
NYACK COMMUNITY GARDEN

October-November 2019

Planting Monarch Butterfly Habitats



I have been gardening nearly all of my life, incorporating best practices of organic gardening every step of the way. Over these many years, I've come to realize that it's not just about the food I am eating but the impact that these practices have on an entire ecosystem.

For the past five years, I have been actively involved in helping to create three [Monarch Waystations](#). These waystations provide host plants where Monarch's lay their eggs. Once the caterpillars emerge from the eggs, they eat the plants' leaves, and the flowers ultimately provide a source of nectar for butterflies. Milkweed alone can meet all of these needs—that's why it's a plant commonly associated with pollinator gardens and monarch butterflies.

One of the biggest threats to monarch butterflies is habitat loss. Monarch caterpillars eat only one type of plant, milkweed. Anytime meadows are destroyed—for example to build new homes and buildings—landscapers tend to plant grass around these new developments instead of creating new pollinator habitats. Milkweed is also increasingly mowed away from roadsides and killed by herbicides along fencerows, so it's up to gardeners to reintegrate this habitat into our human-altered ecosystem.

There are a number of milkweed varieties that can be planted to serve as host plants for monarchs, as well as nectar sources. But to be on the safe side, it's good to provide other sources of nectar to help fatten up those butterflies for their long trip south to Mexico or wherever their destination may be. These species include coneflower, wild bergamot, Joe Pye weed, phlox, zinnias, and Mexican sunflowers.

Two of the waystations I've worked with are planted next to organic vegetable gardens and are registered with [Monarch Watch](#), an organization that monitors monarch populations with the help of citizen scientists and provides information on how to help them. The third garden is in Bear Mountain State Park in New York and is a pollinator garden with milkweed and educational signs for their many gardens and exhibits. These three gardens are also registered [Climate Victory Gardens](#), because they incorporate important environmental practices that fight climate change like improving soil health, encouraging biodiversity, planting perennials, and ditching chemicals.

Monarch Waystation at Bear Mountain State Park

[The Trailside Museums and Zoo](#) at Bear Mountain, New York, have a number of pollinator gardens, but the largest one contains a wide variety of perennials (bee balm, purple coneflower, asters, catmint, etc.) including shrubs (such as nine bark) and milkweed that attract different types of pollinators. There is always something blooming throughout the growing season, which provides an ongoing supply of nectar for pollinators. Also, different pollinators are attracted to different shapes and colors, so it's important to have something for everyone. Besides producing food for pollinators and other wildlife, perennials pull carbon from the air and store it in the ground. For tips on creating a pollinator garden of your own, visit [The Xerces Society](#).

Monarch Waystation at Rockland Country Day School

At Rockland Country Day School, a small private school in Rockland County, NY, the children learn about organic gardening in our very large, hands-on garden. As the school's organic garden instructor, I teach them about the importance of soil management, composting, how seeds grow and the importance of pollinators. Pollinators produce three out of every four bites of food we eat. At the school, we are limited in what we can grow because of the school's schedule, so we mainly grow lots of fast-growing plants in fall, then again in summer. We also plant a crop of garlic. Bunnies usually harvest our strawberry beds. Adjacent to our raised garden beds is a very large perennial garden with a huge amount of common milkweed. The students have learned how to identify male and female monarch butterflies and have participated in tagging them and recording their tag numbers during their fall migration. The information we gather is then sent to Monarch Watch.



Monarch Waystation at Nyack Community Garden

In the town where I live, Nyack, NY, we are very fortunate to have a community garden, which has been operating for over thirty years. For a small fee, a gardener can "rent" a full or half-plot of soil in which to grow veggies and flowers. It is so popular, that there is almost always a waiting list for new members. I have been a member for around ten years. During this time we have experimented with planting a cover crop during the winter. We would like to make this a common practice because it is better for the soil, but we have yet to come to a consensus. Growing a cover crop would mean closing the garden a week or two earlier than we do now, and people like to leave their kale in the ground for as long as possible. Directly outside of the fence, where the approximately 50 plots are located, is our Monarch Waystation. It is a large, oval-shaped garden that is planted with perennials and several types of milkweed.

In all three of these gardens, it is very common to see the third-generation monarchs coming in to lay their eggs. It is also common to find their chrysalises, which contain the fourth generation of monarchs that will travel the great distance to Mexico. It is for this very reason that the fourth generation of monarch butterflies lives longer than all of the other generations. I find this tiny creature's journey so amazing and awe-inspiring; perhaps this is the reason why I have been developing these Monarch Waystations in the first place. Creating these places for monarchs is really such a small thing to do, but I know that my efforts combined with the efforts of other waystations make a difference for this species, which has a much larger implication for the natural world.

--Laura Pakaln, reprinted with permission from Green America:
<https://greenamerica.org/story/planting-monarch-butterfly-habitats>

Nyack Pollinator Pathway

Nyack Community Garden is now a part of the Nyack Pollinator Pathway! In collaboration with the Nyack Sustainability Committee and Pollinator Pathways in Westchester County and Southwestern Connecticut, the goal is to increase and enhance pollinator-friendly plantings around Nyack, through both public and private lands. Enjoy the plants donated by the organization Plant Me a Rainbow, for beautiful flowers all season long. Thanks to Laura Pakaln and Jill Remaly for organizing!



Seed Saving Tips



Most people think of seeds in early spring, when it's time to start planning our gardens and starting seeds indoors. But late summer and fall are also good times to be thinking of seeds, for seed saving! If you had a favorite in the garden this year, you can save those seeds to have it again next year. Saving seeds is economically and environmentally beneficial, as well.

Which plants' seeds can be saved? Technically, any of them, but don't try to save seeds from hybrid varieties (noted as "F1" on the seed package). Most gardeners save seeds from heirloom varieties, which are not hybrids. Choose your very best plants for saving seeds—if your plants were especially disease-resistant, ripened quickly, or were especially tasty, those are good to save. You don't want to save seeds from mediocre plants.

Some seeds are easier to save than others. Beans, for example, can just be removed from their pods, and pepper seeds can be saved from any ripe pepper. For easy, beginner seed-saving, choose self-pollinating crops such as beans, peas, tomatoes, and peppers. A tip for tomatoes: since their seeds are encased in a wet, fleshy fruit, they need to be treated to remove the "goo" that will remain on the seed. Simply put the seeds in a jar of water and let them ferment for a few days. The fermentation process will dissolve the "goo," and then the seeds can be strained and dried for saving.

Before storing seeds, make sure they are thoroughly dry. To test for dryness push your fingernail into the seed. If it is soft, it's not yet dry. To store, put the seeds in a paper envelope or packet and label it. Keep in a cool, dark place, and these seeds should remain viable for a few years.

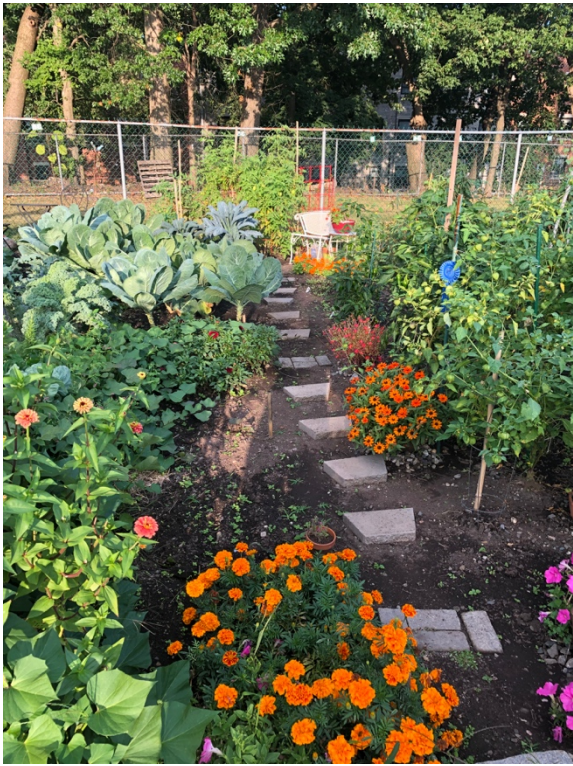
If you have a bounty of seeds, consider donating the to the Nyack Seed Exchange at the Nyack Library! More information on their program can be found here:

<https://www.nyacklibrary.org/nyack-seed-exchange.html>



--Liz Cherry

Garden Contest – And the Winners Were:



Best Overall:

Jill Remaly – Plot 37

Best Maintained:

1st Prize - Elvin & Yoolet De La Cruz – Plot 35

2nd Prize – Linda Watson – Plot 44

3rd Prize – Pritsky/Caplan – Plot 7

Best Vegetables/Flowers

1st Prize – Jayne Stuecklen – Plot 36

2nd Prize – Janice Solomon – Plot 43

3rd Prize – Morgan Strand – Plot 27

Most Creative

1st Prize – Marie Carmel Grube – Plot 23

2nd Prize – Fava/de Waal – Plot 21

3rd Prize – Mari Natal – Plot 24

Congratulations to all!

One thing that was new this year was that the date of the judging was not announced ahead of time this year – so gardeners couldn't spiff up and prepare with that last-minute weeding.

There were 4 judges this year (usually there are 5) – 2 Village Trustees, a Cornell Cooperative Extension Master Gardener, and one "lay person". The overall consensus was that all the plots looked wonderful and it was very difficult to reach the decisions. Several apparently commented that overall it was a joy to walk down the pathway and see all of the gardens from the inside. We all know this, because we have the key and come in all the time. But for those on the outside, it was a delightful surprise.

We also know that we have been, in recent years, planting more and more flowers. As of this writing, in late September, the colors of the garden are simply magnificent. They remind this writer of a Monet painting. And, for sure, the butterflies and moths are abundant and appreciative, too!

--Kathy Schwarz



2019 Dates to Remember

- Mondays, around 10am** Plant A Row veggies in cooler will be given to food bank
- Thursday, Oct. 17** Pot Luck Dinner with prizes awarded to attending contest winners and free raffle for all attendees
- Saturday, Nov. 2** Garden closes, all items removed and plots restored to state as of April 8
- Saturday, Nov. 9** 8:00 AM sharp: Winter prep clean-up

Pot-Luck Dinner, Thursday, October 17th, 6:30pm



The annual, end-of-season pot-luck dinner will take place on October 17th at 6:30 at the Senior Center on Depew Avenue. It is a wonderful opportunity to socialize with other gardeners and share some great food. It is, of course, encouraged that you prepare a dish containing some food that you harvested, but this certainly is not a requirement. Just share a dish to serve about 10 or more people, and come! And bring along a family member or friend, if you want. Drinks will be provided.

That evening, awards will be given to the contest winners who are in attendance. And there will be a raffle, so everyone has a chance to win something. But everyone wins no matter what, because of the great food and great company of our fellow gardeners!

Thanks to the Pot-Luck Dinner Committee members for organizing the event: Adrienne Alarco (chair), Christina Clemente, Betty Berlingeri Jo Robbins, Janice Solomon, and David Raiken.

--Kathy Schwarz

News you can use!

Death to Vines!

The fence behind your garden must be vine-free 24/7. You are urged to become a serial vine killer.

Kids in the Garden?

There are now child-friendly gloves and tools in the shed, donated by Rockland Country Day School. Thanks to Laura Pakaln for coordinating the donation!

Coming or going?
Please don't forget
to lock the gate.



Give a hose a chance!
Don't forget to turn the hose
off after use. Then open the
nozzle and drain. Thanks!



A Message from Your Newsletter Team

It's your newsletter so please send
us your garden story or let us know
what you want to read about.
We'd love to hear from you.

Liz Cherry elizcherry@gmail.com
Kathy Schwarz Katherine.schwarz54@gmail.com
Michelle Morales mzmichelle@hotmail.com

*Photographs by Nancy Gray, Elizabeth Turk, Laura
Pakaln, and Liz Cherry.*

Notes from the Board:

Please notify us at nyackcommunitygarden@gmail.com if our garden information has incorrect information for you such as wrong name spelling, email, phone number, plot number, committee assignment, or address OR if you change any of these.

While we do not email revised lists every time an update is made to all members, the up-to-date information is always posted on the bulletin board on the door of the shed.

Nyack Community Garden Executive Board

John Dunnigan (plot 16)	co-president	pickwickbooks@gmail.com	358-9126
Lynda Grant (plot 42)	co-president/secretary	lhgrant1@gmail.com	358-2175
Marie Dilluvio (plot 15)	treasurer	mvenus1220@aol.com	358-5877
Jill Remaly (plot 37)	member	jillremaly217@gmail.com	358-3427
Laura Pakaln (plot 32)	member	lpakaln@verizon.net	358-0593

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