Tulane's native plant garden + path

Learn what plants live here and which pollinators love to come and visit!

Photo by Rusty Costanza

Why pollinator plants?

Pollination is key to the reproduction and growth of all plants. Pollinator plants provide shelter and food for the insects that make the world go round!

Why was the garden built?

The native plant garden was developed during the 5 Year Stormwater Planning process in order to manage stormwater campuswide. Storm drainage gardens provide an elegant, natural method to reduce runoff as they allow for water to gradually soak into the soil.

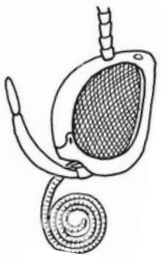
Why native plants?

Native plants are important for maintaining biodiversity. Native plants are classified as things that grow naturally in the same region where they evolved. Most plants used in landscaping are invasive species, that overtake landscapes and erode diversity. Having a native garden helps heal the ecosystem and attracts native pollinators!

Kaitlin Fahlgren, Sarah Donato

Common Pollinators

Butterflies



Butterfly mouths are modified into a long snout, which they unroll and use to suck nectar up from flowers like a straw. Because of this, they prefer flowers that are long and narrow, like Swamp Milkweed. They're also commonly seen on Black-eyed Susans and Swamp Sunflowers!

Monarch
Danaus plexippus

Monarch butterflies are probably some of the most-recognizable insects. They're well-known for their long migration–all the way from Canada to Mexico!

Viceroy
Limenitis archippus

The Viceroy butterfly is a Monarch mimic–you can tell them apart by the white spots along the bottom of the Viceroy's wing.

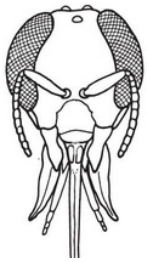
Giant Eastern Swallowtail
Papilio cresphontes

This butterfly is quite noticeable as it has big black wings with bright yellow spots to trick predators. This butterfly is also the largest North American butterfly species!

Sulphur
Pieridae sp.

Sulphur butterflies are easy to identify with their bright yellow wings. They come in various sizes, and can have different patterns on their wings–just look for the bright yellow.

Bees



Bee's mouthparts are modified for collecting nectar and pollen. They have jaws and a special straw-like structure which is much shorter than a butterfly's. Their favorite flowers are usually purple, blue or yellow!

Bumble bee
Bombus sp.

Bumble bees are easily recognized by their large bodies that are covered in fuzz. They can have yellow or white stripes, or appear all black, depending on the species!

Honey bee
Apis mellifera

Honey bees are one of the most well-known insects. Known for their yellow and black striped abdomen, they are also responsible for making the honey we all know and love.

Carpenter bee
Xylocopa sp.

Carpenter bees look similar to bumble bees, but typically don't have fuzz/hair on their abdomens. They're called carpenter bees because they drill holes into wood in order to build their nests.

Mason bee
Osmia sp.

Mason bees are solitary pollinators, which means they don't belong to large hives like honey bees. They also do not produce honey or have stingers!

Common Pollinators

Moths

Moths having sucking mouthparts like butterflies, which is why you'll see them around many of the same flowers!

Crambid snout

Family Crambidae

Crambid snouth can be identified by their unusual mouthparts that project outward like a snout. These moths drink nectar from flowering plants with their long tongues!

Pink Hawkmoth

Agrius cingulata

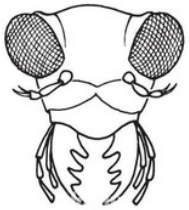
The pink hawkmoth Is hard to miss with Its pink and grey banded appearance. This moth feeds on flower nectar and Is vital for night-blooming plants.

Ailanthus webworm

Atteva aurea

The ailanthus webworm moth resembles a bug or beetle while crawling on plants, and a wasp when in flight. They differ from most moths as fly during the day, visiting variety of flowers as it pollinates the garden!

Beetles



Beetles, **wasps**, and **ants** have chewing mouthparts that they use to bite and chew a variety of foods. You'll usually find them on the ground next to trees or in nearby plants!

Lady beetle

Family Coccinellidae

Lady beetles (also known as lady bugs) are small bodied beetles with a vibrant red, orange, or yellow elytra decorated with black spots. They benefit the native garden by eating aphids and other pests!

Weevil

Family Curculionidae

Weevils are known for their long snouts which they can tuck under their body like in the image above. You'll typically find weevils by the roots of plants or trees!

Longhorn beetle

Neoclytus mucronatus

This is just one species of long-horned beetles that you can see around campus. This species looks like a wasp, but you can tell it's a beetle because its wings are hidden at rest. They are called long-horned beetles due to their antennae length. Can you find any other long-horned beetles around campus?

May beetle/Junebug

Cotinus sp.

These beetles are attracted to light, which is why you can find them near structures in the spring. They love to eat leaves, and can cause damage to the garden if left unchecked. See if you can find any plants where a Junebug may have eaten a snack!

Common Pollinators

Wasps

Wasps love to feed on nectar, so you'll see them visiting the flowers around campus when they're in bloom!

Paper wasp
Polistes annularis

Paper wasps are frequently spotted around campus. You can recognize them by their their red and black pigmentation. They can also have yellow stripes, like in the photo above. Don't be scared if you see them, they're on the hunt for plants!

Braconid wasp
Family Braconidae

Braconid wasps are recognized by their long antennae and tiny body. They can also have two long tails! These wasps target insects that we tend to consider pests, and can even exhibit parasitic behaviors by laying their eggs inside Hornworm caterpillars.

Thread waisted wasp
Sceliphron camentarium

You can recognize thread waisted wasps by their extremely thin waist. It almost looks like their abdomen is detached from the rest of their body! The species of wasp pictured builds its nests with mud along the sides of structures. You may be able to find their nests around campus.

Ants

Ants are vital to native gardens as they feed on common plant pests! Many of them build unique nests underground, above ground of within trees!

Carpenter ant
Camponotus sp.

Carpenter ants are small, dark brown or black ants known for their ability to build nests within wood. These ants do not eat wood, infact, they feed on sources of protein and sugar. They can be found around campus near hardwood trees- just look for wood shavings from their nests!

Sugar ant
Camponotus consobrinus

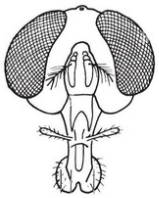
Sugar ants can be identified by their seemingly banded appearance. These ants have large black heads, a small waist that is rust orange-brown in color. They feed on any sugar-based compounds, including fruits, baked goods and other insects!

Fire ant
Solenopsis sp.

Fire ants have a dull red coloration and a larger abdomen. They are identified by their nests, as they build dome-shaped mounds of soil with no apparent holes. Be careful not to step on it, because these ants latch on with their jaws and provide a fiery sting!

Common Pollinators

Flies



Flies' feeding habits may include scavenging organic materials, drinking nectar from plants, or preying on smaller insects. Their mouthparts are designed to suck fluids from tissues, either by siphoning or absorbing liquids like a sponge!

Green Bottle

Lucilia sericata

The green bottle blow fly has a brillance, metalic green coloration. They feed on organic decomposing materials as well as the nectar of plants with strong scents- like the American Crinum lily!

Hoverfly

Episyrphus sp.

Mimicking the coloration of bees, hoverflies are crucial pollinators for native plants. Tiny hairs on their bodies allow them to transfer pollen from various flowers pollinating a variety of perennials.

Horse-fly

Family Tabanidae

Horseflies can be identified by their large body size (6-30 mm) and prominent eyes. Although the females can give a harsh bite, males feed on nectar and pollen.

Pollinator plants

Black-eyed Susan

Rudbeckia hirta

These daisy like flowers can be found everywhere In the native garden. They're easily identifiable by their sunshine-yellow petals, bristly oval leaves, and dome-like center.

Swamp Sunflower

Helianthus angustifolius

The Swamp Sunflower looks like the Black-eyed Susan, however this flower can be distinguished by its height and the flat center of the flower. The Swamp Sunflower can grow to be 8 feet tall!

Buttonbush

Cephalnahus occidentalis

This native shrub Is well known for their spherical, spiky flowers. It attracts butterflies and moths, including the monarch and various sphinx moths.

Pollinator plants

Louisiana Iris

Iris giganticaerulea

The Louisiana Iris is a beautiful, native plant which blooms into a vibrant white or purple flower. This pollinator attracts bumble bees and hummingbirds with its nectar!

Turkey tangle frogfruit

Phyla nodiflora

Turkey tangle frogfruits have distinctive, tiny white and purple flowers which give this plant a circular appearance. This pollinator attracts a variety of butterflies, bees and moths!

Rattlesnake master

Eryngium yuccifolium

With its stiff, upright stems- the rattlesnake master is a unique native plant. These ball-shaped flowers grow to be 1 inch wide, with tiny individual greenish or white clusters of petals.

Halberd-leaved Mallow

Hibiscus laevis

The Halberd-leaved Mallow (also called the rose Mallow) adorns the garden with pastel pink flowers that can grow 5-6 inches in diameter! These flowers bloom in late spring or early fall, so keep an eye out when the fall semester starts.

Scarlet Rosemallow

Hibiscus coccineus

This eyecatching perrenial is distinguished by its deep scarlet, palmately shaped petals. With adequate sunlight and water, the Scarlet Rosemallow can grow up to 4-8 feet in height!

Swamp Mallow

Hibiscus moscheutos

The Swamp Mallow appears similar to the Halberd-leaved Mallow although the Swamp Mallow flowers typically have a stark white coloration with a deep red center. This perennial hosts caterpillars of various families of butterflies and moths.

Pollinator plants

Swamp milkweed

Asclepias incarnata

The swamp milkweed is a Louisiana native which thrives in moist marshlands- making this perennial perfect for the rain garden. It additionally provides nectar for monarch butterflies!

Starrush whitetop

Rhynochospora colorata

This longlived plant can be identified by its white, specialized leaves called brachts which give it a star-like appearance! These fragrant flowers attract bees, butterflies and flies!

American Crinum Lily

Crinium americanum

The American Crinum Lily is also called the swamp lily. These perennials blossom from onion-like bulbs and grow In small clumps. This plant attracts braconid wasps!

Spiderlily

Hymenocallis liriosme

The spider lily typically grows to be 1-3 feet tall, and has 2-3 blossoms per plant. The flower shape is unique, with three white petals that are attached, and three thin white sepals that fan out underneath the petals. The flowers are also fragrant, so make sure to take a sniff when they're in bloom!

Muhly grass

Muhlenbergia capillaris

Muhly grass is known for the big pink/purple fluffy stalks that it produces, which can grow up to 5 feet tall! The actual grass is dark green, and thin which provides contrast with the flowering stalks.

Needlerush

Juncus romeranius

Plants in the genus Juncus are also known as "rushes." Their stalks are stiff and sharp, be careful when touching this plant! Birds love to visit Junus plants for nesting materials and food.

Cherokee Sedge

Carex cherokeensis

Cherokee sedge are a type of evergreen grass. You can identify them based on their flowering structures, which looks similar to wheat, but the fruits are larger and green in color.

Non-pollinator plants

Bald Cypress

Taxodium distichum

Bald cypress trees are found all over Louisiana. Three key characteristics of bald cypress trees are their wide trunk bases, "knees" (roots) that pop out of the ground, and feathery leaves. They also love to grow in marsh/swamp conditions!

Elephant ear

Colocasia esculenta

Elephant ears are also known as taro plants. They prefer moist soil, which is why they grow well in Louisiana. Additionally, these plants can get huge over time. What's the largest elephant ear plant you can find on campus?

Marsh Pennywort

Hydrocotyle vulgaris

Marsh pennywort appears in many gardens by accident, as a weed. You can find pennyworts all across campus growing in the grass!

Dwarf Palmetto

Sabal minor

Dwarf palmettos are easily recognizable, because they look like palm leaves that sprout from the ground. They are extremely hardy plants that can survive cold and drought!

Sweetbay Magnolia

Magnolia virginiana

Sweetbay Magnolia has wonderful smelling flowers, that have a lemon-rose scent. This plant also is host to several species of butterflies and moths!

Resurrection fern

Pleopetis polypoidies

Resurrection ferns love to grow on the oak trees across campus. The "resurrection" part of their name refers to their ability to dry out and appear dead, only to spring back to life once the conditions are right!

Cinnamon fern

Osmundastrum cinnamomenum

Cinnamon ferns produce a single stalk that is covered in brown spores (which are their seeds), which is where it gets the "cinnamon" part of it's name!

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