



# The Pollinator Garden

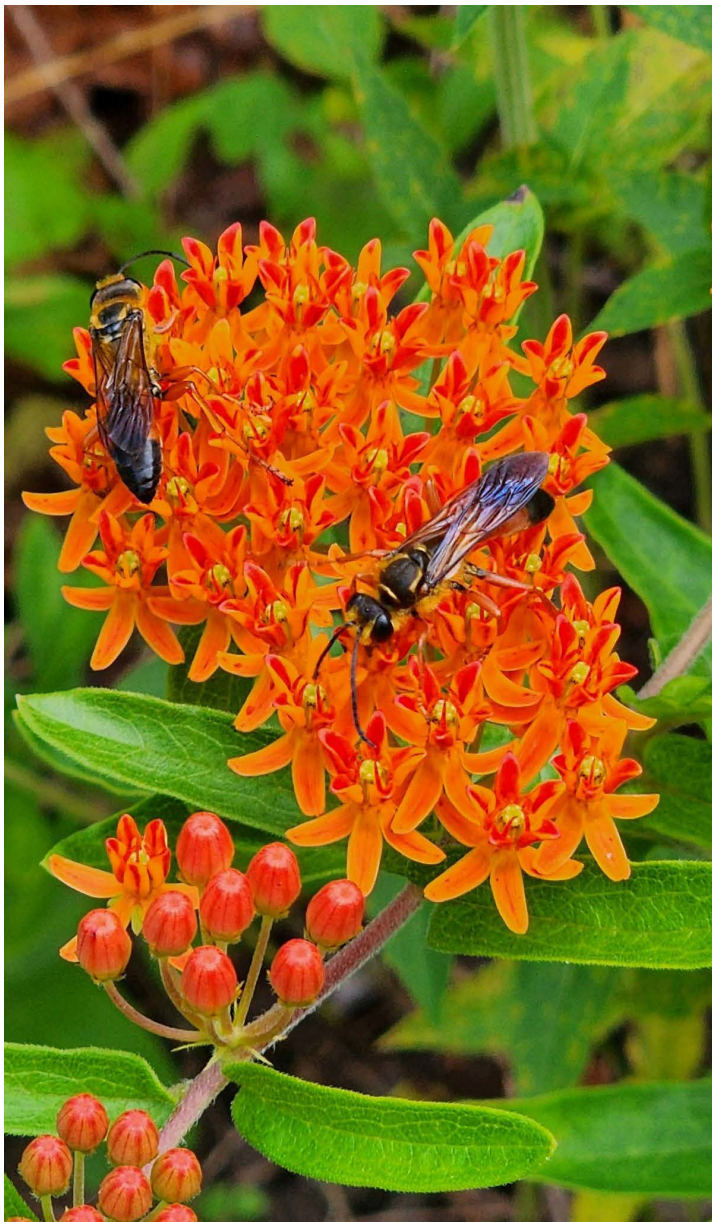
Follow the main walkway clockwise through Wilcox Park from the back of the Westerly Library, past the Pond, to the Pollinator Garden. This beautiful collection of native flowering plants is designed to attract, nourish, and shelter many pollinators such as bats, bees, beetles, birds, butterflies, flies, and moths. The Pollinator Garden and the Hillside above it are managed by a team of Master Gardeners and community volunteers.

Pollination occurs when pollen, the yellow powder-like substance in the heart of a flower, is moved from flower to flower. Sometimes, pollen moves between plants by wind, but most often it is moved by pollinators. This transfer results in the development of fruits and seeds.

Plants use color and scent to attract pollinators. They offer rewards of pollen (a source of protein), nectar (a source of sugar), and resin (used to waterproof bees' nests).

The Pollinator Garden showcases the best practices to support pollinator plants:

- It is planted exclusively with native plants, plants that have evolved with the local geology and climate since before colonial days. Native plants attract a more diverse community of pollinators.
- The plants in this garden were almost exclusively grown from locally collected seed, assuring the continued genetic diversity they would have developed in the wild. Making them better suited to resist pests, drought, and diseases, and adapt to climate changes.
- The garden contains a variety of flower shapes, colors, scents, and bloom times to attract and support a variety of pollinators. For example, bees prefer fruity, flowery, sweet smells. Many pollinators find nectar and pollen more accessible in open, composite flowers and butterflies rest on them while they feed. Birds find flowers using color. For example, red plants attract hummingbirds.
- A well-designed pollinator garden will include flowers that provide nectar and pollen from April through October. Bees feed on one type of plant per foraging trip so the Pollinator Garden is planted in large groups of each plant.
- No pesticides or chemical fertilizers are used in the garden, and watering is only done for new plants and in periods of drought. Plant stalks and seed heads are left as protection for overwintering insects and birds. Native plants tend to be robust, and the garden is routinely “edited” as plants spread to give room to each type.



Throughout the year, a small portion of the seeds are collected. Some are given to the Westerly Library for their seed exchange program. Most are winter-sown and are ready to plant the following September. New plants and plant divisions are used in the Park and exchanged with other gardeners.

The plants in the Pollinator Garden have identification signage in the ground. The attached plant list details all the plants in the Pollinator Garden.

Explore the Pollinator Garden and the hillside above it. Or take a tour of this garden and the other Native Plants with the Master Gardeners. These are offered 2 Saturdays a month. You'll be inspired to plant some of these native species at home and attract birds, bees, butterflies and moths to your garden.

By Sandi Carmichael, Park Committee member and Master Gardener

