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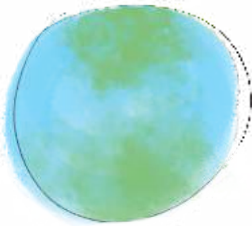


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# bluedotliving™

AT HOME ON EARTH



Every other week, Bluedot Living will share stories about local changemakers, Islanders' sustainable homes and yards, planet-healthy recipes and tips, along with advice from Dear Dot. Did your friend send you this? [Sign up for yourself here](#). Not interested? No problem — [click here](#) to be removed from Bluedot Living emails.

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**SIMPLE / SMART / SUSTAINABLE / STORIES**



We love this photo of IGI farmers Jeremy Driesen took last summer for [our story on carbon](#). IGI's Mary Sage Napolitan recently sent us this "[Field Note](#)": "At Island Grown Farm, we're undertaking a ... restoration of native plant communities that can host, feed, and protect wild native and at-risk insect species and enrich the biodiversity of the farm system."

**“Lawns provide no biodiversity, contribute to runoff that pollutes our ponds, and irrigation wastes our only source of drinking water. Plant native plants that are suited to the region and have deep root systems that absorb rainwater. And trees! They provide shade, absorb rainwater and carbon dioxide, and improve the value of your property.”**

—Liz Durkee, MV Commission's Climate Change Planner, at the Climate Week panel "Time to Retreat from the Shore?," which was hosted by Bluedot Living.

## May We Share Some Thoughts?

While we typically rely on the dog days of summer for permission to be lazy, the month of May is increasingly encouraging sloth.

It is, for instance, the month for



**No Mow May**, a UK initiative getting traction here that asks only that we let our lawns grow without cutting. Of course, setting the stage for No Mow May is giving up lawn culture entirely, instead converting our grass to a more diverse and natural landscape.

Conveniently, May is Garden for Wildlife Month, which

invites us to be part of the National Wildlife Federation's goal to reach the creation of **one million wildlife gardens by 2027**. And May 22 is the International Day for Biological Diversity, a UN declaration that urges all of us to just back off and let natural ecosystems flourish, something that's more likely if we plant wildflower gardens and abandon our carefully manicured lawns. (Want to know how? See our story last year, **"Natural Neighbors."**)

It's a steady drumbeat of a message that you might have heard plenty during the well-attended Climate Week. Thanks to all of you who participated, including in Bluedot Living's events. (That photo is from the Climate Week Finale on Saturday at the Grange.)

As one participant remarked upon leaving Marc Rosenbaum's "How to decarbonize your home" seminar, "That was exactly what I needed to hear. I feel so empowered."

That's exactly what *we* needed to hear because that's precisely what Bluedot aims to do.

We had lots of visitors at our table at the Climate Week finale, wanting to give us story ideas, questions for "Dear Dot," and to sign up for newsletters. And we had a raffle! Bruce Nevin of Edgartown won dinner for two at one of our favorite restaurants, Atria. If you didn't get the chance at our table at the Grange to sign up for our **hub newsletter** (featuring the solutions-focused stories you've come to expect from us but from all around the world), we hope **you'll do so now**. On another note, Bluedot Living is a proud sponsor of the MV Film Society's **Environmental Film Festival**, running from Thursday, May 26 to Sunday, May 29. These are all worthy and fascinating "stories from the front lines of environmentalism." See you there. —*Leslie Garrett and Jamie Kageleiry*



This issue of the Bluedot newsletter is sponsored by [The Martha's Vineyard Environmental Film Festival](#) — Stories from the front lines of environmentalism.



### Climate Quick Tip

In her story "[Planting for Pollinators](#)," BiodiversityWorks' Angela Luckey urges us to retain dead trees on our property. "This is an easy way to provide nesting cavities for birds. If the tree poses a risk, consider removing the top limbs and leave some of the trunk standing."



**96%** of **North American** bird species feed **insects** to their young



Insects are integral to creating biodiversity for healthy ecosystems.  
[Learn more about how native plants benefit birds and people here.](#)



## Local Hero: Julie Pringle

“On a typical day, Julie Pringle starts collecting water samples at sunrise,” Sam Moore writes. “From the Edgartown Great Pond and Crackatuxet Cove, to the great ponds of Tisbury and Chilmark, she gathers data from May through October — top to bottom, shore to shore, and week to week.”

‘Dissolved oxygen, temperature ... lots of different parameters that we can then use to assess the health of the pond,’ Pringle said.

“Pringle, 30, grew up on the Island and is now the Scientific Program Director at the Great Pond Foundation. Her mission is to connect indicators of water quality to the wellbeing of the creatures and people that depend on the Edgartown Great Pond, and other Island ponds.”

[READ THE STORY.](#)

## BUY LESS/BUY BETTER

### Helayne Cohen’s Treasure Bowls



When jewelry designer Stefanie Wolf has to reject an imperfect bead, she doesn't throw it away. Ceramicist Helayne Cohen melts the beads onto pottery to add color to tiny Treasure Bowls and oyster-shaped “sensory objects.” We seem to no longer have paper clips, so we think we'll use them to rest our teaspoons on.

[LEARN MORE](#)



### Dear Dot: What do all those sustainability certifications mean?

Dear Dot,  
I never know what to think about the sustainability certification labels on various products. Are they reliable?

–*Michael*



Dear Michael,

Eco labels exist in a murky area that, in the world of eco-claims, has brought about the term “greenwashing”, which applies to products that advertise environmental *bona fides* that don't hold up under scrutiny. Indeed ClimateBert, an AI tool that measured 800 companies' eco claims, revealed that greenwashing was rampant. Enter eco logos, which ostensibly do the homework for us, slap a label on something, and assure us that our money is well spent.

But is it?

Eco labels lend products a certain credibility and run the gamut from third-party verified and trustworthy to industry-verified and less so to almost meaningless...

[Read the rest of Dot's response here.](#)

Got a question for Dot? Ask her at [deardot@bluedotliving.com](mailto:deardot@bluedotliving.com).



## RIGHT AT HOME



## HOME

### Planting for Pollinators

When it comes to conscious landscaping on Martha's Vineyard, it's all about the birds and the bees, writes Angela Luckey. A garden can be more than a place of beauty — it can also be a foundational piece of the backyard ecosystem. [Read her tips.](#)

## FOOD

### Asparagus and Panzanella

It's always best when you can buy local, and use fresh in-season ingredients. This spring creation from Karen Covey is "a perfect way to use up day-old bread," Covey writes. Plus, it uses local asparagus. Lemony asparagus, and crispy bread? Happy spring!







## Quiz: Vineyard Watersheds

How much of the Vineyard's land area drains into coastal ponds?

22%

36%

64%

**bluedotliving**  
BY BUREAU OF OCEANS



## ADVICE

Want to help preserve the Edgartown Great Pond? Volunteers can assist with the Ecosystem Monitoring Program and educational outreach events, aiding in water quality and biodiversity data collection, conducting surveys of pond species, helping staff with demonstrations of scientific concepts, and assisting with science communication. For updates on volunteer opportunities, email [science@greatpondfoundation.org](mailto:science@greatpondfoundation.org).

To learn about more volunteer opportunities on Island, consult our [Ultimate Simple, Smart, Sustainable Handbook to Martha's Vineyard](#).

## SPOTLIGHT



### Think Global, Act Local

On Bluedot's [hub website](#), we share stories of the amazing work being done all over, such as this one written by part-time Vineyarder Maria Buteaux Reade. She's involved with Vermont's [Grateful Hearts](#), which diverts food waste and feeds the community's hungry. In 2021,

Grateful Hearts generated more than 40,000 meals from 6,682 pounds of food destined for waste. "Miracles happen when people collaborate to solve problems," she writes. "The Grateful Hearts model can be replicated in almost any community."

## FOLLOW US





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