

## In Praise of Changing Landscapes

For decades, a lush, manicured lawn, paired with well-ordered garden plantings has been the goal of most homeowners and neighborhood associations. Property ordinances, developed to create uniform continuity, reinforce the “ideal” of today’s suburban yard. In Radnor Township this approach has been adopted, with ordinances focused on “weed height” which states “weeds and plant growth (other than cultivated flowers and gardens) may be no taller than 12 inches”. A significant portion of land use in our township is residential and low density (30% being 1/2-1 acre lots).

The environmental challenge this creates is reflected in a declining population of insects and birds! Maybe it’s time to reconsider how we think about residential landscaping and the rules and norms governing it. Adopting a more ecologically friendly approach to suburban landscaping could bring greater diversity, beauty, and sustainability to all our yards.

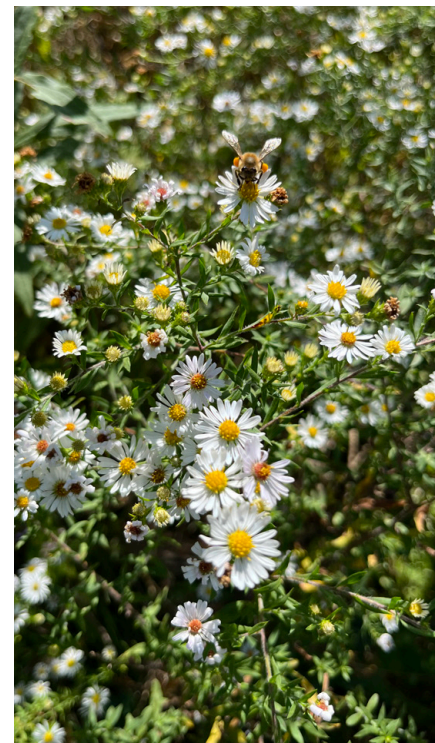
Recognizing the role our yards can play as a resource to sustain a healthier ecosystem, we must consider transforming our approach to garden design and the choices we make. The Radnor Conservancy will continue to work with township government advocating for changes to existing ordinances. Elevating the importance of native plants and natural landscaping can encourage our community at large to embrace the value and beauty a healthy habitat provides for a variety of wildlife and pollinators.

It is encouraging to see Radnor property owners moving in this direction, creating habitats that support biodiversity in their yards. A Conservancy member and long-time Radnor resident continues to transform her own personal space into a diverse and rich landscape that supports both wildlife and pollinators and is worthy of note.

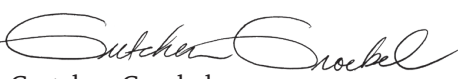
*“The biggest change I made was gradually pulling out non-native pachysandra and vinca, gradually replacing them native species, including:”*


- Mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum* spp.)
- Hoary skullcap (*Scutellaria incana*)
- Native goldenrod (*Solidago rugosa* ‘Fireworks’)
- Blue mistflower (*Conoclinium coelestinum*)
- Anise hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum*)
- Garden phlox (*Phlox paniculate* ‘Jeana’)
- Asters (*Aster laevis* and *Eurybia divaricata*)
- Elephant’s foot (*Elephantopus tomentosus*)

When asked about shifting from a traditional approach to one that is natively focused, *“It certainly has a messier look than it did, but tidy doesn’t mean wildlife friendly. I also encouraged (by not removing) the blue and white wood asters and goldenrod that appeared in the front of my house and throughout the yard and are alive with a variety of bees in the late summer and early fall.”* She continued, *“I think one of the main messages would be that a perfectly tidy yard with neat green grass and a couple of trees is not conducive to wildlife, birds, and pollinators. A tangle of various native plants is more appealing to them. (And of course, no chemicals.) The native tree offerings from the Conservancy were stimulating in the sense that I’d not been familiar with hackberry, for example, and learned how much birds love that tree.”*



Top: False aster (*Boltonia asteroides*)  
Bottom: Obedient plant (*Physostegia virginiana*) and Goldenrod (*Solidago rugosa*) in the background

  
Gretchen Groebel  
Radnor Conservancy Executive Director

  
Lorna Atkinson  
Radnor Conservancy Board President



## Fundraising to Support Our Programs

On September 30, 2022 Radnor Conservancy celebrated at an in-person gathering at the stunning Stables at Berkley V Farm, Estate of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Nerney in Wayne, PA to celebrate our mission: *To preserve and enhance Radnor's open space and natural assets through engagement with and education of our community in sustainable environmental stewardship.* It was a lovely evening to connect with so many members, sponsors, auction donors, and friends that share our passion for preserving and protecting the local environment. Special thanks to The Nerney's, our generous hosts, and Michele Leff with 12th Street Catering, who did a phenomenal job with the food and service. Funds raised go to purchasing trees for our community, environmental initiatives, and educational programs in Radnor Township. If you are interested in being a sponsor or participating as a Planning Committee member for next year's fundraiser, please contact Gretchen Groebel at [ggroebel@radnorconservancy.org](mailto:ggroebel@radnorconservancy.org).



Top left to right: Steve & Meg Shreiner, John & Liz Negrey, Eileen Brett (honoree) & Laura Luker

Bottom left to right: Elizabeth Hepburn Miller, Hannah Hepburn, Liz Feldman & Bonnie Mohler, Bill Marino, Michelle & Kip Wetzel, Betsy Michau & Leigh Oblack

### A Very Special Thanks to ALL of Our 2022 Sponsors



## Radnor Township Single Use Plastic Bag Ordinance by Margaret Reinhart

An ordinance banning single use plastic carry out shopping bags was enacted this past August by the Radnor Township Board of Commissioners. Beginning September 15, all retail establishments that distribute single-use plastic shopping bags are required to display signs informing customers that the store will no longer distribute carry out plastic shopping bags beginning March 15, 2023. If retailers plan to distribute paper shopping bags, they are required to charge a

minimum fee of 10 cents per bag. Radnor Township is the tenth municipality in Pennsylvania to ban the bags.

The ordinance had been proposed by the Radnor Township Environmental Advisory Council in January of 2022. Three public hearings were held on the proposed ordinance and letters were sent to every retail establishment in Radnor Township. The majority of residents who commented were strongly in favor of it. Very little opposition was voiced either among residents or retailers.

Single use plastic bags have become a huge environmental burden in the last few decades. They are not easily recyclable, are typically too fragile to be repeatedly reused, and are not compostable. They are made using petroleum products, and can degrade into microplastics which have been shown to cause harm

to humans, wildlife and contaminate our waterways. By banning these bags, Radnor Township is helping our local environment, as well as reducing the total carbon and waste impact on the entire region. Our motto is BYOB Radnor – Bring Your Own Bag Radnor!



## Who Was Aldo Leopold?

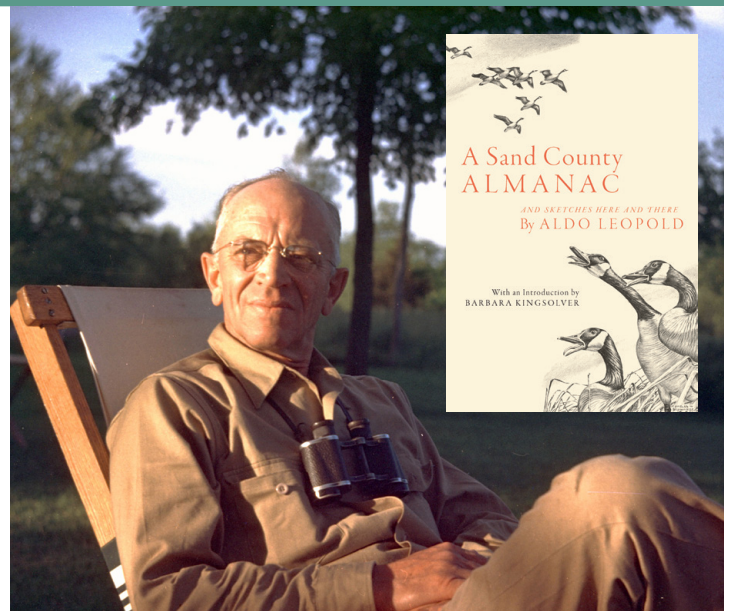
by Gretchen Groebel

Aldo Leopold (1887–1948) was an American author, scientist, ecologist, forester, conservationist, and environmentalist. As a child, he spent many hours outside, observing and sketching what he saw in nature. He attended Yale School of Forestry and became a professor at the University of Wisconsin. He bought a worn-out farm in Wisconsin and documented his family's efforts to restore the land.

His work strongly influenced game management in the United States. He helped to found the Wildlife Society and made many contributions to the conservation movement.

A prolific writer of scholarly articles and textbooks, Leopold is perhaps best known for *A Sand County Almanac* and *Sketches Here and There*, a collection of essays aimed at a general audience.

In the *Almanac*, Leopold records his observations on the nature around him, in which every living thing has a niche in the ecosystem. This influential book has sold over 2 million copies since its publication in 1949.



*“We abuse land because we see it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.”* — Aldo Leopold



# Replenishing The Tree Canopy in Radnor

by Gretchen Groebel

175 families picked up native trees at our Annual Free Tree Giveaway the weekend of October 15 & 16, 2022. Special thanks to ALL of the volunteers who came out to lend a hand (I could not have done it without you), including Shreiner Tree Care for helping with tree selection advice, loading trees into cars and Radnor Township Public Works Department for helping me unload 500 trees. This is the first year we have included evergreens and residents were thrilled with the new additions.

We are committed to the long-term health of our local environment. Keeping the tree canopy green in Radnor Township is crucial to help keep our air and waterways clean, provide important habitat for wildlife, mitigate storm water runoff and provide a more tranquil, beautiful place to live. Octoraro Native Plant Nursery, Sam Brown's Nursery and Pleasant Run Nursery were our suppliers this year.

A very special thanks to all of our sponsors who help support this effort. Please consider becoming a member or donating online so we can continue to fund this important initiative.





## Gardening for Good: Supporting Insects in the Garden by Samantha Nestory

In the face of a rapidly changing world, the choices we make in our gardens are more vital than ever. Wildlife of all sorts increasingly need our gardens for food and shelter as our wild lands dwindle, insects chief among them. Insects are among the most numerous, diverse, and incredible living things on the planet, deserving of our effort and admiration.

The key to gardening for insects is choosing native plants. Many insects are considered “specialists”, meaning they rely on a specific group of plants for survival, because they have evolved alongside those plants for millions of years. Simply put, to support our region’s native insects, we need to use our region’s native plants. The monarch butterfly and its reliance on milkweed (*Asclepias*) is a prime example of this kind of specialist relationship – monarch caterpillars can only successfully grow and thrive by eating the leaves, flowers, and buds of milkweed. And there are hundreds of thousands of other insects with similarly spectacular specificity!

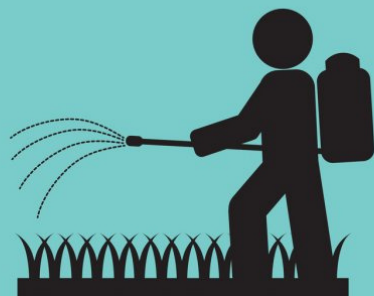
Brown-hooded owlet caterpillars only eat the leaves of goldenrods and asters (*Solidago*, *Symphytotrichum*). Spring beauty mining bees only collect the pollen from spring beauty (*Claytonia*) for their young. Loosestrife bees only collect the floral oils from native loosestrife (*Lysimachia*). Oak apple gall wasps only lay their eggs in the newly emerged leaves of oaks (*Quercus*). And the list goes on. So it turns out, gardening for good is pretty simple: use native plants, plant a brighter future.



American lady (*Vanessa virginiensis*) caterpillar on pearly everlasting (*Anaphalis margaritacea*). Photo by Samantha Nestory.



Brown-hooded owlet on New England aster (*Symphytotrichum novae-angliae*). Photo by Samantha Nestory.



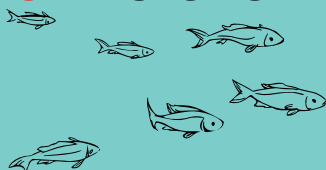
### USE CAN LEAD TO:

**-CONTAMINATION OF LOCAL AQUATIC LIFE**

**-UNINTENDED DEATH OF POLLINATORS**  
*(these are all the good insects in your yard)*

**- HEALTH RISKS THROUGH EXPOSURE**  
*(people & wildlife)*

**STOP INSECTICIDE USE**



SOURCE: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2984095/>  
Radnor Conservancy 2021 - created by Ben Peters  
[www.RadnorConservancy.org](http://www.RadnorConservancy.org)





# Bird Town in Radnor Township

by Phil Witmer

Perhaps you are not aware that Radnor Township is a 'Bird Town.' Well, Radnor has been a Bird Town since 2013 partnering with Radnor Conservancy since then to support our mission. 'What is a Bird Town,' you might ask? The program began in 2010 as a way for Audubon PA to reach out to municipalities to encourage building safe habitats for birds. Community members from each municipality work with their Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) or other designated agency to educate the public about the benefits of providing native plants and safe places for birds and people. We love birds but, more importantly, we love people. Birds provide many ecological services that benefit humans from pollinating plants to disseminating seeds to eating insects. So, what's good for birds is good for people.

So, why native plants? First, a native plant is a plant that has evolved over thousands of years in our region. That means somewhere in the mid-Atlantic area, not somewhere in southwest USA. You wouldn't expect a cactus to survive very well in our winters and many of our plants wouldn't do well in Arizona (at least not without a lot of watering.) That is part of the issue. A plant native to our region has evolved to survive with our climate, our soils and our insects. Insects are the key for birds. Our native plants have co-evolved with native insects which means that our insects depend on having native plants. But our birds have co-evolved with native insects and the birds depend on them. Even if a bird is predominately a seed eating bird like a sparrow, it feeds its young insects. Just like we wouldn't feed our babies steak, most bird nestlings need insects. It's a beautiful partnership. Our native birds rely on native insects and the native insects rely on native plants.



Chestnut-sided Warbler. Photo by Phil Witmer.

The Bird Town organization has gone through some changes over the last year. Audubon PA merged into Audubon Mid-Atlantic. This re-organization meant that Audubon no longer had the resources to support Bird Town. A group of passionate volunteers jumped into action and formed Bird Town Pennsylvania, LLC and we're working under the auspices of the Pennsylvania Audubon Chapters (PAAC). We now have many resources to assist Bird Towns with their work. Check out our new webpage at: [birdtownpa.org](http://birdtownpa.org).

Join us to learn more. We need volunteers like you to spread the word in your community. Contact Gretchen Groebel at: [ggroebel@radnorconservancy.org](mailto:ggroebel@radnorconservancy.org)



Yellow Rumped Warbler. Photo by Barbara Beck.



Ruby crowned kinglet. Photo by Barbara Beck.



## Community Science Water Monitoring

by Lauren McGrath

The Watershed Protection Program at Willistown Conservation Trust (WCT) has teamed up with Darby Creek Valley Association (DCVA) and Stroud Water Research Center to create a community science water monitoring program in Darby Creek! This collaborative project aims to create a network of training and mentoring opportunities to empower the neighbors of Darby Creek to collect high quality stream data and become water advocates for their community. Since 2021, WCT and DCVA have trained over 20 volunteers at 17 monitoring sites throughout the Darby Creek Watershed. The long-term goal of this project is to use the information collected from Darby Creek to advise restoration decisions, like choosing the most effective location to improve riparian buffers or the best place to install a rain garden to slow down storm water entering the stream. Detailed monitoring data will also help to identify pollution sources and areas of the landscape that pose a risk to watershed health and integrity.

While the Trust is focusing on the headwaters of Darby Creek, the partnership with DCVA ensures that this program is being implemented throughout the entire Darby Creek Watershed. This whole-watershed approach will provide opportunities to learn about how the waterway changes as it moves downstream and will highlight challenges that local communities face such as flooding, thermal pollution, freshwater salinization,



Little Darby Creek monitoring site in Wayne. Photo by Gretchen Groebel

and erosion and sediment problems and will provide a foundation to address those issues. The data we collect will help address these concerns starting at the origin of the stream, right in the Trust's program area. Our waterways are a valuable part of our environment and are a reflection of the health of the entire landscape – the more we understand how they are being impacted by human activity (and protected by highly valuable forests and wetlands), the more effective we can be at preserving and restoring them.

Gretchen Groebel participates as a volunteer data collector for this program at a site in Radnor Township (Little Darby Creek) on West Wayne Avenue.

## Comprehensive Plan Update

by Cheryl Tumola

Our last newsletter contained an article about Land Use Planning in Radnor Township; at that time we were awaiting the adoption of the budget. The budget passed which included funds for hiring a consultant to guide the process. The Township Manager and staff requested proposals and received numerous responses; the responses were evaluated by the manager, a committee of the Commissioners and staff. They chose Michael Baker International.

Our Township solicitor has been working on a contract with Michael Baker once that is done the staff and the contractor will participate in sharing existing documents pertaining to Land Use (i.e. zoning code, previous plans and their appendices). A Comp Plan steering committee will be chosen and it is proposed that the committee and consultant will embark on a tour of the Township.

We were informed that the Township Administration intends to involve the community in a substantial way throughout the process and that they are seeking ways to broadcast their efforts.

Once again please stay alert to these possibilities so that the end product truly reflects what the populace would like to see in the future of Radnor Township.



## “Hey Dad, What’s That?” by Donald Park

The inevitable question abounds whenever my children and I are outdoors together. We might be hiking or walking the dogs when an unfamiliar flower, colorful mushroom or captivating bird snares our attention. While helping in the garden, my inquisitive children revel in asking me about every insect and butterfly. There’s always something fascinating to identify.

I’ve recently approached the kids’ inquiries as opportunities to “learn something together” rather than hazarding a guess. After copious eye rolls and heavy sighs, my children generally acquiesce. Collectively, we observe our subject: its shape, size, color. My daughter might draw what she sees; my son prefers his encyclopedic lists of details. We catalog as much information as possible and take photos to either compare with guide books or upload to identification apps.

When it comes to ID apps, I defer to expert advice about what works best. Sergio Peçanha’s recent opinion article noted “Michigan State University found that Picture This and Plantnet were the most accurate” for identifying plants. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/interactive/2022/climate-change-backyard-gardening-permaculture-fall/>



Spicebush Swallowtail on Phlox paniculata. Photo by Donald Park

My favorite app is an update to Cornell’s Merlin Bird ID that can identify birds by sound. As Margaret Renkl explains in her essay, “the app can identify some 400 North American species so far and will keep expanding.” <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/26/opinion/cornell-birdsong-id-app.html>

Sharing these discoveries with my children helps connect us to the natural world. The bird sound identification might even afford a brief interlude from questions, because as I explained to my kids, the process “works better if we listen quietly.”

## Trail Updates



*We would like to remember and honor the life of Harry Murray, who worked tirelessly on the Radnor Trail and Radnor Trail Extension Projects. Mr. Murray worked for over thirty five years as a project architect and project manager on numerous architectural, historic preservation, trail, and streetscape projects.*

### Radnor Trail Extension:

Campbell Thomas & Co and Radnor Township Staff have come back to the Board of Commissioners (BOC) to present alternative solutions to some environmental and design challenges.

Arsenic was found in some of the railbed and remediation is needed. Two solutions are possible. The BOC voted to “Cap” the arsenic instead of “Total Removal.”

The consultants and township staff had been asked to review four options to bring the trail across or under Radnor-Chester Road. The BOC chose, what they felt, is a safer option of building a large culvert that will go under Radnor Chester Road. This will connect both sections of the trail, allowing easy passage for pedestrians and cyclists and large construction vehicles needed for future trail construction to the east without interfering with Radnor-Chester Road. Once the new designs and engineering are completed, Campbell Thomas & Co will present to the BOC for approval. This project has received many grants and will continue to seek more to cover expenses.

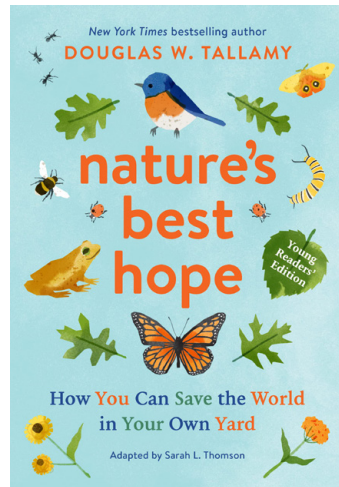
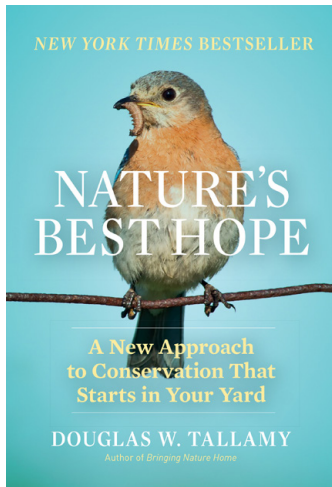
### Darby-Paoli Multi-Use Trail:

Meliora, the engineering firm and trail consultant, recently presented to the BOC the history and the current status of the trail project. There are three sections in the proposed trail design. The engineering phase has been completed. Permits need to be obtained as well as infiltration testing. In the near future, the project will be presented to the Shade Tree Commission, Parks & Recreation, and neighbors for input. The project will require substantial grant funding.

To get a detailed overview of these two trail projects, please view the Radnor Township’s October 17, 2022 BOC meeting Agenda Packet: <https://d3n9y02raazwpg.cloudfront.net/radnor/5d175e31-5da9-11ec-85e3-0050569183fa-e3f7d3c7-1718-4329-b4e8-22f3e8438737-1665594328.pdf>



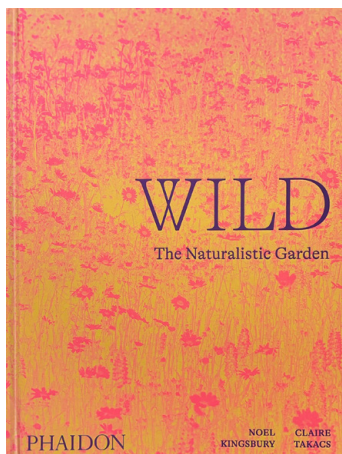
# Gardening with Native Plants — Resources and Good Reads...



## *Nature's Best Hope*

by Doug Tallamy  
(and young reader version)

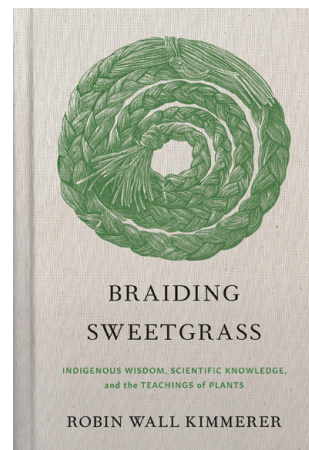
Nature's Best Hope shows how homeowners everywhere can turn their yards into conservation corridors that provide wildlife habitats. You will walk away with specific suggestions you can incorporate into your own yard.



## *Wild, The Naturalistic Garden*

by Noel Kingsbury

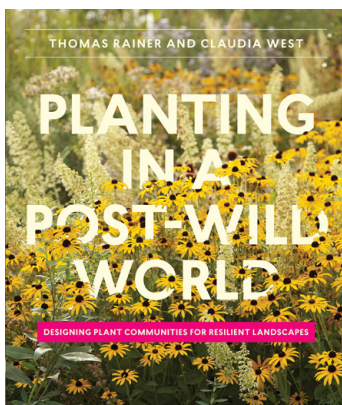
A stunning exploration of one of the hottest trends in garden design, nature-based planting with an eco-aware approach, featuring the work of leading designers such as Sean Hogan, Piet Oudolf, and Dan Pearson.



## *Braiding Sweetgrass*

by Robin Wall Kimmerer

As a botanist, Robin Wall Kimmerer has been trained to ask questions of nature with the tools of science. As a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, she embraces the notion that plants and animals are our oldest teachers.



## *Planting in a Post-Wild World: Designing Plant Communities for Resilient Landscapes*

by Claudia West and Thomas Rainer

An inspiring call to action dedicated to the idea of a new nature—a hybrid of both the wild and the cultivated—that can flourish in our cities and suburbs.



## *A View From Federal Twist: A New Way of Thinking About Gardens, Nature and Ourselves*

by James Golden

Part experimental horticulturist and part philosopher, James Golden has written an important book for ecological gardeners and anyone interested in exploring the relationship between gardens, nature, and ourselves.



# The Radnor Conservancy Board: The Work Behind the Mission

by Kathryn Beaumont Murphy

The heart of a nonprofit organization is its board of trustees. Nonprofit boards generally are empowered by the organization's charter and bylaws to appoint an executive director, to create policy and procedure, and to ensure the organization's financial health, which often includes fundraising efforts.

A strong board, then, will be comprised not only of members who are passionate about the mission of the organization, but those with experience in leadership, management, governance, fundraising – and, just as important, “friend raising.”

The Radnor Conservancy's Board of Directors is made up of 11 members who bring both a depth and breadth of different experiences in support of our mission. While certain members have long been involved in conservation issues and/or have deep knowledge of



Laura Luker (past President) and Tyler Ridgeway (current Vice President) potting up plants for the Native Plant Sale.

the Radnor community, others bring leadership and governance experience from serving on other nonprofit boards. Still other members were inspired by concern for the environment or passion to help the community to volunteer for their first board-level position.

Creating a strong board not only for the present, but the future, is an evergreen task for any nonprofit. Radnor Conservancy invites community members with an interest in, or desire to contribute to, the organization's mission at a core level to reach out to our Board President, Lorna Atkinson or Vice President, Tyler Ridgeway. Radnor Conservancy values our community members' engagement, and we welcome any and all experience, expertise and passion that supports our goal of sustaining our natural resources well into the future.

## Special thanks to ALL of our community partners.

Please consider Radnor Conservancy in your year-end giving plans. Your donation is fully tax deductible.

# Become a MEMBER TODAY!



### Membership Levels

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Young Friend (30 and younger) - \$40.00                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Trailblazer - \$250.00     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single - \$75.00  | <input type="checkbox"/> Conservationist - \$500.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family - \$125.00   | <input type="checkbox"/> Steward - \$1000+          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Memorial Gift or Honor Someone Special (any amount) - \$_____ |   |

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State and Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email (please): \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Please let us know if you are interested in upcoming programs and events.

Please make checks payable to **Radnor Conservancy** and mail this form to Radnor Conservancy, P.O. Box 48, Wayne, PA 19087 or visit [www.radnorconservancy.org](http://www.radnorconservancy.org) to join online.

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