

SPRING HAS SPRUNG!

Please follow these guidelines to support our local ecosystem:

Wait until May to mow or to clean up leaf litter and stalks with last year's seeds; the Friends of the Outlet will manage such clean-up on its pollinator gardens along the trail, so **please look but don't touch**

<https://xerces.org/blog/dont-spring-into-garden-cleanup-too-soon>

Try to include plants indigenous to this region into your garden; see below for details and enjoy the fact that deer will mostly leave such plants alone

These pollinator gardens are a joint project between the Penn Yan Rotary and the Friends of the Outlet, with guidance from the Cornell Cooperative of Yates County

Establishing native species in a nature preserve is an excellent way to support the local ecosystem. Many insects, animals and birds have evolved to eat and breed on native plants. They may enjoy the nectar or leaves of other plants, but their systems are best adapted to native species. Some butterflies, for example, are unable to reproduce if a specific plant is unavailable, because their caterpillars can only eat a certain kind of plant (for example, Monarch butterflies only lay eggs on milkweed or butterfly weed).

In addition, native plants have adapted to the ecosystem and are usually hardier than other plants, strengthening the forest and meadows. There are notable exceptions to this phenomenon, such as garlic mustard and Japanese knotweed. Such invasive species crowd out native plants, shrinking the food supply for many creatures. Nurturing strong, native perennial plants is one way to combat damage to the ecosystem.

The advantages extend to people as well: more resilient greenery creates better shade in the summer heat, and a healthy ecosystem fosters clean water and fights erosion, not to mention that healthy plants, flowers, berries, birds and animals are delightful to see.

One of the best things about this installation is that you can do a version of it at home, easily! It doesn't have to be large to make a difference; see instructions below. The list of native plants we put in here were selected especially for their adaptation to part-shade and their benefits to pollinators. Once you determine how much sun/shade your location will get, you can consult your local garden store or do some online sleuthing, perhaps starting with the Cornell Cooperative of Yates County: <https://yates.cce.cornell.edu/gardening>. Our region boasts many native plant nurseries.

Here are some of the plants (added on April 28, 2024) to the bed at Fox Mills site:

Winterberry

Dwarf crested Iris

Wild ginger

Native geranium

Leucathoe, variegated

Baptisia

Monarda (bee balm)

Jacob's ladder

Black-eyed Susan

Stonecrop

Colombine

A Second Pollinator garden is underway at Cascade Falls. It will be filled with plants in the spring of 2026; the bed is overwintering with a few hardy shrubs during the winter of 2025-6.



POLLINATOR GARDEN ABCs



The bed above was planted in spring, 2024 and is located at Fox Mills site

1. Outline the area you wish to plant with logs or stones
2. Line the bottom with cardboard (brown with black or no colored printing)
3. Add about 6-8 inches of good topsoil
4. Cover with more cardboard
5. Cover with 3-4 inches of aged mulch – green is ok if left to overwinter before planting.
6. Water well. After a few days, you can plant by digging carefully down through the cardboard to add plants.
7. Seek perennial plants that are native to your area, perhaps blooming or making berries at different times for season-long interest.
8. Weed as needed, but the structure of the bed should keep down weeds, especially as plants become established. And some weeds are beneficial; like Dandelions, which you can remove after they go to seed, or leave for extra green.
9. Enjoy year after year!

