](#) on Staten Island, an island that shares Long Island’s native species and habitat.

From grasses, LINPI’s work has gone on to include 40 different varieties of plants. Some are native flowers, including asters, black-eyed Susans, blue verbena and bog white violet. Some are clovers and some are mints and some even have names that include the word “weed.”

Ms. Weigand said her group spends a lot of time educating people about the idea that weeds aren’t necessarily invasive species.

Some native plants even have the word “weed” in their name, including Joe Pye weed and New York ironweed.

“A weed is basically something people say they don’t want in their yards. It doesn’t mean it’s invasive,” she said. She added that poison ivy is an essential plant for migrating birds, who don’t suffer from the contact dermatitis that humans have and who eat poison ivy berries to fatten up for their trips south in the winter.



Joe Pye weed

In fact, several commonly planted landscape plants are invasive species, including winged euonymus, Red Norway maples and Japanese barberry. These three plants are due to be [banned from sale in Suffolk County](#) in upcoming years.

Ms. Weigand said her group’s mission is threefold: to encourage the public to request truly native plants from nurseries, to make a supply of seeds and nursery stock available for the growers, and to hold educational events to help build community awareness about the importance of native plants.

They’re planning a native plant symposium on Sept. 27 at Brookhaven National Laboratory. More information is available [here](#).

[Books](#)
[Health](#)
[Gardening](#)
[Theater](#)
[All Events](#)

[GET OUR WEEK IN REVIEW](#)

Email Address

Subscribe

[FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK](#)



[BREAKING ON TWITTER](#)

Share this:



Related



This Morning's Bulletin — 4.18.14 In "Morning Bulletin"



This Morning's Bulletin — 6.5.15 In "Morning Bulletin"



This Morning's Bulletin — 3.24.14 In "Morning Bulletin"

Like 48



About Beth Young

Beth Young has been covering the East End since the 1990s. In her spare time, she runs around the block, tinkers with bicycles, tries not to drown in the Peconic Bay and hopes to grow the perfect tomato. You can send her a message at editor@eastendbeacon.com View all post by Beth Young

Leave your comment here

Empty comment input field

Please prove you're human:

2 x [input] = 2

Large empty comment input field

Post Comment

Notify me of follow-up comments by email.

Notify me of new posts by email.

Twitter feed showing tweets from East End Beacon (@eastendbeacon) with images and text.

4 Stages to a Heart At



4 Signs

The Cardi





4 Stages to a Heart Attack



4 Signs

The Cardiac Kill



[About the Beacon](#)

[Our Staff](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Advertise](#)

copyright 2013-present beacon publications

5