

# Native Plant Program on the Green Mountain & Finger Lakes National Forest

## 2014 Accomplishments

In 2014, all GMNF district native plant gardens were maintained. Volunteers helped weed one garden, and were allowed to take home seedlings of native plants that were being thinned. This same garden was expanded this summer, and we were pleased to add the beautiful large yellow lady's slipper to the list of native wildflowers showcased there. In addition, one of the cultivated flower gardens on the Rochester District was converted to native plants, and we also continued not mowing 0.4 acres of lawn at the Rochester office to reduce our carbon footprint and enhance pollinator habitat.

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, developing fact sheets, contracting out seed collection across northern NY and New England, and giving seeds to partners for initial multiplication, in 2014 we had a chance to meet with other interested organizations and see the results of initial successful plantings. We are still searching for long-term growers who can produce a sustainable supply of seeds.

During the 2014 field season, GMNF staff worked cooperatively with the FHP (Forest Health Protection) Division of the Durham Field Office to initiate insect pollinator monitoring on GMNF lands in the towns of Manchester and East Dorset, Vermont. Two permanent upland openings were identified, one in each area, with the objective of collecting baseline information on species presence, species richness, species diversity (Simpson Index), rare species, and abundance. Sampling method was a colored bowl survey based on that used in the National Pollinator Survey coordinated by Sam Droege (USGS Bee monitoring expert). Specimens collected during the 2014 field season are currently being processed and identified to the lowest taxonomical unit possible. We have also begun to summarize existing milkweed data, with the goal of selecting other suitable sites for monitoring and or restoration in future years.

On the FLNF, staff purchased 8 pounds of seed mix specifically designed for attracting pollinators. These seeds, purchased in 2014, are slated to be sown on the banks of a stock pond in one of the FLNF's many grasslands in 2015, after the pond is dredged.



Figure 1. A pollinator visits Virginia waterleaf flowers in the Rochester District garden (photo by seasonal botanist Melissa Green.)

### Expenditures & Partners:

#### Gardens:

- Salary to maintain gardens: \$1875

#### Pollinators:

- Seed mix: \$585
- Salary to work on pollinator projects: ≈ \$1,000 (botany staff) + ≈ \$2,000 (fish & wildlife staff)

#### NNSI partners:

- Colonial Seed
- Big Flats Plant Material Center (NRCS)
- Salary to meet with partners: ≈ \$600

#### Contact Person & phone number:

MaryBeth Deller 802-767-4261 x 524



**Green Mountain & Finger Lakes NF**  
231 North Main Street  
Rutland, VT 05701