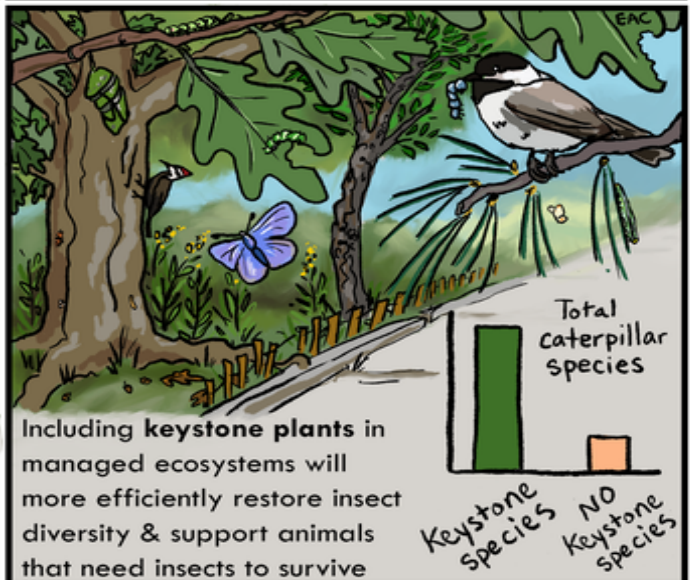
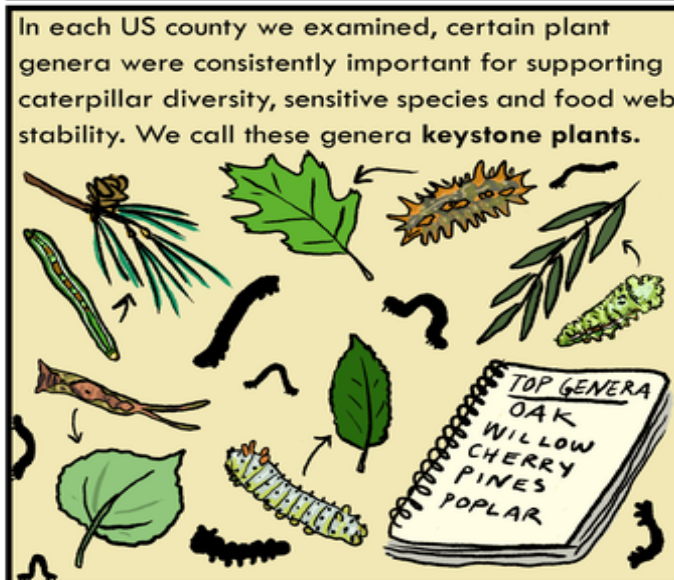
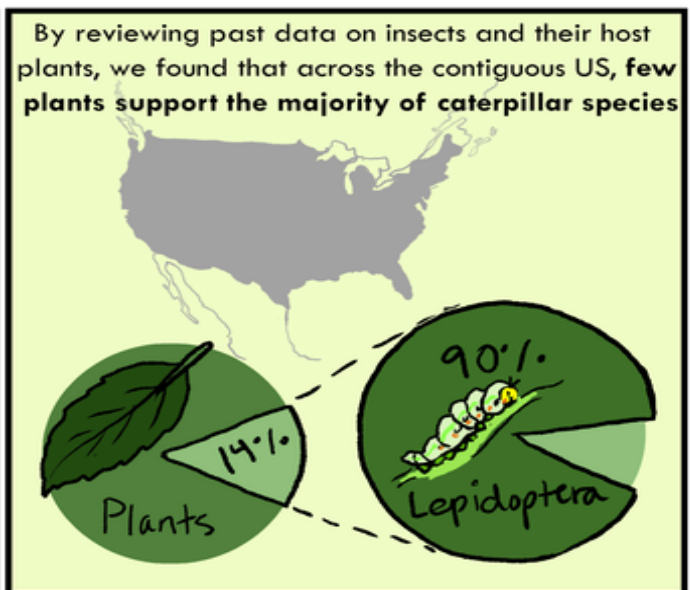
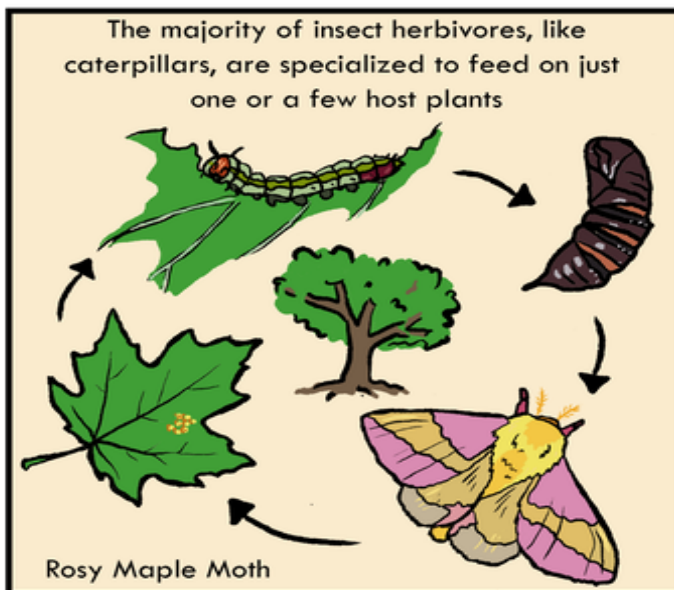


Keystone Species & Soft Landings

Keystone Species

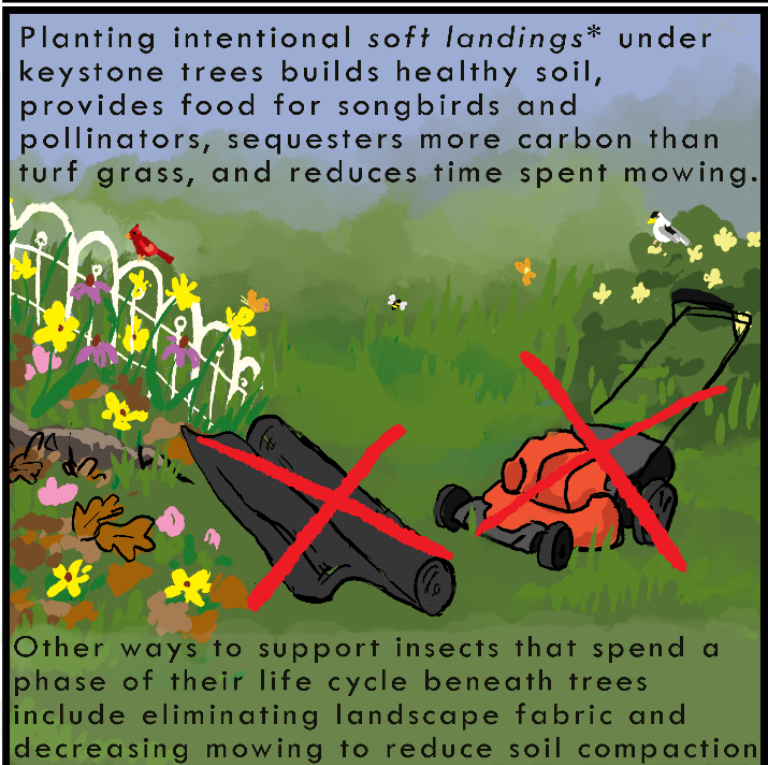
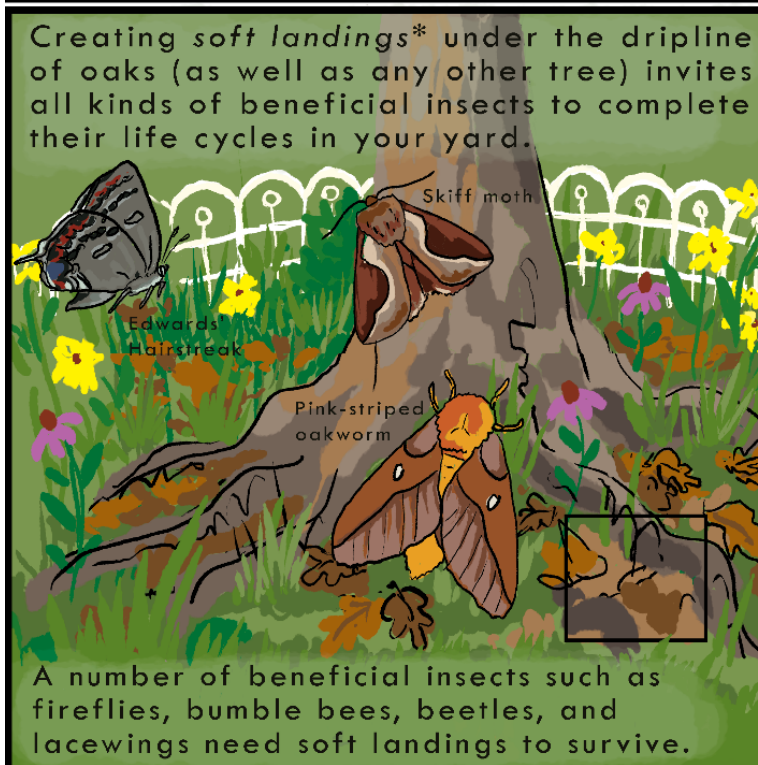
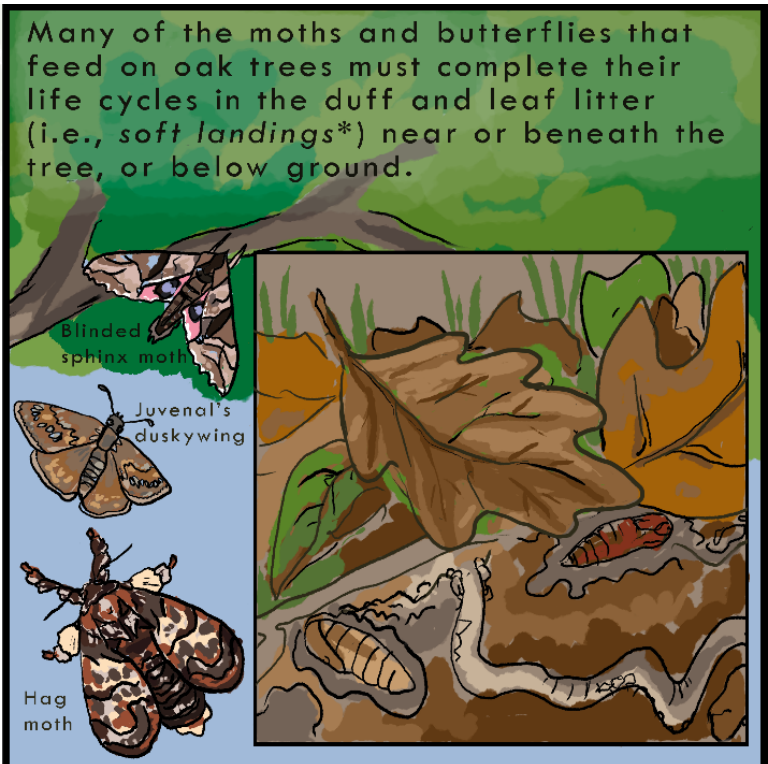
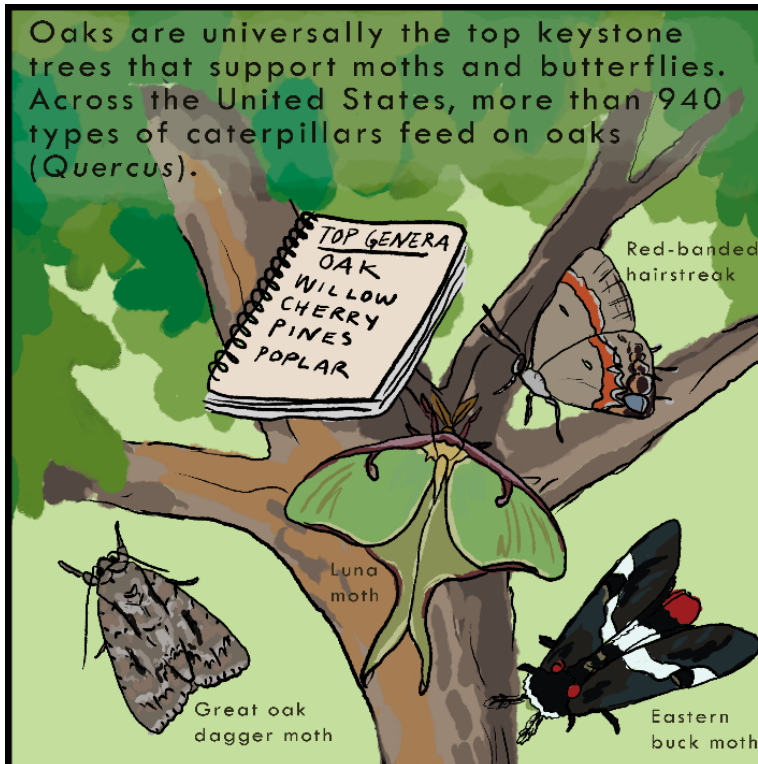
"Every ecosystem has certain species that are critical to the survival of the other species in the system. The keystone species could be a huge predator or an unassuming plant, but without them the ecosystem may not survive."
— National Geographic.

In Minnesota, as well as the United States, the top keystone species for moths and butterflies (lepidoptera) are oak trees (followed by the "fab four," willow, cherry, pine, and poplar). In the U.S., more than 940 types of caterpillars feed on oak—an astounding number. Because oaks are such a robust ecosystem tree, they are always a "winner" to plant in our yards, parks, schoolyards, boulevards, and other managed ecosystems.



Soft Landings

Many moths and butterflies must complete their life cycle stages below ground or in the leaf litter, duff, and plant debris ("soft landings") near or under their host tree. Without these soft landings, a keystone tree (or any regionally native tree) cannot serve its purpose in an ecosystem.



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*For more on creating soft landing plantings under trees, visit: www.pollinatorsnativeplants.com/softlandings.html