

It's a Plan!

By Pollinator Garden Committee Co-Chairs:
Ann Humphreys and Pam Whiston

“In the past, we have asked one thing of our gardens: that they be pretty. Now they have to support life, sequester carbon, feed pollinators, and manage water.”
—Doug Tallamy

We are fortunate to have great resources in Missouri for gardeners and homeowners who want to add native plants to their existing gardens and home landscaping. Our committee has been hard at work for over a year, creating a plan for a Butterfly Garden, which brings together the best information about which plants will achieve the objectives of attracting and supporting butterflies with blooms providing pollen and nectar from early spring through late fall, and using plants native to Missouri which will thrive in our unique area in the northeast corner of the state. In this article we want to share our plant list and garden plan with you, explain how the plan was created, and pass along links for the resources we used. We also want to share with you our big vision for the long term work of this committee.

The Plan

The plan our committee has developed for a Native Plant Butterfly Garden can be found on the Mississippi Hills Master Naturalist website as follows:

- The **design plan** for a 4' x 25' bed: ***Butterfly Garden Layout***
- The **plant list** with both the common and the scientific plant names: ***Butterfly Garden Plant List***
- The **graphic detail** that lists the common name, scientific name, sun exposure, height, spacing, soil preference, color, and bloom time: ***Butterfly Garden Detail and Bloom Times***

The plan calls for 90 plants of 19 different plant species and has been designed for a 100 square foot bed. Using a 100 square feet bed as a standard bed size allows the plan to easily be scaled up or down by simple multiplication to calculate the number of plants needed for the actual area to be planted.

Why Customize?

When we started work a year and a half ago, we thought creating a plan for a Butterfly Garden would be a snap! We intended to use the Native Garden Design: Butterfly Garden, created by Scott Woodbury for GrowNative.org, which is a division of the Missouri Prairie Foundation. (The Missouri Department of Conservation is one of the sponsoring organizations and funders of this plan, as well as the other plans on the GrowNative.org website. As of this writing, there are a total of 13 plans, and more are in the pipeline.) When we reviewed the plant list, we discovered something interesting: not all the plants thrive in our area. If you look at the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map, you will see that 80% of Missouri is in Zone 6a and 6b. We live on the dividing line at the northern edge of Zone 6a and southern edge of Zone 5b. It appears to us

that the plant list for the GrowNative.org plan is drawn from Zone 6 plants. To succeed in our gardens, we need plants that are hardy in both Zones 6 and 5. We used three resources to modify the original **GrowNative!** plant list to find suitable plants for our area:

1. GrowNative.org, Native Plant Database, which has a link to the USDA PLANTS Range Map that will show whether a plant has been reported as being in the counties of Lewis, Marion, Ralls, Monroe, and Shelby. <https://gownative.org/native-plant-database/>
2. The Missouri Botanical Garden Plant Finder.
<https://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderSearch.aspx>
(this site also gives the pronunciations of scientific names)
3. The Missouri Wildflowers Nursery Native Plants Catalog, either the online version or the print version. This provides information on light preference, bloom period, flower color, height, moisture/soil type preferred, spacing, what it attracts, and whether it is deer resistant. Here is the website for the online catalog in two different formats:

[MO Wildflower Catalog](#)

-or-

[MO Wildflower Plant List](#)

Brush Up on Your Latin and Shop at Native Plant Nurseries!

There is just no way around it—you must use the scientific names of plants to ensure you are getting the plants we list in the plan.

Here is the contact information for the two nurseries our committee has worked with:

Forrest Keeling Nursery
88 Forrest Keeling Lane
Elsberry MO 63343
573-898-5571
800-356-2401
Info@fknursery.com

Missouri Wildflowers Nursery
9814 Pleasant Hill Road
Jefferson City MO 65109
573-496-3492
Mowldflrs@socket.net

Our BIG Goals!

Our Pollinator Garden Committee has long range goals of customizing all of the **GrowNative!** plans for our area. One down, twelve to go! But we do not just want to create these gardens on paper, we want to put them in the ground and see how they perform. Originally, we hoped to put these gardens on public lands that would be accessible to everyone, and possibly use signage

with QR codes to provide plant lists and other information. We are finding that public lands often have budget and staffing limitations, which put the continued maintenance of gardens in jeopardy. The best planned and planted pollinator garden will turn into a pile of weeds if it is not maintained. As Scott Woodbury said during his program to our Chapter in March, "MAINTENANCE IS KEY!"

Our committee may have better success working with individual landowners who already have gardening experience, and who understand that all gardens require maintenance.

Here is the assistance our committee can provide a landowner:

1. Help the landowner determine what plan is best suited for the location and soil type of the site, and whether any soil amendment would be beneficial.
2. Help the landowner locate a source for plants.
3. Drive to the plant nursery and pick up the plants the day before planting.
4. Organize a workday for Chapter volunteers to plant the garden.

Here are our expectations of what an individual landowner would do:

1. Prepare the bed (landowners would decide the location and size of the bed, which only makes sense since they will be maintaining the garden once it is planted)
2. Pay for the plants.
3. Maintain the garden after it is planted.

This model of working with landowners on private lands is in line with Doug Tallamy's idea for *Homegrown National Parks*.

"Our National Parks, no matter how grand in scale, are too small and separated from one another to persevere species to the levels needed. Thus, the concept of Homegrown National Park, a bottom-up call-to-action to restore habitat where we live and work and to a lesser extent where we farm and graze, extends national parks to our yards and communities." —Doug Tallamy

Next Steps

From talking with people, we know there is a lot of interest in native plants. If you have been thinking about adding native plants to your home landscaping but have been feeling unsure about what to do next, please contact us. We can help you create a plan, find the resources you need, and recruit willing hands to make your ideas a reality!