

# Native Plant Program and Monarch Joint Venture on the Green Mountain & Finger Lakes NF

## 2013 Accomplishments

In 2013, all GMNF district native plant gardens were maintained, and all garden educational signs were replaced. One garden, with dense sun-loving species, was maintained by prescribed fire for the first time. The fire effectively removed thatch accumulated over the years, and regenerated a lush, colorful wildflower garden, attractive to pollinators. Volunteers helped weed another native plant garden, and were allowed to take home seedlings of native plants that were being thinned. All of our gardens have milkweed plants that are attractive to monarchs. We also stopped mowing 0.4 acres of lawn at the Rochester office to reduce our carbon footprint and enhance pollinator habitat, and helped a nearby town establish a town green by planting native sugar maples.

Working with the Northern Research Station and the Genetic Resource & Silviculture Management programs, research plots were planted with DED-resistant elms in two grasslands on the FLNF. The goal is to study success of different cultivars in the northeast. It is hoped that DED-resistant elms could help offset anticipated widespread loss of ash trees due to spread of the Emerald ash borer. The elms are also part of ongoing riparian restoration on the FLNF.

The Northeast Native Seed Initiative (NNSI), formed in 2008 to develop an ongoing supply of seeds of native species of local genotypes, continued to move forward. After refining a species list and contracting out seed collection across northern NY and New England, this year seeds were given to growers to multiply to generate seeds for long-term production.



Figure 1. Seed production for NNSI at Big Flats Plant Materials Center (NRCS); (photo by Martin Vandergrinten).



Figure 2. A pollinator visits aster blooms in the Manchester District garden (photo by seasonal botanist Melissa Green.)

### Expenditures & Partners:

#### Gardens:

- Salary to maintain gardens: \$1250
- Garden Supplies & Educational Signs: \$1200
- Partners (all growers):
  - 1.Colonial Seed Company
  - 2.Big Flats Plant Materials Center (NRCS)
  - 3.Ernst Conservation Seeds

#### Elm planting:

- 30 elm saplings: \$330
- Other elm planting services/supplies: \$2000
- Salary & travel to plant elms: \$4500
- Partners
  - 1.Northern Research Station in Delaware, OH
  - 2.The Genetic Resource & Silviculture Management Programs

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