

The Garden Corner

By: Art Kammerlohr

Master Gardeners of Johnson County Missouri

Pollinators! You know, those cute little critters that flit from flower to flower spreading pollen and drinking nectar. Primarily due to the need to feed the billions of people on the planet, the habitat to support these helpful creatures is disappearing at an alarming rate. We gardeners are also part of the problem. Through the use of herbicides, pesticides, and planting all those lovely exotic types of plants we are (rather innocently I suspect) destroying the very environments necessary to support the wildlife we depend upon to produce the food we eat. Well, what can we do? This article is the first in a series designed to enhance our understanding and appreciation for incorporating native flowers, bushes, and trees into our landscape designs. By increasing the availability of native plant material we can successfully promote a sustainable pollinator population for future generations. Where to begin? The Long Island Gardening Community Resource might be a good first step:

Top Ten Reasons To Use Native Plants In Your Landscape:

1. Once established, Native Plants require little care and maintenance
2. Native Plants save money on landscaping cost
3. Native Plants are pest and disease resistant
4. Once established, Native Plants require no watering
5. Once established, Native Plants require no fertilization (or pesticides)
6. Native Plants survive harsh winter and hot dry summers
7. Native Plants provide wildlife with food and protection
8. Native Plants help reduce erosion to a minimum (good for shorelines)
9. Native Plants are non-invasive
10. Native Plants look like they belong in the landscape (Gets us in touch with our surroundings)

\*Long Island Gardening Community Resource

Penny –pinchers unite! Am I the only one who sees the savings of hard earned cash by choosing to plant more native material? As the flower and seed catalogues continue to flood our mail, might I ask a favor: Keep the top ten list nearby as you ponder additions to your 2014 garden and if possible choose to go native. Even a small start will go a long way towards helping our pollinators find the food, nesting locations, and protection they need to survive.

In the coming months we'll go over alternatives to using pesticides, herbicides, and offer some suggestions as to specific types of plants you might want to consider. As always, for your comments, questions, and/or suggestions: Write: 370 NW 121 Rd., Warrensburg, MO 64093 or email: [mandpak@embarqmail.com](mailto:mandpak@embarqmail.com) and I'll get right back with you.