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Food for Us, For Butterflies and Pollinators!

Jefferson Barracks, Laborers House

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Welcome to the May 2016 Meeting of the Children's Garden Club. And don't forget we are back to Sherwood's Forest next month!

Pick up a copy of Gateway Gardener to get your own "First Step" to pollinator friendly gardening. This "Pollinator Pantry guide" reference guide is the first level of St. Louis County Park's program of classifying all pollinator plants that grow in our area by the amount of care / horticulture challenge required to care for them.

This "First" list features 20 St. Louis's flower friendly common butterflies we've been discussing, their most "neighborly-well mannered" nectar preferences for the whole season plus a "between the gaps" annual recommendation for an easy "sipping snack" as well as each baby butterfly/ caterpillar's preferred food/ host plant!

All of the plants in the guide are relatively low maintenance, available as plants and in stock at most local nurseries at their appropriate times. They are also the most "neighborly", well- mannered/easy care, pollinator garden choices. Many are polite Missouri natives that perform well in cultivated spaces. Quick tip care instructions are included with each plant.

For today, we want to welcome you back to Jefferson Barracks for the Opening of the Labors House (Closed for over a year) and the Labors Garden, a "pantry garden" for people, here in Jefferson Barracks. Discover why St. Louis truly is the Gateway to the West. Jefferson Barracks has a deep and rich story to tell such as we learned last year about the birth place of the American cavalry, this is the site of the Buffalo Soldiers.



A quick overview of 19th century gardening and its popularity from necessity hardly gives justice to the many facets of gardening that existed. The Labors Garden represents a kitchen garden for the post, which was supplemented by working with local farmers.

Carrots, beets, and turnips, beans and peas were generously planted because they were traditional in the diet of the time. Much of the earlier gardens were given over to vegetables that stored well, primarily for winter use. In contrast, less space was given to lettuce, which was of the romaine type, or mustard greens. These were supplemented with wild edibles such as wild dandelions and curly dock.

Cabbage was also grown with storage in mind. These were stored by hanging them upside down in a root cellar, or buried in a pit or "grave." Irish potatoes, known as a root crop were also grown and stored for winter usage. Popular in both city and country kitchen gardens was "sweet" corn—although the early varieties were not so sweet—had a long history of usage dating back long before the arrival of Euro-Americans. It could be eaten fresh or dried and ground into meal, which also made a variety of dishes.

In addition to vegetable crops, a few culinary herbs were grown separate or intermixed with vegetables. Some of the most frequently grown were horseradish, sage, basil, parsley, marjoram, chives, mint, dill, and summer savory. Some were eaten fresh and others were dried for future use. Unusual for today's garden were hops grown to make a yeast culture.

In 19th-century when vegetable, or kitchen gardens, dominated the landscape around the home, post or farmstead and was a major part of the family's workday during the growing season as it was essential to survival.

The fort's population fluctuated from 300 to 400 people when training down to 30 or 40 when they moved to permanent outposts. The uniform itself and swords and rifles provided a look of authority, but some work was a surprise to enlistees. Yes they learned to ride a horse but also how to farm, keep food fresh, dig latrines and build corrals at far-flung posts.

Thanks to Mike from Weithop's Greenhouses for donating these warm weather vegetable to take home and plant in your gardens. With this being Mother's Day weekend we thought it would be nice to make a flower basket to take home to your Mother.

Also today, MaryAnn Fink, our St. Louis County volunteer ambassador for our Butterflies and Patron of Missouri Pollinators, we are continues sharing information about a couple annuals that are featured in our "First Step Pollinator Pantry Garden".

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. She is going to discuss two (2) of our favorite annuals,

Lantana & Penta. These will give you summer enjoyment and more than likely opportunities to see and help support Monarchs and these other pollinators!

Lantana camara



Lantana, like most of the plants in the verbena family has clusters of pollinator friendly flowers gathered in small bouquets. There are many color variations in each flower cluster that changes as the flowers age. There are also varieties that have more dominate colors and there are several different growth habits from fairly compact to big and full. There is a lantana for any sunny situation whether you are planting a butterfly basket, a quick sip stopover for hummingbirds or boosting your “bee happy” pollinator picnic gardens!

Lantana is a tropical / annual does not live through the winter in our area so it takes our summer heat and humidity without a problem but does need to be planted each spring after the last frost.

Its needs watering, no deadheading and is rarely bothered by hungry deer or rabbits. Lantana attracts: Lots of different types of butterflies, some moths including hummingbird moths, sometimes actual hummingbirds and also very likely to attract visiting bumble bees, honeybees, various little carpenter bees, and miner and leaf-cutting bees.

Pentas lanceolate



Like the lantana, Pentas or sometimes called Egyptian Star flower, is in the verbena family and has its flowers in clusters. Each cluster is the same color on each plant and has much bigger flowers. Even the clusters are much larger, often creating mini-bouquets that have 30 to 50 little flowers. There are many varieties and colors available.

This is also an easy care tropical annual for us in the St. Louis area so it too needs to be planted each year after the last frost.

Pentas takes our summer heat and humidity just fine with only average water. It does best with good drainage in a cultivated space. It doesn't need deadheading and is only occasional bothered by hungry deer or rabbits. Pentas also attracts lots of different types of butterflies, some moths including hummingbird moths, even hummingbirds. Sometimes bumble bees or honeybees will nectar and possibly various little carpenter bees, miner and leaf-cutting bees might stop by for a thirst quenching drink as well!

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Primary sites

Missouri Prairie Foundation. *Grow Native!*

<http://grownative.org><http://missouriansformonarchs.blogspot.com>

<http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/visit/family-of-attractions/butterfly-house.aspx>

<http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/learn-discover/classes.aspx>

<http://millionpollinatorgardens.org/>

<http://www.nwf.org/how-to-help/garden-for-wildlife/create-a-habitat.aspx>

<http://www.nwf.org/Butterfly-Heroes.aspx>

<http://www.monarchwatch.org/waystations/>

<http://monarchjointventure.org/success-stories/>