

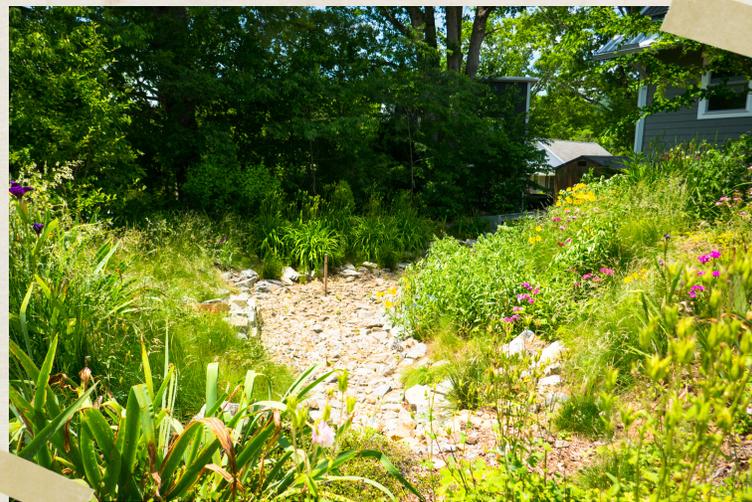
THE PITTARD GARDEN

Most of what Ruth Pittard calls her yard is actually a sloped town easement occupied by a sizable settlement pond surrounded by a wash of color. Like the Cummings property, Ruth's greatest challenge is also her greatest, most beautiful victory.



The Locust Spring neighborhood was not so long ago a patch of forest that served as a natural sponge for rain and run off. When the neighborhood was developed in 2015, the woods were plowed under and water had to go somewhere. Due to its location, all drainage led to the Pittard residence.

Through study, negotiation, and working with her neighbors for the greater good, Ruth transformed what had been an eyesore that held stinky standing water, into a wonderland of moisture-loving plants that drained naturally. "I had to keep the functionality while also creating an aesthetic as it is the entrance to my house. That meant I had to study water catchment and settlement pond systems and rain gardens, and the difference between the two. Water issues dominated the first two seasons in my house."



Then, she started to plant wildflowers and cuttings acquired from friends aiming for a profusion of color. She succeeded. Pillows of color and texture cover every inch of available space, all humming with pollinators and attracting wildlife. Ruth uses no pesticides, increases water absorption with a gravel drive, benefits from solar panels on her roof, retains irrigation water for herself and her neighbors through a system of catchment barrels, and tries to be considerate of her neighbors down hill. The property has been named a Certified Wildlife Habitat.

A lifelong gardener who grew up with vegetable gardens, canning, and cut flowers, for Ruth, "gardening is an integral part of my life. I believe I share space with animals and people, so I share wherever and whenever possible to create community. I see myself as part of a whole system and am responsible for keeping it healthy and beautiful."

