

**THINK GLOBALLY, ACT LOCALLY**

Marine Park is one of New York City's largest properties and it has great value within the ecology of the larger western hemisphere. All New York City green spaces serve as stopover habitat along the Atlantic Flyway for birds and butterfly species. This range and purpose must be seriously taken into account as plants are chosen to be cultivated.

This environmental work serves to strengthen habitats for this year and for the following long-term effects:

- offset climate change
- improve air quality
- absorb storm water runoff
- improve biodiversity
- sustain shade and heat reduction
- increase value of surrounding neighborhoods
- improve public health and well-being

CARE OF MARINE PARK'S PLANTS

Marine Park is 798 acres of fragrant salt marshes, upland woods, grasslands with over 60 garden beds around active recreation areas. This parkland is habitat to a unique array of flora and fauna, but it does not take care of itself.

There is a misunderstanding by some in the general public that natural areas take care of themselves. That is not the case in urban greenspaces. Climate change temperatures or winds and severe storms along with trampling and dumping disrupt and can obliterate a healthy habitat.

Our jobs are to combat that destruction with horticultural and ecological restoration. Basic tenets for horticultural and ecological restoration projects in Marine Park are to

- remove invasive species
- promote native species
- create bird-friendly, bee-friendly, and butterfly-friendly plant communities
- use pesticides as minimally as possible

- design for visual beauty and sensory experiences in formal, semi-formal or naturalistic character

SPECIFICATIONS & POLICIES**The Concept of Beauty**

The concept of beauty is fluid depending on different traditions. Native gardening draws its inspiration from the natural environment rather than the formality of European gardens. When native plants come into bloom, their gentle, subtle flowers are a delight, but do not expect a show of flashy colors. Native species tend to be less showy and can be more architectural in their green shapes. These are the choices landscape designers work with in making their visual statement.

Plant PalettesSpecies Choices

NYC Parks' Natural Resources Group has established a broad list of approved native species for planting in natural areas. However, brighter, non-native or cultivar plants may include welcome gardens at entrances to the park and formal garden beds. Marine Park's Lead Gardener chooses the plant palette in concert with landscape architects and park professionals. None of these plants may be on the invasive species list.

Bulbs

Daffodil plantings erupt in spring throughout City parks. Please encourage enthusiastic volunteers to consider other bulb species such as blue bells and alliums to add other colors, shapes, bloom times and they are nearer to native choices.

Sources

Seed mixes and plant sources must be approved by Parks. Generic seed combinations such as Meadow in a Can are not native to this area. Some plant providers tend to misidentify their plants. Parks will approve reputable sources.

Soil & Fertilizers Amendments

DO NOT use soils donated from construction sites outside the park. They often contain unwanted toxins. Whenever possible, budget into your projects clean, tested soils. Since much of Marine Park was built on landfill, added clean soil is a welcome, healthy addition to the ecological environment.

Any fertilizer used must be a nitrogen based, slow release fertilizer. Plant Tone or Osmocote are the preferred brands.

Protective Fencing

To avoid trampling or mowing over, especially of new plantings, protection and demarcation of some sort is needed. Budget into your projects fencing that is visually pleasing, can withstand seasonal storms, and is easily removed. Parks standard fencing includes chain-link, range fencing and guardrail (core ten, aluminum, and wood). The least expensive of these is range fencing. The sole supplier for range fencing in the US is <https://www.louispage.com/>

Signage

Some projects will be solely for landscape purposes and need no signage, while others would benefit from directional or educational signage.

Interpretive Signs

Old signage needs to be replaced or removed. This is a great future project for the historic signage for Gerritsen Avenue and for the Pratt-White Oval. Others are needed for restoration of the natural history interpretive signs.

Plant Labels

Labeling is a staff intensive proposition to keep up with, so labeling is limited to the educational site adjacent to the Nature Center.

Plant labeling must follow Parks Department guidelines:

- stake signs into ground
- do not tie onto the plants or trees
- use agreed upon font specs

Ornaments & Memorials

Let the natural beauty of plants and the landscape shine. Plastic flowers and ornamentation are discouraged by Parks and will

be removed. Parks Enforcement Control considers unauthorized memorials litter and therefore summonsable.

Please promote instead the commemorative bench and tree programs that NYC Parks approved citywide for a reasonable fee. See the Park Director.

VOLUNTEER GARDENERS

NYC Parks is dependent upon the generosity of volunteers and donors to provide assistance that elevates the park beyond the standard of care the agency can do with its resources. Volunteer gardeners must either be trained through the Super Stewards program to be able to work on their own or work under the direction of a Parks employee or Super Steward. Marine Park is lucky to have four trained Super Stewards. Please contact the Park Director to become a Super Steward or work with a trained person.

PARKS APPROVALS

Should other projects arise for our preserved natural areas or landscaped areas, the Forever Wild Committee will have the opportunity to review plans and make recommendations. The offices of Parks Borough Commissioner and the Park Director make final decisions and authorize approvals for all Brooklyn parks landscapes.

MORE ON BIODIVERSITY IN NEW YORK CITY

Wild birds representing more than 350 species—almost a third of all the species in North America—live in or pass through New York City each year. They flock by the millions to Jamaica Bay, Central Park, the islands of New York Harbor, and countless other pockets of greenery that dot the City's landscape. Marine Park's Gerritsen inlet lies on the western edge of Jamaica Bay and its salt marsh sustains breeding osprey, ring-necked pheasants, and waterfowl while the upland woods and meadow sustain songbirds migrating between the upper reaches of Canada and the far end of South American. We will plant species that will provide food for sustenance before the birds' long trip south and for nesting areas for breeding.

Meanwhile, the monarch butterfly depends upon milkweeds as a larval host. Eastern populations of this iconic butterfly migrate at the end of the summer 3,000 miles to their wintering ground in Central Mexico. In the spring successive generations follow the re-growth of milkweed and spread north to the Canadian Maritimes. In the last 15 years monarch numbers have plummeted and it is now being considered for Endangered Species designation. Among the reasons for its decline is the eradication of milkweed in farm fields facilitated by “Round-up Ready” genetically modified crops. The Commission for Environmental Cooperation recommends in its North American Monarch Conservation Plan the planting of regionally appropriate milkweed species in areas where

milkweed is a limited resource. Planting milkweed and other late flowering species in "Butterfly Gardens" will give butterflies sustenance for their trip to South America and give a corps of professional and volunteer gardeners the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to on-going conservation initiatives that are very local in each increment of deployment, but are expected to result in measurable global effect. We hope to couple this work with a butterfly banding program to help scientists study further the passage of monarch butterfly populations.

Contact:
Marine Park Director,
margot.perron@parks.nyc.gov