

The BIRD CALL

Newsletter of the Bronx River-Sound Shore Audubon Society, Inc.

Garden Nursery Encourages Going Organic

By Jeff Zuckerman

Since 1944, when the Krautter family opened the Sprainbrook Nursery, gardeners from near and far have been treated to the most extensive varieties of plants, flowers, vegetables, trees and shrubs. In addition, Sprainbrook has always been the place for gardening advice for everyone from novice to expert gardeners.

Al Krautter, son of the original owners, was trained at Cornell University and has worked his entire life in the family business.

In May, Scarsdale High School hosted a "Sustainability Day." There were exhibits of every kind and a number of interesting speakers. Bronx River-Sound Shore Audubon was well represented all day with a table displaying what we do and some of our board members were on hand.

Al Krautter was exhibiting at the very next table and our fascination began as we spoke to him during the day. Then he gave a talk to many of those in attendance. He referred to himself as

"one of the bad guys" for many years. He sold thousands of gallons of harmful fertilizers and pesticides.

However, after doing research and training in organic gardening, Al Krautter has now embraced the need for, and effectiveness of, organics. In fact, when you ride by Sprainbrook Nursery, there is a huge banner covering the roof of a large building which announces "ORGANICS."

Al took a huge chance after all the years of doing it one way. That "way" was the way he was formally trained at Cornell as well as the way he was taught by his parents. It was the way of using toxic materials because he believed there was no other way to produce "good" plants, flowers and vegetables.

Would his customers still be there for him? Would they, too, embrace organic gardening? The answer to these questions is a resounding "Yes!" At the age of . . . let's just say Al has his AARP card . . . he has proven that you can teach an old dog new tricks. We were emotionally moved listening to him speak.



Al Krautter had an epiphany. Go organic!

Want to know more? Al produces the most extraordinarily helpful newsletter you'll ever read. It's called *Krautter's Korner*. Just go to his website www.sprainbrook.com. Or go to the nursery and pick up a free copy of it every month.

The bottom line is that this is a special guy from a special family. They are here to help all of us help the planet.

Jeff Zuckerman is a Board Member and Treasurer of BRSS.

Birdscaping Helps Our Native Birds

By Tim Mack



Grow seed-producing plants like purple coneflower to attract a variety of birds.

Birdscaping is the combo of America's two top hobbies, gardening and wild bird feeding. There is nothing like putting up a tube or suet feeder and watching beautiful songbirds enjoy a snack. But doing this is not enough because songbird habitats are disappearing at an alarming rate due to development and pesticides.

But you can make a huge difference by planting native plants and trees in your yard. Try to emulate nature by starting from the ground up. You don't need a huge yard to attract songbirds. It's variety and layering that counts, not size or width of property.

You can let a section of your yard go wild that will attract them. But that's no fun. You want to get your hands dirty and start gardening. Clear a sec-

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*Bronx River-Sound Shore Audubon Society, Inc.
is a chapter of the
National Audubon Society
serving the communities of
Bronxville, Eastchester, Edgemont, Hartsdale,
Larchmont, Mamaroneck, Mount Vernon, New
Rochelle, Pelham, Scarsdale, and Tuckahoe*

BRSS Annual Meeting



Our Annual Meeting honorees, Jeff Zuckerman and Clare Gorman (on left), received many accolades honoring their dedicated service to BRSS and other community organizations. New York Assemblypersons Amy Paulin and George Latimer (on right) were among the presenters. President Doug Bloom (center) was elected to his third two-year term. We elected two new members to the Board—Jeanne LaPorta and Lika Levy. Over 60 people attended the festivities at Five Island Park on June 5th.

Special Thanks to the People Who Gave Donations to the Seed Sale This Year

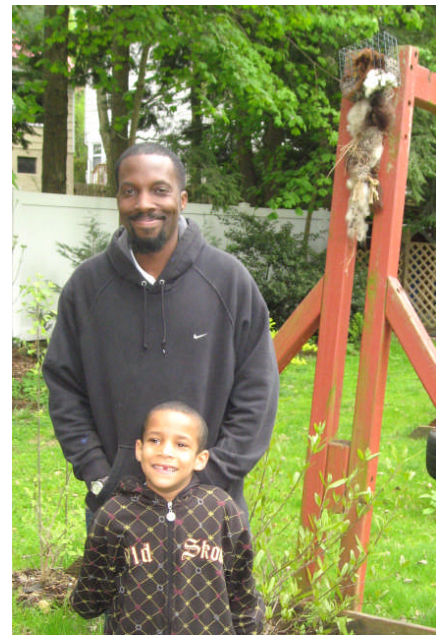
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Birdscaping

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tion and start with some plants that produce seeds like asters and poppies. Then some nectar producing shrubs like rhododendrons and azaleas. Then you can go with some small and midsize growing trees like dogwoods and cherries. Then the big boys like maples and pines. Use your imagination. Plant in odd numbers. Plant variety.

Songbirds are looking for 3 things: food, water and shelter. By doing the above you definitely will attract them. But to bring them out you should add any of these four things: feeders, a bird bath, bird houses, and nesting material. Just sit back and enjoy them. Your yard will never be a boring spot for you or for local songbirds again.



Tim Mack runs Tim's Birdscaping business in Hartsdale. To contact him call 917-208-5507 or tygercrane212@aol.com.

Tim Mack with his son in his "birdscaped" property. Note the nesting material hanging from the swing set.

Welcome New Members

We hope you will join in our field trips and programs.

Bronxville

Lorraine Lange
Alice O'Flynn
Stephen Palfrey
Dorothy Shields

Eastchester

Edith Degaetano

Hartsdale

Patricia Haber
Daniel Thomas

Larchmont

P. Marszale

Mamaroneck

Susan Benton
Akemi Masui
Laura Solow

Mount Vernon

Judith Hanes
Patrick Merrell
Alice Pace

New Rochelle

Andrea Alampi
Sidney Dulman
William Grabel
Judith Pinals

Livia Sklar

Sandra Weinstein

Pelham

Isabel Harther
Roberta Rosen
Duncan Urquhart

Scarsdale

Ruth Ernst
Robert Greenstein
Jerry Huo
Lauren Kayaian
Ruth Suzman

Tuckahoe

Denise DeRosa



Everything's Coming up Roses

This was the spring of the rose-breasted grosbeak. I have fed birds for 30 years and have never had one at my feeders—as least that I knew about.

This gorgeous bird—black and white with a triangle of rose-red on its breast—visited my feeders during the month of May.

What was particularly interesting was that I had at least ten people ask me if I could identify a strange bird at their feeders. Each time it was the rose-breasted grosbeak.

Are there any rose-breasted grosbeak experts out there who know why they were so abundant this spring?

Sandy Morrissey

Field Trip Reports

Read, Marshlands and Larchmont Reservoir April 13—by Doug Bloom

Nine participants saw 74 species of birds including osprey, great horned owls on a nest and a close up view of a pine warbler. It was an overcast spring day. This trip was done with CWAS Audubon.

Central Park May 4—by Neil Powell

Gathering at West 77th Street, the day was already looking promising as we had spotted an indigo bunting and several warblers and heard countless other birds before we even entered the park.

Eight birders from BRSS and Hudson River Audubon tore ourselves away from the birds near the street and entered the Park. It turned out to be a spectacular day for bird watching. We identified 71 species of birds over approximately three hours, including 21 warblers, 4 varieties of vireos, a rose-breasted grosbeak and a Baltimore and an orchard oriole. One high-point that morning was a long series of looks at a hooded warbler. We were also able to spot both waterthrushes!

As we left the park several of us were discussing how lucky we are to live so close to so many great areas to watch birds.



These early-birders caught all the warblers.

Doodletown May 18—by Doug Bloom

On a Beautiful May day 19 participants saw 60 species of birds including 15 warblers. Some of the highlights were cerulean and blackburnian warblers and seeing an American redstart on a nest. We had some good looks at a few olive-sided flycatchers sitting at top of trees in the open, also a common nighthawk on a branch. There were also some beautiful looks at indigo buntings. This trip was done with Central Westchester Audubon.

Constitution Marsh June 1—by Orlando Hidalgo

This tidal marsh has been a birding hot spot for many years. We had a wonderful trip leader, Richard Anderson who is the Asst. Director of the marsh.

He started the morning with interesting history about the tidal marsh, and then we went outside to be briefed on canoeing safety. After putting on our life vests, off we went, 18 people in 7 canoes raring to go.

We had 37 species of birds including a juvenile bald eagle. Out on the marsh, we all stopped and gathered around a marsh wren nest where we learned that male marsh wrens make many dummy nests within the reeds and wait for the female to choose one that would then become the real nest. Then we stopped at a muskrat lodge where we learned how important the muskrat really is to the well being of the tidal marsh.

Wow! A great day canoeing!



West Point is in view across the Hudson.

Bronx River-Sound Shore Audubon Society, Inc.

(formerly Scarsdale Audubon Society)
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??? Question for Members ???

Prospective Birding Trip to the Southwest

By Neil Powell

Hello fellow birding enthusiasts! A few people looking to expand their bird sightings beyond the northeast have voiced interest in BRSS sponsoring a trip to the southwest; either Eastern Arizona (Tucson, the Green Valley, the Sonora Desert, etc.) or South Texas (Corpus Christ, Fort Davis, Big Bend National Park and the Hill Country).

The purpose of this article is to determine the level of interest there is out there in "BRSS-land."

The trip would be for about one week, in April, 2009. The ground costs, while not known exactly, are estimated to be approximately \$2,500.00 per person; air fare would, of course, be extra.

These are two very special birding areas, I am told. I have never been there to bird, but I can't wait to go!

Please contact Neil Powell at (914) 777-2206 or send an email to n.powellatmillpond@verizon.net by August 7, 2008 and let him know if this trip is of interest, and which of the two areas (Eastern Arizona or South Texas) holds greater interest for you.

Looking forward to hearing from you. Happy Birding!

Neil Powell is a BRSS Board member.



Want to add a roadrunner to your life list? A trip to the southwest should do it.