

## Volunteers of the Month - Pollinator Gardeners

Most of the time when people plant flower gardens, they choose the flowers based on color or fragrance, and occasionally as edible. But we, as creatures with even greater curiosity than squirrels like to know things. It's that curiosity that has led us to discover a lot about flowers besides which ones we think are most beautiful, and it's also caused us to discover that we're not the only creatures that like flowers.



Bees, butterflies, hummingbirds and other smaller flying creatures do as well and the flowers like them back. We call them pollinators. They move the pollen from flower to flower and plant to plant and they are responsible for a lot of good in nature, which we're finding out, is also good for us humans.

All of this is by way of introduction into the "Love Your Block" Grant that Lynn Johnson championed in Asylum Hill. The goal was to create six small pollinator gardens in various locations in Asylum Hill for these migrating creatures to feed on along their way. The first step was to enlist the aid of Mike McGarry, her neighbor, long-time gardener and purveyor of plants to get involved, which he did.

From there they went to the local churches, all with lots of green space and accustomed to doing good things, to help with planting these special gardens. Since these pollinators are especially attracted to Aster, Bee Balm, Butterfly Weed and Purple Cone Flowers, Mike got 30 of each variety, and that's what was provided and planted.

Each of the participating churches rounded up their volunteers to help. At Immanuel Congregational Church they included Judi Gilligan, Ann Conable, Joanna Geber and Richard Syracuse; at Grace Lutheran Church Louisa Barton Duguay, Sue Carey and Emmanuella Hart provided the labor; at Glory Chapel, program participants did the work and fortunately one of them was a professional landscaper. Asylum Hill Congregational Church had the help of Paul Grimmeisen, Kathye Cipes, Susan Fellman and Paul O'Mara. Saint Joseph Cathedral of course is taken care of by Mike McGarry and his fellow Knights of Columbus, and at Trinity Episcopal it was Peter Green.

When the grant schedule got delayed by the pandemic, Lynn had to choose between conforming with that schedule or nature's schedule which is not as flexible. She went ahead with nature's schedule so that nearly everything was already in the ground way before June 25<sup>th</sup> when they got the news that they had received the grant. Fortunately all of them will bloom beginning in mid to late summer so they have a while to get established and we have some time to see how successful the planting will be. Photos of all of the gardens are available at: <https://bit.ly/pollgardphotos> .