

# Marshouse Self-Guided Tour

Wander at will!

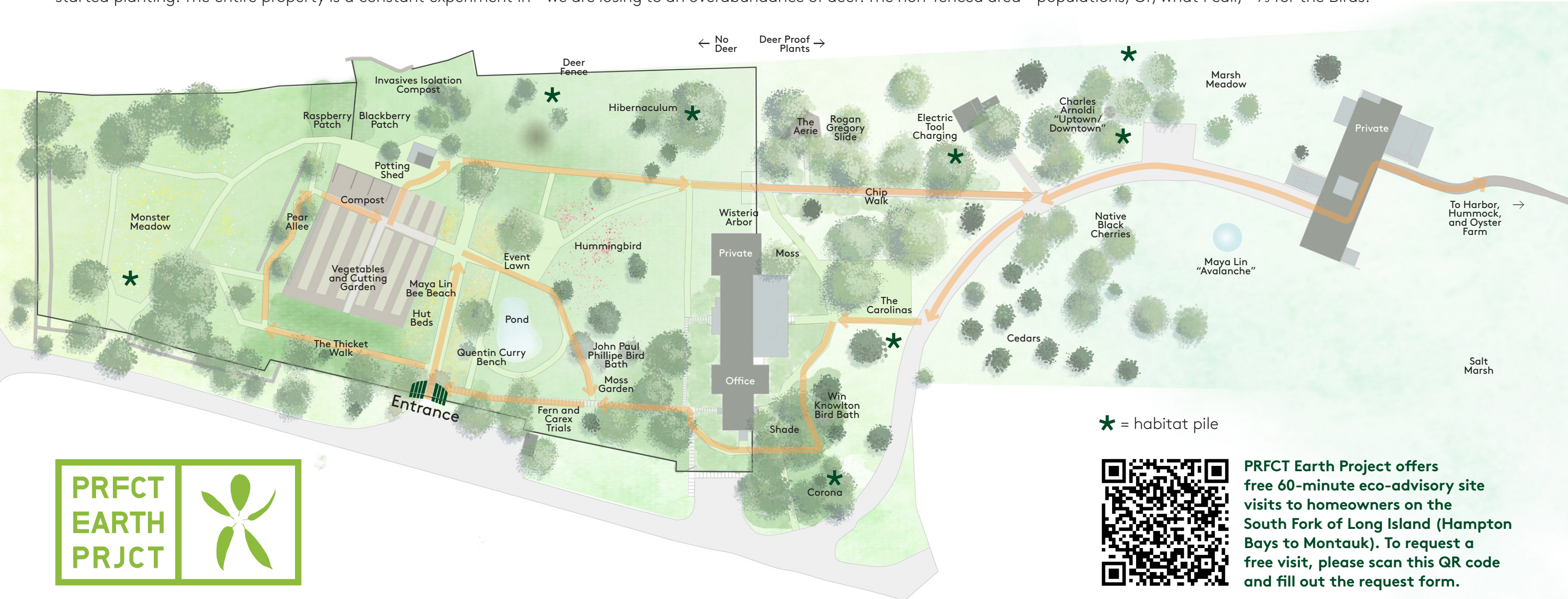
**WHEN I FIRST CAME TO THIS PROPERTY,** it was completely covered with invasive plants. I started by cutting everything back. I made a commitment that no biomass would leave and had to figure out what to do with everything I cut back. Dead trees became log walls. Branches, sticks, and twigs became woodchip paths. Vines, which I bundled up and placed around the edges so as not to remove all wildlife habitat, became homes for thrushes, rabbits, and wrens. Once the property was reasonably cleared, I started planting. The entire property is a constant experiment in

how I can maximize biodiversity by focusing on food for non-human lifeforms. The only part of the property specifically for human consumption is the vegetable garden. I like to look at a property this way: *What is for me and what is for everything else? If wildlife can't eat the everything else, what will they eat?*

The entire property is divided into two main areas: deer in and deer out. The deer fenced area is intended to support my gardening habit, but also to show people the native flowering plants we are losing to an overabundance of deer. The non-fenced area

shows what you can do with deer and what they do not eat.

I call this a PRFCT property, meaning it follows our Principles of PRFCT: Minimize harm and maximize biodiversity. No chemicals are used on this property, and we operate as a closed loop, meaning no inputs aside from new plants and no outputs. All the biomass that the land produces stays here and returns to the earth. Most of the plants on the property are native, but not all. My goal is 2 of every 3 new plants are native to support wildlife populations; Or, what I call, "2/3 for the Birds."





# What's Going On Here?

## Monster Meadow

I started here. Aside from preexisting Catalpas, Cedars, and Oaks, I planted everything else starting in 2005. Many of the trees I planted were small. I've let things grow in this area that would probably not be suitable for a regular garden. Many of the plants are aggressive, but they form a great buffer.

## The Thicket Walk

There is a focus on native azaleas and shrubs for bird habitat here. I acquired as many seed-grown shrubs as possible for this area and I'm trying to make this the case for the entire property.

## The Moss Garden

This area is managed for moss by reducing competition with super short weed whacking and providing a humid environment through short bursts of irrigation so that the moss will thrive in the shade of the Red Maples.

## The Pond

Habitat requires food, shelter, and water. For water I have a pond, bird baths, and bee beaches. The pond has a clay liner, not only to help me meet my commitment of never burying plastic but also because you can plant right into it.

## Hügel/Hibernaculum

What to do with a large amount of very poor soil that was excavated to make a pond? Make a Hügel! What to do about declining snake populations that has resulted in more voles and mice? Turn that Hügel into a hibernaculum where snakes can overwinter in the garden.

## Habitat Piles

You will see various habitat features scattered around the property. They serve to conserve and decompose the biomass produced here in inventive ways, smother invasives, and provide shelter for wildlife. Indicated by ★ on map.

## The Hut Beds and Hummingbird Beds

This is an example of a meadow-type garden. It has a higher percentage of grasses than forbes (flowers). Over time it requires less and less maintenance. I try very hard not to control what lives, thrives, and fails here.

## Marsh Meadow

Created by simply stopping the mowing. Happily, all of these wonderful native grasses were waiting in the soil. It is cut once a year at 12" high in the spring. The grass is raked off and piled on the haystack.

# The Principles of PRFCT

Practice toxic-free, nature-based land care for the health of people, pets, and the planet.

## Maximize Biodiversity

### GROW FOOD FOR ALL

Plant a diverse mix of native flowers, shrubs, and trees—aim for at least 70%— $\frac{2}{3}$  for the birds—in your yard.

### SUPPLY WATER

Add birdbaths, bee beaches, and ponds.

### CREATE SHELTER

Grow shrubs and trees, leave the leaves, build habitat piles, and let snags (dead trees) stand.

### SOS (Save our Soils)

Support the soil biome. Compost! Leave the leaves! And don't use any fertilizers or pesticides.

## Minimize Harm

### UNDERSTAND YOUR LAND

Follow right plant, right place for self-reliance and resilience. It's the best use of natural resources.

### BE TOXIC-FREE

Refuse to use pesticides and fertilizers.

### STOP THE CHOP

Let plants grow as nature designed. Every cut is a wound.

### CLOSE THE LOOP

Compost plant debris (biomass) on site to feed the soil and replace foreign inputs.

### GO ELECTRIC

Reduce fossil fuels and noise.

### WATER ONLY WHEN NEEDED

Irrigate deeply and infrequently.

### LIMIT ARTIFICIAL LIGHTING

Follow DarkSky guidelines.



**There is no such thing as a tick specific spray. The organic ones are equally harmful to beneficial insects as they are to ticks. So, I don't spray the garden. I spray myself. I ask that you do the same. Please bring your repellent of preference.**