**At the Seed Altar**

*(This spring the HUUF Grounds Committee is fortunate to host an Intern from HSU, Lilyanne Price. In this space, Lily will highlight a different native plant, and tell us why it is so important in our landscape.*

*On March 10, Lily gave away sprigs of native willows from the “seed altar” she created in the foyer. Below is more information about them. Look for Lily at the seed altar on March 31, April 7, May 5 and May 12, when she’ll be giving away more native plants, and for information about them here.)*

**Willows**

Native willows grow on our HUUF grounds (see map), and we hold them in high esteem. Willows provide more food and shelter for butterfly and moth pupa than any other plant that is native to our local patch of Mother Earth, and far more than any introduced ornamental plants. Birds benefit enormously from this life-giving plant, as it allows them to have a diverse and abundant diet for themselves and their chicks.

There are 11 different species of native willows. The darling sprig that may be growing with you now is a dune willow (*Salix hookeriana*), also known as a coast willow or the hooker willow. These willows are often used in restoration projects to stabilize stream banks and provide habitat and food for moose, deer, rabbits, and other small mammals. Their shade also lowers the stream temperature, creating an environment that fish tend to prefer. It grows from Alaska to California, as well as in eastern Siberia! Water in which dune willow branches have been soaking in for a few weeks can be used as a rooting stimulant for other plant cuttings with less hardy rooting habits.

***Caring for your magical willow companion*:** To plant your willow cutting you can simply stick it in the moist ground, or use a shovel to make a slit to bury the willow about a foot deep in the soil. The smaller sprigs can be planted in a pot. You can also easily grow more by simply breaking a sprig from a tree!

To find what other plants would make your garden highly esteemed by butterflies and birds alike click here: <https://www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder/>

To learn more about native willows please visit: <http://www.nwplants.com/business/catalog/indexWillows.html>