

# WILDFLOWER GARDEN

Native plants are important because they have **aesthetic, recreational, biological, medicinal, economic and conservation value.**

## NATIVE PLANTS FOUND HERE

### MILKWEED: A SPECIAL STORY



Common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) is critical to the life cycle of monarch butterflies. Monarchs eat the flower nectar and lay their eggs only on milkweed. The larvae are not affected by the poison they absorb from the leaves; instead they become distasteful to potential predators. Monarchs complete a multi-generational migration each year between Mexico and the northern U.S. and Canada that would be impossible without milkweed.



A pollinator on wild bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*). *Monarda* is also a favorite of hummingbirds. Can you guess why?



The tubular flowers of White beardtongue (*Penstemon digitalis*) are pollinated by bees.



This Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*) may look like one flower but is actually a cluster of hundreds of flowers in the dark center; each will form its own seed.



Gray-headed coneflower (*Ratibida pinnata*) attracts several different butterfly species, and the seeds are eaten by birds in the late fall. Plant species such as this one have evolved divided leaves in order to keep cool in hot sun.



One of autumn's showiest flowers, New England aster (*Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*) attracts moths and butterflies, and is an important source of nectar for bees.

There are at least 21 native wildflower species in this garden. How many can you find that are blooming right now? Do you see any pollinators in action?



Goldenrod (*Solidago*) has the Latin meaning "I make whole," referencing its medicinal qualities. Goldenrod, a native plant, is often blamed for allergies more attributable to Ragweed, which is a non-native plant with much less noticeable flowers that blooms at the same time.

Some of the plants growing in this wildflower garden are not native to this region. We are weeding out those non-native species over time.

### IT'S ALL ABOUT POLLINATION

**How do flowering plants reproduce?** Pollination occurs when pollen is carried from flower to flower or is moved within flowers. The successful transfer of pollen in and between flowers of the same plant species leads to fertilization, successful seed development, and fruit production.

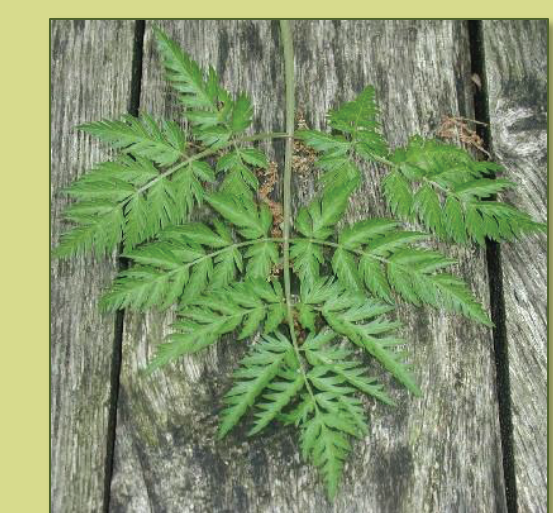
**How does it work?** 80% of pollination is assisted by pollinators, including birds, bats, bees, butterflies, other insects and other animals. The remaining 20% of pollination occurs by wind or water.

### WILD CHERVIL : A NON-NATIVE INVASIVE SPECIES

Have you noticed the plant all along Route 100 that looks like Queen Anne's lace? It's the non-native invasive wild chervil (*Anthriscus sylvestris*) that is taking over local roadsides. While most non-native plants pose no problems, some are invasive and can crowd out native plants. Wild chervil can cause burns on your skin if you touch it and are exposed to sunlight.



Flowers of wild chervil.



Triangular, fern-like leaves of wild chervil.

