

Ronnie's Recap

January 2023 Meeting, Speaker Millie Hendricks

Ronnie Brancazio



What better way to erase the January Doldrums than to take a virtual tour of the wonderful gardens and wildlife so lovingly nurtured and creatively filmed and photographed by our own Millie Hendricks!.

Millie has been studying the flora and fauna in her Glen Cove garden for over 30 years and regularly shares with us what she has observed and learned over those years. In her presentations, Millie's vast fund of knowledge and her intimate familiarity with the permanent residents of, and visitors to her grounds, combined with her lively, relaxed and often humorous delivery, makes her talks a much-anticipated delight.

Since she was asked to speak in January when not much is happening in the garden, Millie took this opportunity to go through her archives and share some of her favorite observations over the past years.

She began with her 1997 film of a *Black Swallowtail Butterfly* in both its caterpillar and butterfly stages and shared a number of interesting facts. One is that the caterpillars only eat parsley, dill, fennel and other plants in that family. Another is that they shed their outer skin five times as they grow, and eat the skin for nourishment. She filmed the entire process of growth and metamorphosis, which takes about a month, while housing the caterpillars in a cage in her house. This allowed her to record, and share with us, the spinning of the chrysalis and the surprising fact that you can see the butterfly wings developing within the somewhat transparent chrysalis. We also learned that the beautiful, intense blue on the wings of the butterfly is something of an illusion - the wings are covered with colorless scales which are exactly the size of the wavelength of blue light, and thus appear blue! They also have their tastebuds at the ends of their legs - who knew?

We were treated to equally fascinating videos and photos of other creatures including *Bumblebees*, a *Praying Mantis*, a *Great Spangled Fritillary*, a *Hummingbird Moth*, a charming *Chipmunk* named "Little Chip" (as were his predecessors), and some wrens, along with more remarkable facts about life-cycles and behaviors of each.

Millie concluded with a dramatic video of a few little ants dragging a relatively huge caterpillar back to their nest. We weren't quite sure who to root for, but the ants triumphed!

Thank you Millie for this winter reminder of the joys and wonder of nature!