

Saltmarsh Coastal-resilient Native Plant Garden, report, 2024

By Paulette Boling

In mid-April I asked Adam Lockley, gardener for the Saltmarsh Center, to add organic compost and mulch from Toscana to the garden.

On Monday, April 29, 2024 I met with Kelly Omand, botanist at the Nantucket Conservation Foundation, to assess the garden and advise.

A few of us met on Thursday mornings at 8 in the late spring and early summer to remove beach grass that had moved into the interior of the garden from the perimeter. Beach grass is helpful at the perimeter to stabilize the soil, especially when winter storms happen. We also continued to dig out the invasive vine called Black swallow-wort. We removed plants that had moved into the beach grass perimeter, removed grass-leaved goldenrod that had infiltrated other plants, and added some new potted natives from Surfing Hydrangea Nursery.

Members who helped – Maryann Wasik, Beth Davies, Liz Sheppard, Ruth Plandowski, Lynn Boyajian, Robin Youngman, Dottie Gennaro, Connie Ciggaran, Christine Dean, Sarah Johnson, and Paulette Boling, with additional help from Provisionals Jessica Katchen, Kate Roberts, and Kathy Stroz.

Our budget was for \$2500 but costs came to just under \$1500. Of that amount \$700 was for the compost and mulch in the spring and \$750+ was for plants from Surfing Hydrangea.

This was the third season for the garden, and it really came into its own. It is now filled with native plants, and it attracted positive feedback from passersby, Julie Jordin and Merrill McClusky, who helped us with the first seasons, and from visiting zone co-chairs Libby Moore and Peggy Mayfield, among others.

The Education Exhibit at the Green Thumb Show in mid-July at the Sconset Casino featured the garden and publicized it. The goal of the exhibit was to demonstrate the Saltmarsh Senior Center Garden's advantages by defining a Coastal-resilient garden, explaining the benefits of this kind of garden to the environment, and demonstrating our process in creating the garden. The exhibit won the Ann Lyon Crammond Education award from the GCA judges.

We are in the process of documenting the garden with the Remain Nantucket sponsored website called Nantucket footprints.

Saltmarsh Garden Plant List, 2024

Small tree/large shrub -

Prunus maritima – Beach plum

Shrubs -

Ilex glabra – Inkberry

Clethra alnifolia - Summersweet

Comptonia peregrina – Sweet fern

Perennials-

Euthamia graminifolia – Grass-leaved goldenrod - yellow flowers in fall

Solidago sempervirens – Seaside goldenrod, - tall, broad leaves, self-seeded

Asclepias tuberosa – Butterfly milkweed - orange flower, dry conditions

Asclepias syriaca - Common milkweed - pink flowered

Pyncnanthemum muticum - Broad-leaved mountain mint, deters rabbits

Eutrochium dubium - Coastal plain Joe Pye weed - pink flowers

Monarda fistulosa – Wild bee balm - lavender flowers

Silphium perfoliatum – Cup plant - tall, narrow, yellow flowers

Symphotrichum novae-angliae – New England aster – purple flower

Eupatorium perfoliatum – Boneset - white flower

Hibiscus moscheutos – Swamp rose mallow - damp conditions, large pink blooms in late summer

Helenium autumnale – Sneezeweed – fall-blooming, yellow flowers

Grasses-

Schizachyrium scoparium – Little bluestem – spikey and bluish

Eragrostis spectabilis – Purple love grass – low, fine purplish seeds

Bouteloua curtipendula – Side oats grama - low, small seed-heavy spike

Ammophila breviligulata – American beach grass – along the perimeter for stability

