

Wright Library Native Pollinator Garden

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Welcome to the Wright Library Native Pollinator Garden. This 2000 square foot garden provides a habitat for many species in our community. One of these species is the monarch butterfly. As you may have already heard, the monarch butterfly was recently put onto the endangered species list. Why is that, and what is so important about pollinators? Let's take a look into this and also take a glance at 3 specific types of plants in our garden.

What is a pollinator garden?

A pollinator garden is a habitat that attracts pollinators. Pollinators are animals that move pollen from one flower to another so that the plants can produce fruits and seeds. Most pollinators are insects, including bees, wasps, butterflies, flies, ants, and beetles. But some plants are pollinated by birds such as hummingbirds, and some are pollinated by bats!

How does pollination work?

When a bee, or other insect lands on a flower, small particles of pollen stick to its legs. As the bee flies to the next plant, it transfers the pollen over with it. Plants rely on bees and other insects to make this happen. If they ever stopped pollinating, it could damage the plants that bear fruit and produce oxygen. People need the bees, the plants, and food they provide to survive and preserve the planet.



Why are pollinator gardens important?

Pollinator gardens are important because pollinators like butterflies, bees and hummingbirds rely on the plants in these gardens for food and habitat. Pollinators help to maintain the ecosystem, and pollinate the plants that humans and animals eat. Without pollinators, our crops would suffer, and we would quickly see a shortage in fresh fruits and vegetables, along with other plant life.

Why are monarch butterflies important?

As pollinators, the monarch butterfly migration across the continent provides an invaluable service, essential for many ecosystems to thrive. It is thanks to pollinators, such as butterflies, bees, and other insects, that we have many of the flowers and dietary staples that we enjoy, like squash and blueberries.



This image shows the monarch migration across the United States and into Mexico

Now let's take a closer look at some specific examples of pollinator plants in the Wright Library Garden. We will look at Swamp Milkweed, Cardinal Flower, and Rattlesnake Master plants. Hopefully you can learn a little more about the plants in this garden!

Swamp Milkweed

According to wildlife.org, the juice of this wetland milkweed is less milky than that of other species. The genus was named in honor of Aesculapius, Greek god of medicine, undoubtedly because some species have long been used to treat a variety of ailments. The Latin species name means "flesh-colored."



Cardinal Flower

Cardinal flower is a beautiful pollinator plant that has a pretty interesting story. According to wildlife.org, this flower has been over-picked which has resulted in its scarcity in certain areas. Since most insects find it difficult to navigate the long tubular flowers, Cardinal Flower depends on hummingbirds, which feed on the nectar, for pollination. Its common name alludes to the bright red robes worn by Roman Catholic cardinals. In southern Arizona, Sierra Madre Lobelia (*L. laxiflora*) is also found; its corolla is red with yellow lobes or all yellow.



Rattlesnake Master

This interesting plant has a great bio in wildlife.org, which talks about how their spiny leaves make walking through clumps of these plants difficult, and also make them unpalatable to grazing livestock. They were once credited with a variety of curative powers. Their flower heads develop a bluish cast with maturity.



Everyone at Wright Library hopes you learned something new today about the importance of pollinators. Make sure you check out the garden and see what else you can discover!



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Source Page

Kidsgardening.org

Kremp.com

Outnumbered3-1

Nature.org

Monarchwatch.org

Wildflower.org