



The Newsletter of the Friends of Mt. Agamenticus

Summer 2025

OF WILD LUPINE AND THE KARNER BLUE

Have you ever felt as if you depended upon someone to the point where you believed you would cease to exist if you had to live without them?

Needless to say, every living thing on Earth depends upon something for its survival, and in turn, becomes a vital resource that helps something else survive. Earth's trees, plants and insects have formed eons-old interdependent relationships so that when one is taken out of the web of living things, it causes a crucial thread to be pulled from the ecological fabric, often causing ripple effect extinctions.

In June, all across the state of Maine, in fields, along roadsides, and wending their way to the seashore, Common lupines (*Lupinus polyphyllus*), also known as Bigleaf or Russell

lupine, are blooming in shades of blue, purple, pink, red, yellow and white. Beloved by both tourists and Mainers alike, these sensational spires of densely packed blossoms are celebrated by photographers and artists. The iconic storybook, "Miss Rumphius", written and illustrated by Barbara Cooney, tells of the lady who scattered lupine seeds all around the mid-coast encouraging children to "do something to make the world more beautiful". The story is based upon the real Hilda Hamlin, who emigrated from England in the early 1900s and brought Lupine seeds with her.

But this hybrid species of lupine we see in great clusters - often growing up to four feet tall - has displaced and out-competed the native North American species, Sundial lupine (*Lupinus perennis*). Sundial lupine has been crowded out from its preferred habitat of dry, open woodlands or clearings and is "presumed extirpated" in Maine (meaning not located despite intensive searches of historical sites and other appropriate habitat, and virtually no likelihood that it will be rediscovered).



Sundial Lupine.



Karner Blue Butterfly

Gone with the Sundial lupine is the Karner blue butterfly, (*Lycaeides melissa samuelis*), which was critically dependent upon it. It is the only plant Karner blue larvae/caterpillars, can eat, while adults feed on the nectar. While most Karner blues live in Wisconsin, their territory extends throughout much of the Great Lakes region and in several northeastern states, including New York, Maine and New Hampshire. Karner blues were previously found in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Ontario, but are now considered extirpated (extinct) in those states.

Once again, we are witness to the disappearance of our native species; according to the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry, "Some populations [of *Lupinus perennis*] may have succumbed to residential development." Another sorrowful tale, much like the one of the endangered Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) population and its host plant, Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*).



White-tailed doe in a sea of Lupine flowers

Wild Lupine - Continued from page 1

What to do about this growing problem? Plant Native! Shrink your lawn, remove invasive plants, don't use poisons and chemicals, make a home for wildlife, design a native landscape and perhaps find guidance from Professor Doug Tallamy's "Home Grown National Park":

<https://homegrownnationalpark.org>

The "Wild Seed Project" of North Yarmouth, Maine is planning to re-stock the Sundial native species of lupine seeds for sale in early October; sign up at their website to be notified when seeds are back in stock (<https://shop.wildseedproject.net/products/sundial-lupine-lupinus-perennis-seeds>). "Wild Seed Project equips community members with the resources they need to collectively restore native plants that expand wildlife habitat, support biodiversity, and build climate resilience."

<https://wildseedproject.net> Email: shop@wildseedproject.net; info@wildseedproject.net



Sundial lupine at the summit of Mt. A. Started from seed, raised and planted by David Tibbetts in 2021.

WHY POLLINATORS NEED NATIVE HOST PLANTS

The US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) reports, "Pollinators have two basic habitat needs: a diversity of flowering native or naturalized plants, and egg-laying or nesting sites."

Most of us are familiar with the pollinator/host plant relationship of the Monarch Butterfly and native milkweeds; however, there are other pollinators in New England that have evolved with very specific native host plant needs and those that have limited plant preferences.

Native plants provide the proper chemical composition and other necessities our pollinators must have to survive and thrive; not even cultivars of some native plants, nor invasive plants with similar characteristics, can provide these requirements.

In their report, Pollinator Biology and Habitat/New England Technical Note (first link below), the NRCS also notes, "Pollinators are an integral part of our environment and our agricultural systems; they are important in 35% of global crop production. Animal pollinators include bees, butterflies, moths, wasps, flies, beetles, ants, bats and hummingbirds."

Protecting the life cycle of pollinators is crucial to the entire ecosystem; song birds and many other wildlife species depend on the larva (or caterpillar if the insect is a butterfly or a moth) of pollinators to feed to their young.

Therefore, a key part of this protection is learning to identify pollinator caterpillars, as shown in the last link from the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, so that they can be protected and become the adult pollinators that we all rely upon.



Bobolink on Lupine.

Robin Ohrt



Cassandra Ross photography

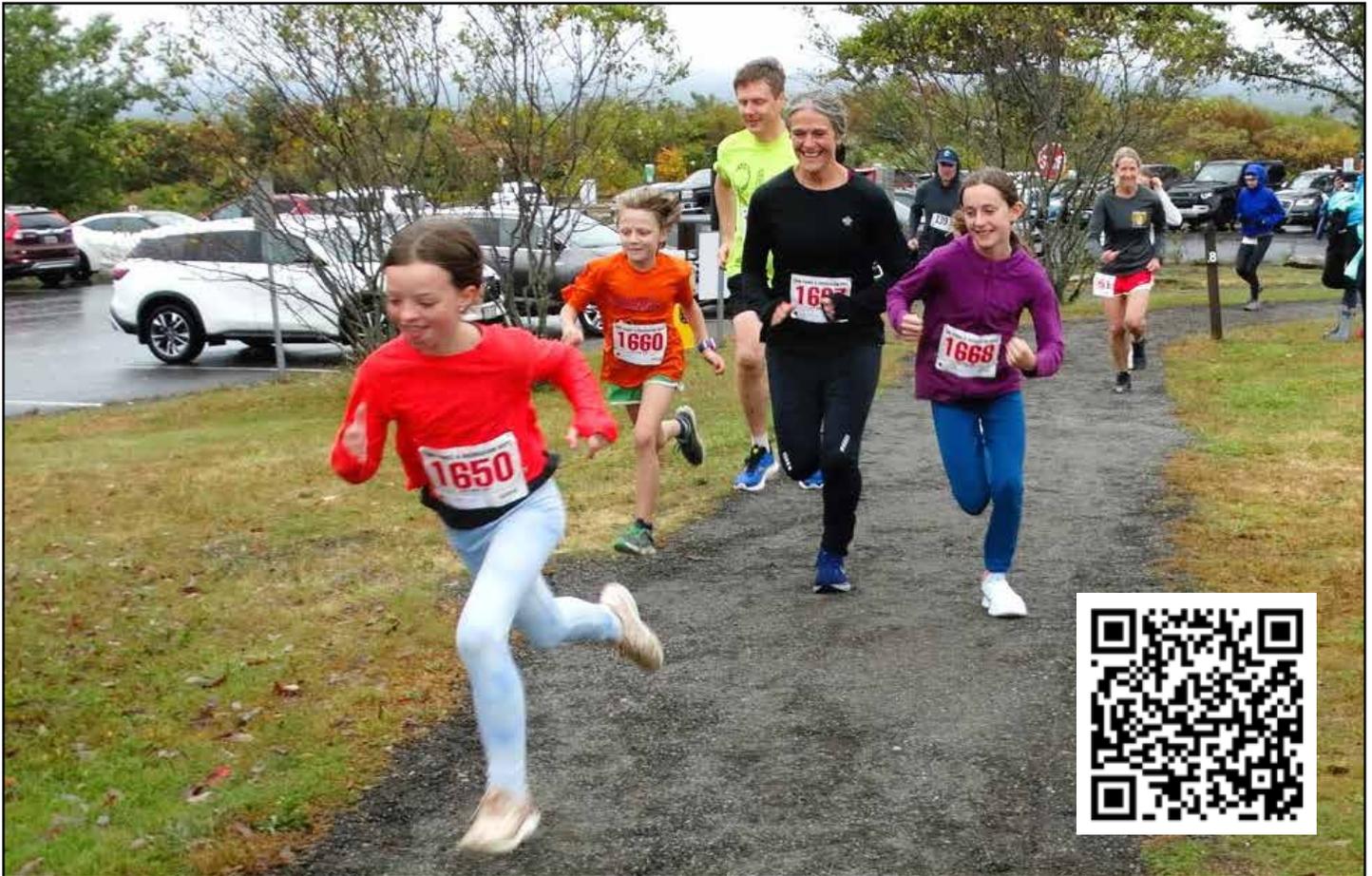
"Where sunlight meets innocence,
the forest holds its breath"

- Cassandra Ross, Rome, Maine

Listen

by Dean Fields – Portsmouth, NH

The birds sing.
Through the rainstorms,
the wind,
the sunshine.
What may seem a cacophony to some
is a constant reminder
of their presence.
We worry about silly things.
Politics, deadlines, needs.
They plague our minds
and we worry more.
Yet the birds still sing.
Maybe...
Possibly...
Maybe...
We should listen more.



Registration NOW OPEN for the 9th Annual
Mount Agamenticus Trail Challenge
on Saturday, September 20!

Run, hike, roll or stroll through either our 1 Mile or 5K course.

This challenge is timed the good ol' fashioned way with stop watches,
thanks to our local York Highschool Cross Country Team.

There are no traditional age category prizes, but there will be a raffle for all participants!

This year, any previous participants who beat their own personal Trail Challenge record
can receive a Mount Agamenticus Conservation Region logo pin!

As always, all funds raised go right back into Mount A conservation & education efforts.

Thank you for your continued support!

To sign up please visit <https://runsignup.com/Race/ME/York/MtATrailChallenge>

*Looking to be involved day-of or leading up to the event?
Volunteers are always needed! Please email rkerr@yorkmaine.org.*

Over \$5K Raised by FOMA for Big A Universal Access Trail Remediation Project in Online Auction

The first ever online auction held by the Friends of Mount Agamenticus (FOMA) from July 6 through 12 was a great success with over \$5K raised for the Big A Universal Access Trail Remediation Project!

Thank you to all the bidders who participated and congratulations to the 37 folks who had the winning bids on the amazing items donated by area businesses and individuals, without whom the auction wouldn't have achieved this fantastic result.

In addition to the auction, many individuals and businesses chose to support the Big A Universal Access Trail Remediation Project with financial donations for which FOMA is very grateful.

FOMA would also like to thank the amazing volunteers who contributed so much to implement and manage the numerous details throughout the process. *For auction results and donation page, go to: <https://givebutter.com/c/BigATrail> (click on Auction or Overview at the top of the page) or <https://agamenticus.org/foma>.*

Species Spotlight



Spotted Wintergreen *Chimaphila maculata* a Rare and Small Shrub

Very few of our broad-leaf woody-stem plants keep their leaves over the winter. But one that does is one of our smallest and is at the northern edge of its range in Maine. Commonly called spotted wintergreen or pipsissewa, a word from the Cree language pipsisikweu, meaning to break into small pieces, as it was used to treat kidney and gall stones as well as rheumatism, stomach problems, and as a poultice on sores and wounds.

The Maine Natural Areas Program tracks rare species within the State and spotted wintergreen has between 6 and 20 known sites where this plant occurs making it an endangered species in Maine with a rank of S2. Only growing a few inches in height, it is hard to spot among other understory plants on the forest floor but is much easier to find over the winter months with its evergreen leaves. The lance-shaped variegated leaves with their white stripes along the leaf veins make it easy to identify. Keep an eye out for this plant on the forest floor in oak and pine forests. Take a photo and try to get GPS coordinates. Then report your sighting on "Plant Share" by signing up on "Go Botany" (<https://gobotany.nativeplanttrust.org/plantshare/>).



Recent summit sighting of what may be a Long-tailed Weasel. Thank you for sharing Miriam Stevens!

The Friends of Mount Agamenticus

The Friends of Mount Agamenticus is a volunteer advocacy and stewardship group for the Mount Agamenticus Conservation Program. We assist program staff in carrying out educational, interpretive, community outreach, and public use objectives without compromising the integrity of the region's sensitive ecological habitat.

We are currently seeking Friends that can assist with any of the following tasks:

- Orienting and coordinating with new volunteers
- Researching fundraising opportunities
- Writing grants and newsletter articles
- Developing and managing website and social media

Scan the QR Code to "Like" the Mount Agamenticus Conservation Region on Facebook!



Please email friends@agamenticus.org if interested. To learn about additional Mt. A conservation opportunities, please visit our website agamenticus.org.

Newsletter written and designed by volunteers at the Friends of Mt. A.