

# Dr. Douglas Tallamy

Entomologist, wildlife ecologist, best-selling author of *Nature's Best Hope* and co-founder of [HomegrownNationalPark.org](http://HomegrownNationalPark.org)

## *Statement in Support of Preserving the Drew Forest*

The Drew Forest is an excellent example of a publicly accessible “Homegrown National Park.” It’s stunning how Drew University, US Fish and Wildlife, local garden clubs and private individuals **came together 14 years ago to transform an unhealthy forest into a regionally important biodiversity hotspot.** Lotta work went into this restoration. First they fenced out the deer, then they began the arduous process of removing destructive invasive plants. Finally, they planted thousands of native trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants. Once native plants were in the ground and protected from deer, the entire ecosystem began to rebound. Additional native plants appeared on their own, along with many other species of birds, animals and insects that depend on those plants, some of which were threatened or endangered.

Beyond its ecological value, **the Drew Forest educates and inspires Drew students and area residents.** Everybody can take a walk and enjoy this amazing piece of Homegrown National Park right in Madison NJ, free of charge, free of crowds.

The Drew Forest also serves as a model that shows homeowners what they can create if they remove invasives and plant natives in their own yards. **Protecting natural areas is a critical part of slowing the insect and bird declines** that we hear about and these declines threaten the viability of the ecosystems we depend on.

But today Drew Forest, believe it or not, is under threat from development. **It’s extremely important that all parties come together to preserve the Drew Forest because its 53 acres comprise an urban forest of exceptional value.**

