DEMONSTRATION GARDEN: POLLINATOR GARDEN

RELEVANCE

We are in unprecedented times. Current research indicates that pollinator populations are declining precipitously. Current landscaping trends that favor tidy, ornamental landscapes with exotic and non-native plants are contributing to their decline. It is imperative that we pioneer and embrace a new type of landscape that is aesthetically-pleasing, engaging but also benefits the greater ecology of the region and its inhabitants. We can no longer look at gardens/landscapes from an anthropormorphic view, we need to create spaces that are functional and beneficial to birds and pollinators. This garden will be one-of-a-kind in Durango and serve as a precedent for more wild, native gardens in the community.

OBJECTIVE

- To design and implement a garden that successully demonstrates the beauty, functionality and ecological benefits of native, pollinator-friendly plants.
- To ignite a love for wild, native, pollinator gardens.
- Encourage people to get involved and install similar gardens at home

BENEFITS

- Low maintenance and water-wise after established
- Beautiful, functional and ecologically beneficial
- Will provide forage and nesting habitat for birds and pollinators
- Will be an opportunity to educate the public on the importance of pollinators and what they can do to support them.
- Recognition for the City of Durango

"The world is full of plants. It's important that they create diversity, that they work well together, that they create life and attract birds, bees, and butterflies." — Piet Oudolf

SITE CONTEXT AND FINDINGS




The project area is located along the Animas River Trail and in close proximity to the water park and Santa Rita Park. This particular section of the river trail is popular with water recreationalists, bikers and pedestrians. As a result, the pollinator demonstration garden will get a lot of visibility and will naturally produce intrigue by passers-by.

The area is approximately 5,836 square feet, is oriented southwest and receives more than 6 hours of sun daily. This is an ideal environment for the type of plants that will be installed in the garden. The site is gently sloped and also has a drainage basin meant to capture and slow water from runoff and during heavy rain events. This will be incorporated into the design and attempt s will be made to utilize the water that is captured to reduce water usage and mimic a more natural/wild landscape.

DESIGN PRECEDENTS

Photo credit: American Public Gardens Association

The Lurie Garden - Chicago, IL
Planted on top of a parking garage, the Lurie Garden is a blend of native and introduced perennials and grasses that create a feeling of being transported to a prairie or wildflower meadow. Designed by Gustafson Guthrie Nichol, Piet Oudolf, and Robert Israel, the garden is 2.5 acres and is part of the Millenium Park in Chicago. The different height, shapes and textures create both rhythm and variation. The eye is immediately drawn to the vibrant display of colors that are punctuated by wispy grasses dancing in the wind. The Lurie Garden is a prime example of a landscape that is both beautiful and naturalistic. The result is a community of plants that work synergistically together.

Photo credit: Piet Oudolf

Hummelo Garden - Netherlands
Every phase of a plants life is beautiful and meaningful. The Hummelo Garden reminds us of this. Located on the property of Piet and Anje Oudolf in the Dutch Province of Gelderland, the Hummelo Garden demonstrates the full life cycle of plants by displayng their ephemeral nature and beauty in Summer, Winter, Spring and Fall. Taking inspiration from natural landscapes, Oudolf has created a garden where dead stems and brown foliage are embraced rather than immediately pruned back as is frequently done in more manicured landscapes. The result is a more natural, wild look that also provides both forage and nesting for birds during winter time. This type of landscape also introduces more ecologically-sensitive maintenance practices and inspires people to take a more hands-off approach to maintaining their own landscapes.

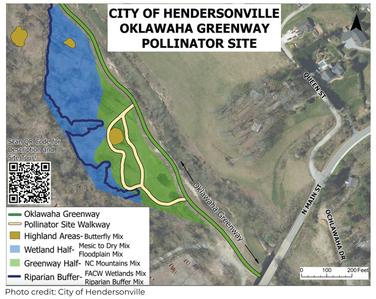

Photo credit: City of Hendersonville

Pollinator Meadow at Oklawaha Greenway - Hendersonville, NC
As a Bee City USA affiliate, the City of Hendersonville has taken a proactive approach to attracting and protecting pollinators. The pollinator garden located along the 3.5 mile Oklawaha Greenway is a recent addition planted by city staff and some members of the USFWS. The garden encompasses 4.7 acres of upland meadow and wetlands. The gardens serve as examples of what people can implement at home.

Photo credit: City of Hendersonville

Pollinator Mural - Hendersonville, NC
"I imagine a world filled with people that see the beauty and connectedness of all things, and act accordingly. A bee woke me up to that truth. I am painting what she showed me." These are the words of Matt Willey, the artist and founder of The Good of the Hive. To date, Matt Willey has painted 27 murals of bees and pollinators around the world in an effort to bring more awareness to the plight of these creatures. His murals have started a movement and his work has been featured in the New York Times, the Washington Post and also a recent documentary. This mural in Hendersonville was painted on the exterior of the Hands On! Children's Museum close to downtown.

RECOGNITION

The implementation of the Pollinator Demonstration Garden is a perfect opportunity for the City of Durango to become an affiliate of the Bee City USA® program and be recognized for their contribution in protecting and providing food and habitat for pollinators.

Bee City USA® and Bee Campus USA work to galvanize communities to sustain pollinators, in particular the more than 3,600 species of native bees in this country, by increasing the abundance of native plants, providing nest sites, and reducing the use of pesticides. Bee City USA and Bee Campus USA are initiatives of the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation.

EDUCATION

Honeybees and Bumblebees are what typically come to mind when people think of bees. However, there are over 900 species of native bees in the State of Colorado plus a myriad of other native pollinator species such as moths, beatles, and butterflie. A total of three interpretive waysides will be placed in the pollinator garden to acquaint people with the variety of species as well as educate them on the importance of pollinators and their relationship to native plant species. The proposed mural will also celebrate native pollinators of this region and their native habitats.

EXPLORATION

The goal is to make this an interactive garden where people of all ages can interact and explore the wonders of a pollinator garden from the delicate details of the flowers, the native bees foraging for pollen or the wonders of propogation in the form of seed heeds ready to be released by nature's forces.

INSPIRATION

A garden has not officially done its job unless it has spawned some sense of awe and inspiration in the spirit of the observer.