

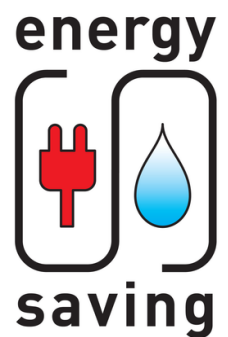
# The Village of Briarcliff Manor Sustainability Advisory Committee (SAC) - and - Environmental Advisory Council (EAC)

*July 2025 Newsletter*

## Welcome to our Summer Newsletter!

As temperatures (and our utility bills) begin to rise, it's a great time to explore avenues to conserve energy and save money.

- **EnergySmart Homes** is a program of Sustainable Westchester that will help you access resources to schedule a home energy audit, understand different clean energy options, incentives and financing, and connect you with vetted energy efficiency experts and licensed installers
- **GridRewards** is a free app that links to your ConEd account and rewards you for reducing your energy use during peak consumption days. On average, participants get \$80+/household; Use **code 5de526** when you sign up from Briarcliff Manor
- **Residential Solarize** is a Sustainable Westchester program that helps homeowners with a preliminary assessment to determine whether their home is suitable for solar panels, and connects them with pre-qualified installers
- **Conserving water saves energy and money.** Check for leaks; wash only full loads of laundry and dishes; install water-saving plumbing fixtures; use irrigation systems only when needed; plant native, drought-resistant plants



### Inside:

- SAC Activities Recap
- Residential Solarize
- Sustainable Landscaping Tips
- Sparta Brook Study
- New Native Pollinator Garden at the Library
- Native Plant Spotlight
- Upcoming Events



## SAC Activities Recap (Earth Day)

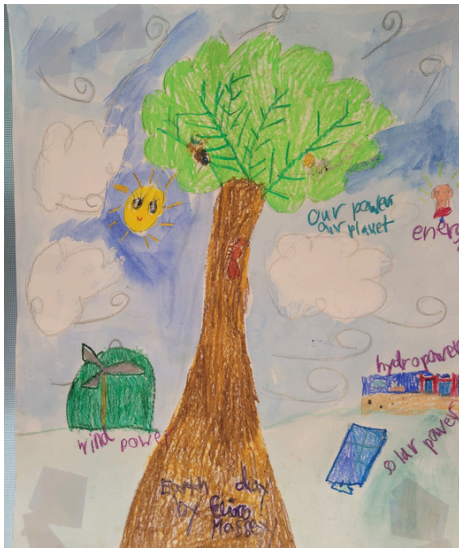
Briarcliff Earth Day 2025 was brought to you by **SAC** in partnership with the **Briarcliff Manor Recreation Department and Briarcliff PTA**. Residents braved the wind and came out to Stash the Trash, plant native flowers, and participate in games and sustainable crafts. We were proud to show off Briarcliff Manor's brand new electric vehicle purchased with a grant and the collaboration of the Village, SAC, our Climate Smart Task Force, and the Greater Hudson Valley Electric Vehicle Association.



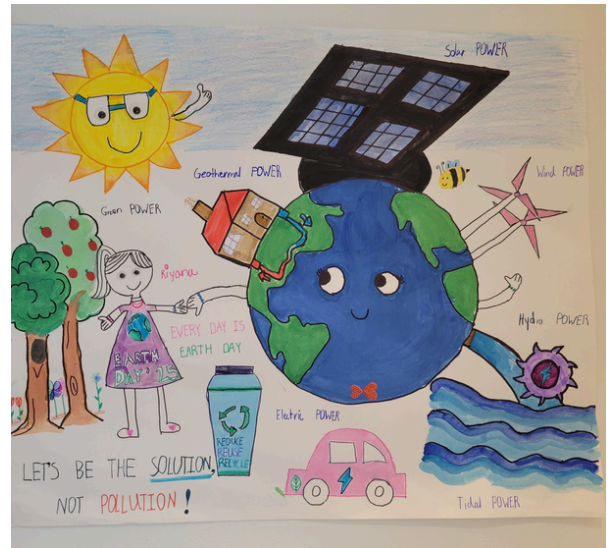


## SAC Activities Recap (Earth Day)

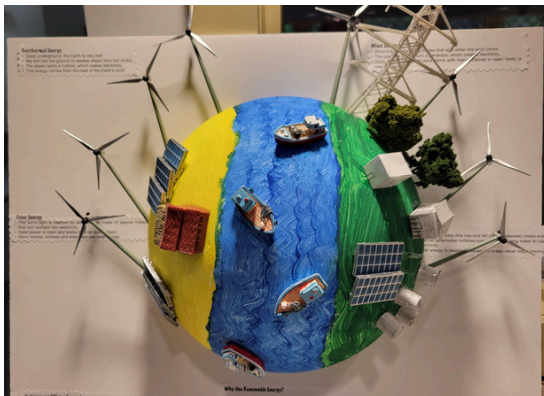
The Earth Day poster contest was jointly sponsored by **SAC**, the **Briarcliff Manor Recreation Department** and **Briarcliff PTA**. Here are some of the incredible entries from the talented students of Todd school on this year's **Earth Day theme: Our Power, Our Planet**.



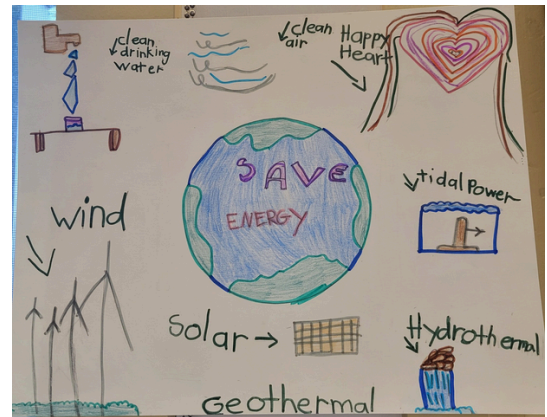
Elira M (Grade 1)



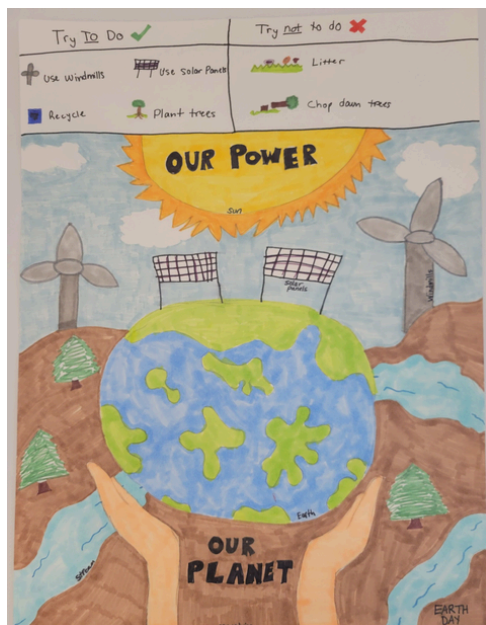
Kiyana P (Grade 1)



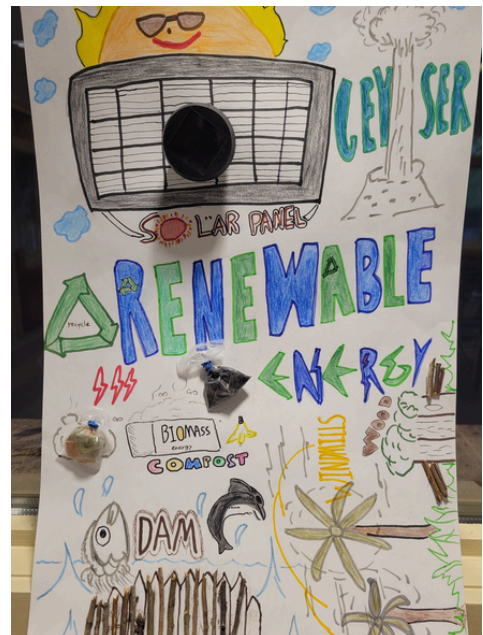
Ava M (Grade 3)



Ellora K (Grade 1)



Aiden L (Grade 4)



Julianna M (Grade 5)

# Residential Solarize

## What is Residential Solarize?

**Residential Solarize** is a Sustainable Westchester program that helps homeowners go solar. Sustainable Westchester has set a goal of helping 3000 homeowners go solar in 2025 (a 50% increase over 2024), and increasing residential solar across Westchester County by 300% by 2030.

If you want to go solar, but don't know how, here is how Residential Solarize can help:

**Step 1:** Get a preliminary solar assessment for your home

**Step 2:** Discuss factors like your electricity use, roof condition, and electrical panels

**Step 3:** Receive competitive proposals and information about rebates and financing from pre-qualified installers

## Did you know?

- Annual electricity produced by a residential solar system is 8652 kWh
- Annual utility bill savings (2025) with a residential solar system (7.5kwdc generation capacity) is \$2768
- You will avoid emitting 177 tons of CO2 over a 20 year time period
- There are 232 residential and 26 non-residential solar systems in Briarcliff Manor

## How is Residential Solarize Financed?

- **Purchase by cash or loan to own** are the most common methods of financing a residential solar system and enables the homeowner to take full advantage of federal and state incentives
- **Solar leases** involve long-term payment commitments by the homeowner to the solar equipment owner
- **Power purchase agreements (PPA)** involve the homeowner purchasing the solar energy as it is generated from the solar equipment owner for an agreed upon rate. PPAs often also come with a buyout feature





# Sustainable Landscaping Tips

## Plant More Native Species

- Native plants adapt to the local climate
- They provide nectar, pollen, and seeds which support native butterflies and birds
- They are low maintenance and need little to no irrigation, fertilizers, or pesticides

Here is a partial list of **native flowers, ground covers, shrubs, and trees** to get you started on this exciting journey!

- **Flowers:** Canada Anemone, Joe-Pye Weed, Swamp Milkweed, Great Blue Lobelia, and Smooth Blue Aster
- **Ground covers:** Northern Prairie Dropseed, Wild Ginger, and Wild Strawberry
- **Shrubs:** American Elderberry, Buttonbush, Inkberry, and Nannyberry
- **Trees:** Red Maple, Swamp White Oak, White Pine, and Serviceberry

## Grow More, Mow Less

- Running a gas-powered lawnmower for an hour emits the same amount of pollution as a 20 mile car ride. **Electric mowers are much cleaner**
- Mow higher and leave your grass clippings on the lawn – you will be supporting fireflies and pollinators
- Eliminate or reduce the use of gas-powered leaf blowers between May-September

## Go Chemical Free

- Organic lawn care promotes deep root systems
- Pesticides and fertilizers run off or leach out, ending up in ground water and affecting our water supplies
- Repeated exposure to pesticides is a health hazard, especially for children and pets



Joe-Pye weed:  
[Keystonewildflowers.com](http://Keystonewildflowers.com)



Great Blue Lobelia:  
[Americanmeadows.com](http://Americanmeadows.com)



Inkberry:  
[Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center](http://LadyBirdJohnsonWildflowerCenter)



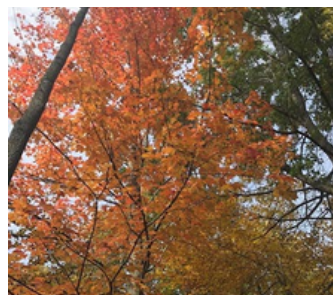
Northern Prairie Dropseed:  
[Northernwildflowers.com](http://Northernwildflowers.com)



Wild Ginger: [Gardening.cornell.edu](http://Gardening.cornell.edu)



American Elderberry: [thespruce.com](http://thespruce.com)



Red Maple: [backyardecology.net](http://backyardecology.net)



Swamp White Oak: [thespruce.com](http://thespruce.com)



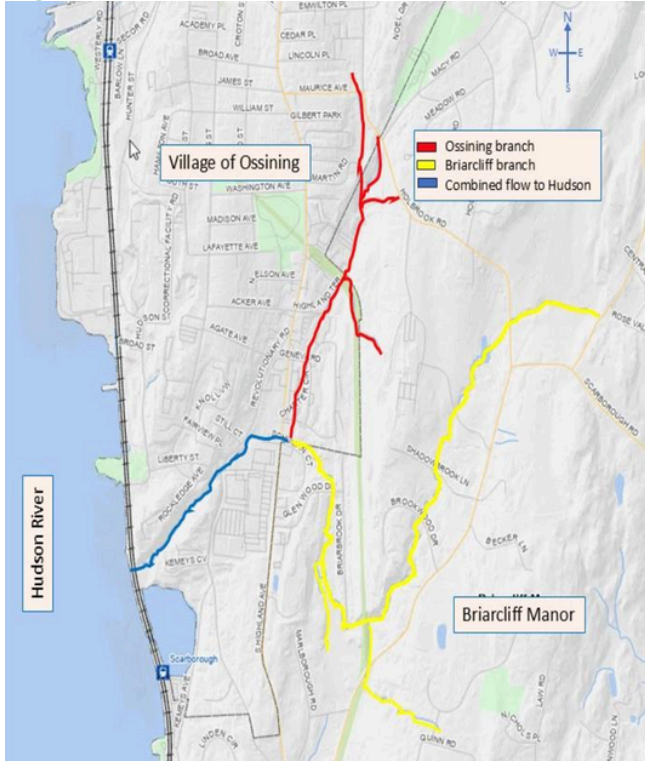
# Sparta Brook: History and Sustainability Come Together

Sinduja Narayanan

Briarcliff High School Student, 9<sup>th</sup> Grade

Sparta Brook is a historical tributary of the Hudson River; this small brook has two branches, one connecting to Briarcliff, and one connecting to Ossining (Figure 1).

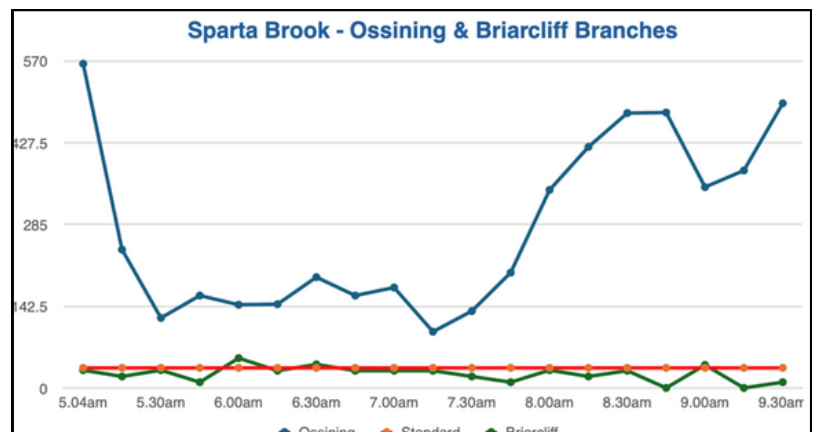
**Figure 1**



I had the opportunity to participate in a water testing study under the guidance of Dr. Hougham who has been conducting tests on the Sparta brook for a few years. A link to the history of the brook and information on the original study is [here](#).

Our hypothesis for the recent study was that sewage was the main factor for pollution in the Sparta Brook. We tested this by testing for enterococcus bacteria (which is found in sewage). By knowing the amount of enterococcus, we can determine if the leading cause for pollution is sewage. Results from our recent study on April 21<sup>st</sup> show that there are extremely high levels of enterococcus in the Sparta Brook (Figure 2).

Sparta Brook is a recreational body of water for the people of Briarcliff and Ossining. Since it's a tributary to the Hudson, pollution from it affects the Hudson's water quality, including a nearby beach in Ossining that is enjoyed by many, and is also an important destination for migrating fish species from the Hudson.



**Figure 2**

**Acknowledgements** – I am deeply grateful to Dr. Gareth Hougham, the Hudson Valley Stream Conservancy, the Sunoco Gas Station, where the study was conducted, and Riverkeeper for all of their support towards this project.



## New Native Pollinator Garden at the Library

This spring, EAC worked with Village staff to install a new native pollinator garden at the Briarcliff Manor Public Library. These plantings span the center driveway circle as well as the building perimeter outside the main entrance. Designed by the EAC, the garden includes native wildflowers and grasses that will serve as a critical habitat for insect pollinators and songbirds. This pollinator garden is one of several that have been recently planted around the Village, including at Village Hall and the Pocket Park in the downtown business district. The plants will grow and fill in their spaces as the season goes along.

The integration of nature into the built environment is a necessary component of a sustainable community. Native plantings are a great way to create habitat while providing additional social and environmental benefits like beautification, stormwater mitigation, temperature regulation, and carbon sequestration. These spaces contribute to a larger system of “green infrastructure” in the places we live and work.

Soon to come is on-site educational signage about the garden, as well as resources in the library for welcoming nature into your own yard through sustainable landscaping and native garden design.



**Many thanks to Village staff, especially our Department of Public Works, who were essential to the creation of this garden!**



# Native Plant Spotlight

## Woody Plant

### *Cephalanthus occidentalis* (Buttonbush)



Image Credit: Prairie Nursery

Buttonbush is a native shrub that grows naturally along ponds and riverbanks. A versatile species commonly used in ecological restoration projects, it prefers moist to wet soils in part shade to shade and can tolerate occasional flooding. It grows up to 12' tall and produces visually interesting flowers in spherical clusters, earning its name. It attracts birds and butterflies and is a nectar source for honeybees. Wood ducks are known to use the shrub as shelter and other waterfowl eat its seeds. Buttonbush is a host plant for several large moth species, including the showy titan sphinx moth.

## Herbaceous Plant

### *Pycnanthemum muticum* (Mountain mint)

A favorite among pollinators, mountain mint is an aromatic perennial perfect for a sunny pollinator garden. It is not as aggressive as cultivated mints, but still spreads beautifully, filling in spaces with its silvery summer flowers and sweet minty scent. Mountain mint grows 2-3' tall and does best in full sun and medium soils. Deer don't like it, but it buzzes with all sorts of beneficial insect activity.







## What are Pollinator Pathways?

- Pollinator pathways are networks of native plant gardens in close proximity that support bees, butterflies, hummingbirds and other vital pollinators
- Pollinators survive by finding nutrition and habitat in pesticide-free gardens that they can access easily
- The Village and Town of Ossining and the Village of Briarcliff Manor have joined forces to create pollinator pathways

Is your yard pesticide-free?

Do you have native plants/trees on your property?

Would you like your yard to be included in the [Ossining/Briarcliff Pollinator Pathway Map](#)?

Please contact [SAC@briarcliffmanor.gov](mailto:SAC@briarcliffmanor.gov) or [EAC@briarcliffmanor.gov](mailto:EAC@briarcliffmanor.gov) for more information.



## Upcoming Events

- Come meet us at the Sustainability Advisory Committee booth at the **Briarcliff Manor Community Day event** (September 6<sup>th</sup> - rain date September 13<sup>th</sup>). Learn how to save on your energy bills, ways to upgrade to clean heating/cooling for your home, composting, and so much more!
- Stay tuned for announcements about our annual **movie event** and a special **author event** in the fall!

**Join us** at our meetings to learn what we are working on, and to see how you can contribute to making Briarcliff cleaner and greener!

**SAC** meetings: First Thursday of every month. 7:00 pm, Village Hall Court Room

**EAC** meetings: Fourth Thursday of every month. 7:00 pm, Village Hall Court Room

For more information, email us at

[SAC@briarcliffmanor.gov](mailto:SAC@briarcliffmanor.gov) or [EAC@briarcliffmanor.gov](mailto:EAC@briarcliffmanor.gov). Visit us at

**[Sustainability-advisory-committee](#)** and **[Environmental-advisory-council](#)**

### **SAC**

Padma Sridhar, PhD (Chair)  
Stacey Winnick  
Seth Leitman  
Jennifer Sendek  
Melissa Rinzler  
Julie Mayville  
Kathy Battacharia  
Christine Kopec

### **EAC**

Amy Karpati, PhD (Chair)  
Brooke Beebe  
Ernie DeMarie, PhD  
Steven Kavee  
Dawn Orza