

UUCA Pollinator Garden

The following plants are part of the pollinator garden on the north side of our building. Plants are labeled with common and scientific names, and a description of the plants is found below. Thanks to Bob Roepnack for planning the garden and procuring the plants, to Phil Roudebush for helping with planning and providing these plant descriptions, and to Bob, Phil, Jill Preyer, Marianne Newman and Luca Anderson for planting more than 100 specimens.



Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*)

Little bluestem or beard grass is native to prairies, fields, clearings, hills, limestone glades, roadsides, waste areas and open woods throughout most of the United States — it is most common in tallgrass prairies along with big bluestem, indiangrass and switchgrass. It is the state grass of Kansas and Nebraska. Little bluestem grows to become an upright, roundish mound of soft, bluish-green or grayish-green blades in May and June that is about two to three feet high. In July, it initiates flowering stalks but many consider the most outstanding ornamental feature of this grass is its bronze-orange fall foliage color. It is one of the best grasses for nesting and roosting habitat. The seeds are consumed by small mammals and birds.

Japanese Sedge (*Carex oshimensis* ‘Everest’) and Pennsylvania Sedge (*C. pensylvanica*)

Carex is a vast genus of more than 1,500 species of grassy plants in the family *Cyperaceae* (sedges) found across most of the world. *C. oshimensis* is native to dry woods and rocky slopes throughout Honshu Island, Japan, while *C. pensylvanica* is native to thickets and dry woodland areas in eastern and central North America. The genus name from Latin means ‘cutter’ in reference to the sharp leaves and stem edges. They are typically used as edging plants for paths and walkways.

Eastern Bluestar (*Amsonia tabernaemontana*)

This native perennial plant in the dogbane family produces dense clusters of pale blue spring and early summer flowers, and golden fall foliage. The flowers provide an important nectar source and the foliage is a larval food for various butterflies. It is host to the coral hairstreak butterfly caterpillar, which has developed a taste and tolerance to the plant’s milky sap. Hummingbirds and hummingbird moths are examples of pollinators drawn to the plant.

Anise Hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum*)

Anise hyssop is a species of perennial plant in the mint family, which is native to much of north-central and northern North America, notably the Great Plains and other prairies. Other common names include blue giant hyssop, fragrant giant hyssop and lavender giant hyssop. The plant typically blooms in June to September with bright lavender flower spikes. The plant was used by Native Americans for cough, fevers, wounds and diarrhea — the soft anise-scented leaves can also be used as a seasoning and tea. The flowers attract bees, butterflies and hummingbirds.

Blazing Star (*Liatris spicata* ‘Kobold’)

Also known as gay feather, this upright, clump-forming perennial plant in the sunflower family is native to moist low grounds, meadows and marsh edges. ‘Kobold’ is a small, compact cultivar, which typically grows 2 to 2.5 feet tall. The showy, deep purple flowers typically appear July to August. This plant is excellent for attracting pollinators. These include monarch, tiger swallowtail, clouded sulfur, orange sulfur, gray hairstreak, Aphrodite fritillary, painted lady, red admiral and wood nymph butterflies, and bumblebees, digger bees, long-horned bees, leaf-cutting bees, skippers and hummingbirds.

Oakleaf Hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia* ‘Pee Wee’)

Oakleaf hydrangea is an upright, multi-stemmed deciduous shrub that is native to bluffs, moist woods, ravines and stream banks from North Carolina to Louisiana. It is noted for producing pyramidal panicles of white to purplish-pink flowers in summer on exfoliating branches clad with large, lobed, oak-like leaves. Numerous cultivars are available — ‘Pee Wee’ is noted for its compact size, smaller flowers, smaller leaves and more restrained growth habit. It is mainly used as an ornamental specimen to accent foundations near buildings or patios. The flowers are attractive to butterflies and songbirds eat the seeds.

Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)

This plant is also called butterfly milkweed but unlike other milkweeds it does not exude milky sap from the stems. Many other common names exist for this plant including Canada root, chigger flower, flux root, orange milkweed, orange root, orange Swallow-wort, pleurisy root, silky swallow-wort, tuber root, yellow milkweed, white-root, wind root and butterfly love. Flowers are a nectar source for many butterflies and leaves are a food source for monarch butterfly larvae (caterpillars). The genus name honors the Greek god Asklepios the god of medicine.

Beebalm (*Monarda didyma* ‘Jacob Cline’)

Commonly named horsemint, bergamot or wild Oswego tea, beebalm grows over most of the Midwest and eastern U.S. in open and rocky woods, roadsides, prairies and borders of glades. Eastern beebalm, *Monarda bradburiana*, has pink-to-white flowers that often have purple flecks but there are many other *Monarda* species with different colored flowers such as *M. didyma* (bright carmine red) and *M. fistulosa* (pink). Beebalm flowers attract bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. Larvae of certain species of moths (*Coleophora* spp) only feed on beebalm plants.

Joe Pye Weed (*Eutrochium dubium* ‘Little Joe’)

Joe-pye weeds are a group of purple-flowering plants in the sunflower family that are native to the U.S. and Canada. The plant was named after a New England man that used the plant medicinally for helping people with typhus fever. *E. dubium*, commonly known as coastal plain Joe Pye weed, is a perennial plant native to sandy swamps, riverbanks and moist thickets along coastal plains from Nova Scotia to South Carolina and Alabama. The ‘Little Joe’ cultivar is more compact than the typical species and should grow to 3 to 4 feet tall. The mauve purple flowers attract many kinds of butterflies and have a light vanilla fragrance when crushed.

Ironweed (*Vernonia fasciculata*)

About 17 species of ironweed are recognized in North America with most found in the southeast. They are members of the sunflower family and can grow 3 to 10 feet tall. It is typically a species of prairies and other grasslands, old fields, roadsides, savannas and woodlands growing on dry to moist soils. It is especially common in overgrazed pastures. On a bright late summer day, the purple flowers of ironweed glow. They are magnets for butterflies.

Rattlesnake Master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*)

This perennial plant of the parsley family is native to the tallgrass prairies of central and eastern North America. The common name comes from the fact that some Native Americans used its root as an antidote for rattlesnake venom. The species name “yuccifolium” was given because its leaves resemble those of yuccas. The flowers attract many insects including short- and long-tongued bees, flies, beetles, butterflies and wasps.

Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia* ‘American Gold Rush’)

Rudbeckia hirta is a common flowering plant native to eastern and central North America — daisy-like, composite flower heads typically appear in late summer and early autumn. Other common names include brown-eyed Susan, brown betty, gloriosa daisy, poor-land daisy, yellow daisy, yellow ox-eye daisy and English bull’s eye. The genus name honors Olaus Rudbeck, who was a professor of botany at the University of Uppsala in Sweden and was one of Linnaeus's teachers. The specific species name refers to the hairs (*hirta*) occurring on leaves and stems. The plant also is a traditional medicinal herb in several North American tribal nations. Numerous types of butterflies are attracted to this plant.

Sweet Coneflower (*Rudbeckia subtomentosa* ‘Henry Eilers’)

This native perennial plant occurs on moist prairies, along streambanks and in low areas. It was found growing in the wild in a railroad prairie in Illinois. The cultivar was discovered by Henry Eilers, a well-known nurseryman in southern Illinois. Flowers typically bloom from July to September and have a mild aroma of anise. Numerous types of butterflies are attracted to this plant.

Coneflower (*Echinacea* ‘Cheyenne Spirit’)

Echinacea is a group of flowering plants in the daisy family. There are nine different species, which are native to eastern and central North America where they are found growing in moist to dry prairies and open wooded areas. Many cultivars and hybrids such as ‘Cheyenne Spirit’ are available for the home garden. The genus name comes from the Greek word for hedgehog (*echinos*) inspired by the spiky projections in the center of its flower head in the seed stage. Nectar and pollen-rich flowers are appealing to butterflies, like skippers and eastern tiger swallowtails, and to bees.

Wood Aster (*Symphotrichum* spp.)

Asters are perennial plants reaching heights of 1 to 3 feet and the blooming period occurs from late summer into the fall. The nectar and pollen of the flower heads attract many kinds of insects, including bees, wasps, flies, butterflies, skippers and beetles. Bees are particularly important pollinators of the flowers. Caterpillars of the silvery checkerspot and pearl crescent butterflies feed on the foliage of asters, as do the caterpillars of many moth species.

Yarrow (*Achillea* ‘Coronation Gold’)

Achillea is a group of several hundred flowering plants in the aster family. The common name ‘yarrow’ is usually applied to *Achillea millefolium*, but may also be used for other species within the genus. This hybrid has yellow blooms and was named for Queen Elizabeth’s coronation. Yarrow is native to most of Europe, temperate parts of Asia and North America. The genus was named after the Greek mythological character Achilles. According to legend, Achilles’ soldiers used yarrow to treat their wounds, hence some of its common names such as staunchweed, soldier’s woundwort and bloodwort. Other common names include gordaldo, nosebleed plant, old man’s pepper, devil’s nettle, sanguinary, milfoil, carpenter’s weed, thousand-leaf, thousand-weed and thousand-seal. The flowers are visited by many insects in the late spring and early summer and the plants are used as food by larvae of several different moth species.

Catmint (*Nepeta racemosa* ‘Walker’s Low’)

Nepeta is a genus of over 250 flowering plants in the mint family. The genus is native to Europe, Asia and Africa, and has also naturalized to North America. *N. racemosa* is native to the Caucasus and northern Iran. True catnip, *Nepeta cataria*, contains the compound nepetalactone, which binds to olfactory receptors of cats, typically resulting in temporary euphoria. The leaves of catmint are also attractive to cats, albeit somewhat less enticing. Flowers of catmint attract a diverse variety of bees and other pollinators.

