# Wildflower Garden Guide

"Our Earth needs constant concern and attention. Each of us has a personal responsibility to care for creation, this precious gift which God has entrusted us."

-Pope Francis

We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan, it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creations. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.

*United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Catholic Social Teachings*

**WHAT'S INSIDE?**



CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF LOUISVILLE, INC.
PROVIDING HELP. CREATING HOPE.

Learn more about Common Earth Gardens at grow.cclou.org

Catholic Charities of Louisville, Inc., a member of Catholic Charities USA and an apostolate of the Archdiocese of Louisville, provides service for people in need, advocates for justice in social structures, and calls the entire Church and other people of goodwill to do the same.

## WHAT IS COMMON EARTH GARDENS?

Common Earth Gardens, a program of Catholic Charities of Louisville, is dedicated to the empowerment and improved quality of life of refugee families and Louisville communities through agricultural opportunities.

This is accomplished through supporting community gardens with multilingual trainings and leadership development, facilitating the Incubator Farm Business Training Program, and connecting growers to land opportunities in the Louisville, KY region. These opportunities contribute to improved mental and physical health, community integration, access to healthy food, and increasing family income through farm sales.

## SUPPORT COMMON EARTH GARDENS

**$30 • Sponsor a Gardening Class**
Participants will learn how to adapt their growing practices to Kentucky's climate in order to feed their families fresh vegetables

**$50 • Sponsor a Community Gardener**
This gardener will grow culturally native produce to feed his/her family

**$200 • Sponsor a Farmer**
This farmer will learn how to run a successful farm business to support his/her family

For more information:
Laura Stevens, Director
Lstevens@archlou.org
(502) 873-2566 x256

# Getting Started

## WHERE TO BUY PLANTS

Whenever possible, purchase plants from locally owned nurseries instead of big box stores. You will be more likely to find plants that are native to your area, and staff are often more knowledgeable about specific plants and varieties. If you have any questions, you can always contact your local county extension office for recommendations.

## POLLINATORS

**Why Support Pollinators?** God created the Earth — full of dirt and flowers, sun and rain, bugs and birds. All these things work together in beautiful harmony, putting food on our tables, flowers in our gardens, and butterflies in the sky. What an amazing gift!

We can show our love and our gratitude by caring for the Earth, which is the home that we share with all living things. Planting a pollinator garden is a great way to do that!

For just as much as pollinators need us for life, we need them as well. As bugs and birds travel the skies, they eat the nectar inside of flowers.

When they go from flower to flower, they pollinate them. When a flower is pollinated, it will soon make a fruit. If you like fruits and flowers, then you will love pollinators!

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step 1

# FORM A TEAM

First things first — who wants to be on the garden team? You will need to form a team of volunteers to help plant and maintain your garden. When starting a garden, the first year often takes the most time and effort.

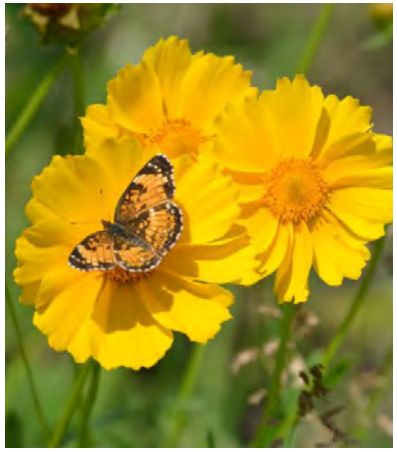
Plan a meeting and invite everyone that is interested or knowledgeable about gardening. Talk about why pollinators are so important to us and to the Earth. Read this guide together and remember why the work is important to our faith. Share ideas and experiences about gardening and growing.

Everyone has something to teach and everyone has something to learn. Everyone can be a part of the project!

Start to think about how to pay for the plants and seeds, equipment rental, and soil amendments. Could you host a fundraiser? Is there money in the landscaping budget? Does anyone have tools to share?

In the coming months, you will be planting, weeding, and watering. Find out who likes to do this!

Be sure to get a list of everyone's contact information and how they would like to help.



step 2

# CHOOSE A SITE

Take a walk around your property with your team. Look for a location that will have these qualities:

- **Lots of sunshine.**
- **Access to water.**

  You will need to water your garden regularly in the weeks after planting, and supply a constant source for pollinators to drink, if there isn't a natural water source nearby.
- **Protection from strong wind.**
- **Keep the garden far away from any use of pesticides or chemical treatments.**

  Synthetic chemicals are bad for bugs! If you're using these treatments, avoid using them anywhere near your garden.
- **A soil pH between 5.0 and 7.0.**

Inexpensive pH meters can ensure the pH of your soil is good for growing. Take a soil sample to your local extension office.

For less than $10, they can provide individual analysis and recommendations. If the pH is high, add manure compost or acidic mulch like pine needles.

If it is too low, add limestone or sulfur before you plant.

Pro Tips

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step 3

# PLAN THE GARDEN

Make a plan. Plant similar plants together while having variety. This creates a “target” that will be easy for pollinators to find when they are in bloom.

Having plants that vary in height and bloom color will not only be attractive to the human eye, but it will attract a wide variety of pollinators throughout the year.

## Plants vs. Seeds

Seeds take longer to provide habitat, but they cover more ground and cost less than plants.

## Plant Suggestions

| Common Name | Bloom Time | Bloom Color |
|---|---|---|
| Wild Bergamot | July-September | Pink/Purple |
| Blazing Stars | June-September | Light Purple |
| Blue False Indigo | May-June | Blue/Purple |
| Butterfly Milkweed | June-July | White |
| Button Bush | June-July | White |
| Coneflower | June-October | White, Pink, Purple |
| Goats Rue | May-August | Yellow to Pink |
| Lance-Leaved Coreopsis | April-June | Yellow |
| Milkweed | June-August | White/Purple |
| New England Aster | June-July | Pink |
| Purple Milkweed | June-July | Pink |
| Scarlet Bee Balm | June | Red |
| Service Berry | March-April | White |
| Spicebush | March-April | Yellow |
| Trout Lilly | April-June | Yellow |
| Trumpet Honeysuckle | April-October | Pink/White |
| Yarrow | August-October | Pink, Red, White |

## Remember!

Your garden can be as big or as small as you like. You can start small your first year and grow in the future!

step 4

# PLANT THE GARDEN

Amend the soil with any compost or mulch additives, if necessary or desired. You can determine soil health through a soil test. Call your local extension office for assistance. Most seeds will be scattered and covered with a light layer of soil. Be sure to water your newly planted seeds right away. Seeds must stay damp in order to germinate!


1. Dig a hole slightly larger than the size of the container your plant is in.
2. Add soil amendments to the hole.
3. Remove the plant gently from its container, and loosen the roots and soil at the base.
4. Place the plant in the hole, and fill the hole in with soil.
5. Press gently at the base of the plant to settle the soil.

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step 5

# WATER FEATURES

Creating a drinking source is as simple as filling a shallow pan or bowl with water. Simple birdbaths are good water features for pollinators, but they can often be too deep.

## Tips

Fill the birdbath with pebbles and set flat stones amidst the pebbles.

Create a slope that will allow pollinators to approach the water without falling in.

Situate your water feature close to your pollinator garden.

Keep the pool full of clean, fresh water and free of debris.

step 6

# GARDEN CARE

## Mulching

Mulching your garden after planting is necessary to limit weed growth and keep plants hydrated. This step will save you a great deal of time and energy.

## Watering

During the first 4 to 6 weeks after planting your garden, it is necessary to water every day. This is especially true if you have planted seeds! You can set up a sprinkler with a timer to do this. You could also create a watering schedule with your volunteer team.

THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP OF ESTABLISHING YOUR GARDEN — A HOT DAY WITHOUT WATER WILL EASILY KILL A NEW PLANT!

## Weeding

Be sure that unwanted plants (like grass and invasive species) do not take over your new garden. Plan to weed for an hour every week in order for your plants to thrive.

When you pull up a weed from your garden, try to pull it up completely by the roots. This way it will not grow back!

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Pollinator gardens provide food, shelter, and protection for the smallest creatures – birds, bugs and bees.

## NATIVE BUTTERFLIES

Look for these in your pollinator garden.

- Red-spotted Purple
- Viceroy
- White Admiral
- Hackberry Emperor
- Tawny Emperor
- Goatweed Leafwing
- Aphrodite Fritillary
- Diana
- Great Spangled Fritillary
- Gulf Fritillary
- Meadow Fritillary
- Silver-bordered Fritillary
- Variegated Fritillary
- Queen
- American Stout
- American Lady
- Baltimore
- Common Buckeye
- Compton Tortoiseshell
- Eastern Comma
- Gorgone Checkerspot
- Gray Comma
- Green Comma
- Malachite
- Milbert's Tortoiseshell
- Mourning Cloak
- Painted Lady
- Pearl Crescent
- Red Admiral
- Silvery Checkerspot
- White Peacock

## GARDEN JOURNAL

Consider creating a garden journal for your garden. Everyone who visits the garden can write about what they observe. This way, you can keep track of changes each year and share what you discover.

Keep an observations notebook for your findings of the natural history of your garden. Make entries that include the date of your observation, weather, location, animal and insect activity, pollinator types, plant growth and color. Consider making a hypothesis that could explain your observations. Then, continue to make observations to test your hypothesis.

- What do plants look like before and after they bloom?
- Is there any fruit blooming?
- Are all of your plants thriving?
- Are there any bugs or birds visiting certain plants?
- Do creatures prefer a certain flower color?
- What is blooming?

## LEARN IN THE GARDEN

Over the course of the summer, you will find that there is much to learn from your garden. The practice of recording your observations is called natural history. The natural history should include drawings and note of things you observe in your garden.

Enjoy your new garden!

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