Common milkweed (Asclepias syriaca) is critical to the life cycle of monarch butterflies. Monarchs eat the flower nectar and lay their eggs only on milkweed. The larvae are not affected by the poison they absorb from the leaves; instead they become distasteful to potential predators. Monarchs complete a multi-generational migration each year between Mexico and the northern U.S. and Canada that would be impossible without milkweed.

Milkweed: A Special Story

Native plants are important because they have aesthetic, recreational, biological, medicinal, economic and conservation value.

Native Plants Found Here

- A black-eyed Susan (Rudbeckia fulgida var. sullivantii) may look like one flower but is actually a cluster of hundreds of flowers in the dark center; each will form its own seed.
- This sweet woodruff (Galium odoratum) may look too small to cause much harm but it is highly invasive and can crowd out native plants.
- There are at least 21 native wildflower species in this garden. How many can you find that are blooming right now? Do you see any pollinators in action?

It’s All About Pollination

How do flowering plants reproduce? Pollination occurs when pollen is carried from flower to flower or is moved within flowers. The successful transfer of pollen in and between flowers of the same plant species leads to fertilization, successful seed development, and fruit production.

How does it work?

80% of pollination is assisted by pollinators, including birds, bats, bees, butterflies, other insects and other animals. The remaining 20% of pollination occurs by wind or water.

Wild Chervil: A Non-Native Invasive Species

Have you noticed the plant all along Route 100 that looks like Queen Anne’s lace? It’s the non-native invasive wild chervil (Anthriscus sylvestris) that is taking over local road sides. While most non-native plants pose no problems, some are invasive and can crowd out native plants. Wild chervil can cause burns on your skin if you touch it and are exposed to sunlight.

Some of the plants growing in this wildflower garden are not native to this region. We are weeding out those non-native species over time.