

DIY Garden Cages

Protecting Plants #11 DIY Plant Protector – Farmer Brown (5 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AA67L2oINU>

How To Protect Young New Plants With This Simple DIY trick 🌱👍 / Colorful Gardener (4:57)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B3pYNscCids>

HOW TO MAKE A SMALL PLANT CAGE IN 15 MINUTES – Stone Family Farmstead (blog)

<https://www.stonefamilyfarmstead.com/15-minute-plant-cage/>

AND A BONUS VIDEO ON CHILI OIL SPRAY

Use This Simple Trick To Stop Rabbits From Eating All Your Plants – Favorite Hobby Gardener (2:04)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tygplQfOoyg>

3 Reasons NOT to Plant in Your Planting Strip or Bump-Out

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This past March, on a gray, wet day, the bump-out at Hosmer/Boylston began its transformation into what would become a thriving and inviting space for pollinators. Two members of the Community Connections Committee of Watertown Community Gardens helped me lay down wet, flattened, overlapping cardboard and covered it evenly with 3" of compost. Two months later I dug into the compost, through the decomposing cardboard, and started planting a variety of rugged perennial pollinator plants, and later mini shrubs, grasses and a few annuals for their eye-popping color. For transparency, please know that I am a beginner gardener sharing my own experience in the article below – I would love to learn from you so please stop by and share what you know!

Here are 3 reasons NOT to plant in your planting strip or bump-out:

You haven't the foggiest idea what to plant to attract the bees, butterflies, and other pollinators.

You are in luck! The nurseries have thought of it for you. Ask for their lists of pollinator plants that survive in planting strips and pepper the employees with questions on what and how to plant. Some nurseries sell "planting strip kits" complete with a selection of carefully chosen perennial plants that withstand ice, road salt and basically awful conditions. The Watertown DPW has a [planting strip brochure](#) listing plants by category: native to the eastern U.S., shade or sun loving, shrubs, flowers, or grass, and even offers simple layout designs.

Whenever possible, think about planting natives – they are easier to grow, less expensive to maintain (need less water, require no fertilizer or pesticides), offer year-round beauty or interest, and preserve our biodiversity by nurturing the native wildlife that evolved along with them over millennia. Choose pollinator friendly plants to attract much butterflies and bees desperately looking for nectar and a place to call home in Watertown.

Here are a few tried and true NATIVE pollinators that have done well in the bump-out at Hosmer/Boylston: Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*), Grey goldenrod, Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), Beardtongue (*Penstemon digitalis*), Black-Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*), Short-toothed Mountain Mint (*Pycnanthemum muticum*), and Purple love grass (*Eragrostis spectabilis*) to name a few.

You don't have the time or money.

Believe it or not, but with a little weeding (or not), some wet, flattened cardboard (free of staples, tape, and labels), a few bags of compost and a smattering of hardy plants, you can fill your planting strip in little time for very little money (bump-outs are a bigger project) The work is done in the first season when you prep, plant and carefully monitor your baby plants. But, since you've planted perennials, you can sit back after the snow has melted and watch them return the next year. Native plants have thousands of years of experience living in this climate and, once acclimated, need little attention.

Visit plant swaps or the end-of-season sales at nurseries. Buy plugs (small-sized seedlings) which are less expensive than the more mature ones. Add plants or plant nursery gift certificates to your holiday wish list. Make a request on Buy Nothing Watertown. Ask gardening friends to keep you in mind when they divide their perennials. **Important Note:** See below for information on the invasive Asian jumping worm and how to avoid transferring them in plant life.

You don't want to meet your neighbors.

My advice is if you don't want to chat with people passing by, meet their family and friends, play with their kids, pet their dogs, and launch into all kinds of conversations that lead to a feeling of sharing and community then, by all means, do NOT plant in your planting strip. Nothing has been more satisfying during this pandemic than naturally and organically building fun, new connections and friendships with my neighbors through plants.

"To be rooted is the most important and perhaps least recognized need of the soul." Simone Beal

A few key points:

The DPW allows planting in our planting strips and bump-outs in front of our homes and welcomes it, in fact, as long as the resident understands the following:

The planting strips and bump-outs are city property.

It's your responsibility to plant and maintain it – weed, mulch, replace dead plants, as needed.

Regular watering for 2-3 seasons and during drought periods is essential.

There is a maximum mature plant height requirement.

No invasive plants or inorganic fertilizer are allowed.

The Town has "Help Watertown grow—Please keep off planting strip" signs available free of charge at DPW.

"Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can." Arthur Ashe (American tennis player)

RESOURCES:

- For more information and guidelines on planting in your strip or bump-out, please visit: [Watertown's Planting Strip Flyer](#)
- Interested in helping WCG plant and maintain public gardens around the city? Join us at one of our [upcoming volunteer days](#).
- Watch for free educational presentations on planting strips and bump-outs by the Watertown Community Gardens group this winter.
- Nurseries selling natives and/or planting strip kits: Blue Stem Natives, Mahoney's, Native Plant Trust, Russell's

NOTES:

Planting strip: the area between the sidewalk and the street

Bump-out: curb extensions at intersections to encourage slower driving; larger in size than planting strips

The invasive Asian jumping worm is a threat to the soil and our ecosystem. Unlike earth worms that aerate the soil, allowing fungi to break down the organic matter and benefit our ecosystem, the Asian jumping worm consumes the ground layer, turning it into the consistency of coffee grounds, making it difficult for plants to take up nutrients from the soil. Care must be taken to ensure these worms are not being transferred from plant to plant during plant swaps, etc. Here's a link for more details.

[University of Massachusetts Amherst- Center for Agriculture, Food, and the Environment](#)
