



In 2022 Riverbend was fortunate to receive a grant from the Hardy Plant Society towards a new plant propagation project on our preserve. We have been working for many years to restore a healthy native habitat at Riverbend, and have purchased thousands of trees and plants along the way through funding from different grants, including from the Hardy Plant Society. This year we decided it was time to try propagating our own plants!

A volunteer group from the organization Leadership Philadelphia kicked off the project by building three raised beds in March, and filling them with soil. With generous funding from the Hardy Plant Society, along with a wonderful donation of native plant seeds from the Society's seed exchange program, we were able to start working with volunteers to begin planting in the spring. Together we learned about cold moist stratification necessary for germination of many types of native plants, and began our propagation journey.

Throughout the year, we worked with young volunteers, sowing seeds, growing on plugs, learning about native plants, and, over the course of a growing season, had the joy and satisfaction of planting out native wildflowers around our preserve that we had grown from seed. We are even growing trees from seeds that were donated by the Hardy Plant Society, including some healthy looking Paw Paw saplings. We are also growing Ohio Buckeye saplings from seeds collected on our preserve and it is one of our goals to collect seeds from our existing native plant populations.

We know that this project will benefit plantlife and wildlife at Riverend for years to come, as well as provide a wonderful educational resource for visitors, students, and volunteers. We thank the Hardy Plant Society for enabling us to start this project through your grant funding, and we are excited to continue to learn and develop our propagation efforts.

Grant funding was used to purchase native plant plugs that were grown-on in the raised beds by our summer interns for planting out this fall, seed-starting potting soil, and critter guards for the raised beds so that our seedlings will be safe from hungry animals. We shared information about the work of the Hardy Plant Society with all of our volunteers and interns and will be posting about your support to our two and a half thousand Facebook followers - we will be sure to tag you! Thank you again for all the work you do and for your support of this impactful project.

