

Children's Garden Club

Growing with St. Louis County Parks & Recreation



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Pollinators & Plants

Sherwood Forest Nursery & Garden Center

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“St. Louis County Parks Garden Club”

Welcome Back to Sherwood Forest for our 17th Year of the Children's Garden Club!

This Month is the Home & Garden Show at the America Center – the Children's Garden Club is at booth # 326, March 3rd through 6th. For next month's meeting, we will be returning to For the Garden @ Haefner's–6703 Telegraph Road.

Today, with MaryAnn Fink, Ambassador for Our Butterflies and Patron of Missouri Pollinators, we are continuing our understanding of the needs of the Pollinator. Butterflies are pollinators but so are lot of other insects like the bumblebee and the hummingbird, and even the Hummingbird Moth (you probably didn't know there was such a thing)!

There are so many creatures that live here with us, and many of these we depend on for helping make our food. That is so important that we should want them to make them feel at home in our landscape and community.

Just think about it; every third bite of food we eat had a pollinator helper. Most of the time, our busiest pollen worker it is the honey bee. Every year, bees and other pollinators make nearly \$30 billion of our crops possible.

A few plants are pollinated by wind blowing pollen around but most flowering plants rely on creatures to carry the pollen from one flower to another, that's a lot of work for such little workers, the pollinators. Pollinators contribute so much to almost everything that grows including; healthy food, shade from trees, even food for some of our pets. It's all a big circle, but right there



at the beginning of almost everything, are the pollinators. I bet you never thought of something so very small as taking care of you! Pollinators are basically our little supporters.

But sadly, a lot has happened over the years and their natural restaurants, the wild native plants that grew in the fields and forests have been mowed down, or paved over or built on or sometimes it has been chemicals we used to help us control other things has affected them. There just isn't as much favorite foods for pollinators any more.

Guess what, if they don't eat, eventually there will be less for us to eat! Someday if we don't help them now we may have to go a long way to get our foods or pay a lot more!

Last year, 2015, in June the President challenged everyone to help the pollinators here in the United States. The Challenge is called the Million Pollinator Gardens Challenge. (<http://millionpollinatorgardens.org>).

This is so important that people who help take care of our communities such as St Louis County "managers," The Sophia M. Sachs Butterfly House (the people who know the most about feeding Butterflies and other Pollinators), the St. Louis area Libraries, along with a lot of other caring people, have gotten together to help everyone know more about pollinators and how to feed them and make them feel at home.

We all are now able to invite you and your parents to join us on March 15th to kick off our Pollinator Project at 10:00 @ the "Sophia M. Sachs Butterfly House", a division of the Missouri Botanical Garden, in Faust Park, 15185 Olive Blvd. So now we will be officially part of this big effort to help pollinators, sort of a "Make a Meal, Make a Bee Happy" job.

David Sherwood and his staff started helping us start our Butterfly Cafés last year, so this year we are expanding our "Garden Menu" with a few more plants. Get ready to build a season long meal plan for our landscapes.

As we introduce you to some more plants, we are going to think about them as groceries, or ingredients for special very long meal. Our plan is eventually to feed them all season. We'll feed them and they will help feed us!

Today we are making a sweet sampler, of a few appetizers for all of our menus. As we each grow our café businesses, we will each be catering to our own personalized group of pollinator customers (remember what we grow, determines what we will see and who we feed. The pollinators are looking for a new place to eat, to live, and have their babies. Our gardens can be where they enjoy the best meals!)

For our Butterfly Café, the delicious Pollinator Platter!



Orange Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) is a milkweed with bright orange clusters of flowers that are native, which means it grows in our natural areas. [We got to put this Monarch munchie in our containers last year.] The adult Monarch drinks the sweet juice called nectar.

A lot of other butterflies and other pollinators like to drink Monarch's favorite juice too! So keep an eye out to see who else is dining at your Café! Remember last year we learned baby Monarch caterpillars like to eat these tasty leaves! If you find a caterpillar on this plant, it is probably going to be a Monarch Butterfly in a few weeks!

This plant is a perennial, which means it will grow back from its roots every year and get a little bigger for at least a few years. It usually gets about 2 feet tall in St. Louis, which is about as tall as the tires on your car. So plant it were you can see it!

It will get orange flowers in the summer once it starts to stay pretty warm outside all the time. This plant likes full sun, dry, sandy or gravel soil, but has also been reported growing on by streams and creeks.



Agastache (Anise Hyssop) is in the same family as salvia, bee balm and mint.

This perennial pollinator favorite is known for its long-lasting flower spikes and ability to tolerate all our weather including our hot summers and our cooler fall weather.

Butterflies and lots of other pollinators including Hummingbirds, love these long stemmed flower wands. Even birds like the seeds. The blue flower color is nice to make into bouquets for indoor too. You may notice the leaves smell a little like black licorice!

Hyssop likes being planted in the ground or a big container and in the sunshine. This is an easy perennial but it sometimes gets a white dusty look on the leaves called mildew and once in a while a few of the leaves get brown splotches called rust, neither apparently affect the taste for pollinators and birds!



Lavender or **English Lavender**, is not native to Missouri but several pollinators like the purple blue flowers and lots of people like the sweet bath soap scent of the flowers.

It is a bush/shrub some places but for us in St. Louis, it blooms along time in the summer but doesn't like Missouri's heavy soil. It might do best keeping it in a pretty big container by itself or with a few other butterfly favorites that like the same sandy soil. In some conditions it can be short-lived.



There are lots of types of **Bee Balm {Monarda}** and all are in the mint family.

All mints and mint relatives have square stems. This Bee Balm has light purple flowers and use to grow in lots of places naturally, plus it is used to be pretty common when most people grew their own vegetables in their own gardens. There once were a lot of small farms and this was usually planted there too! Farmers liked it because the pollinators that liked this nectar, also like to visit and pollinate lots of favorite vegetable flowers so more veggies!

The flower looks a bit like a princess crown or like a clustered circle of water fountain spouts, all full of a delicious sweet drink [nectar] on a hot summer day!

It likes to grow in a garden in a breezy sunny spot but will survive if it gets a few hours of shade. Finished flowers can be cut off so that there aren't too many new plants next year.