



**Sandhills**  
Horticultural Gardens

# The Bloomin' News

Sandhills Community College

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Summer 2020

*The Sandhills Horticultural Society - dedicated to the support of the Sandhills Horticultural Gardens since 1987.  
Please help the Gardens grow by becoming a Society member.*

## The Sandhills Horticultural Gardens During Covid-19

*Jim Westmen*

As I write this article for the 2020 Summer issue of Bloomin' News I am sitting at my computer thinking of all the things that have transpired since March.

The Sandhills Horticultural Gardens have never closed. Many more people have come outside and walked through the many different areas - walking for personal exercise and the lovely fresh air. They have picnicked and taken graduation pictures and have enjoyed the Gardens in their own way all while practicing social distancing. It has been a place of refuge, reflection, and inspiration for so many.

The plans that we make can always be interrupted, so much that we must adapt and rediscover a new and different way of doing things. Believe me when you have been doing things certain ways for over 30 years it is a tough adjustment to handle.

As I am working through the many challenges of this unprecedented time, we are all in, I am personally trying to "Build a better boat" to quote a Kenny Chesney song. We adjust to the new stay at home orders from the state and recommendations on how to be safe for ourselves and others. Our families and loved ones as well as our colleagues and students are all worth the efforts needed. Music has always been another place of refuge for me as I know for many of you.



the early morning allows a peaceful feeling to start your day with a hopeful mind that we need.

With so many additional visitors the Gardens seem to show some signs of wear. While we love the additional people traversing through, we need our visitors to respect the displays and areas with care and understanding of the hard work that goes into them. We are working so hard to maintain and keep up these 32 acres of valued interest and beauty. Parents with small children can really help by paying attention to what the little ones may be exploring. This is a good time to teach the good from the not so good as how to enjoy these garden areas and all they can share with us. This can be a wonderful teaching moment.

How we leave the spaces we come to enjoy is important. Hopefully as wonderful as or better than the way we found them for the next person to also enjoy. I have always loved this small quote from Jon Bon Jovi,

"The way to feel good is to do good,  
Find your good,  
And go do it."

Please remember the Gardens are always here for you and your families to enjoy. *(Continued on page 3)*



The Gardens can give us a place to clear your mind and reset. They absolutely deserve and need our respect. They give us so much. For many people they are a way to connect with the natural world. Connect with the native trees and plants as well as ornamentals throughout the many garden spaces. There are many animals and critters to see, like the Piliated woodpecker, fox squirrels and even snakes to observe from a distance. Personal feelings can calm the spirit and provide a state of mindfulness and understanding of what is important. A quiet walk in

*As always, any contributions to the Sandhills Horticultural Gardens will help us with these upgrades and continued improvement of the Gardens.  
Thank you for your support.*



# Butterfly Gardening

Johanna Westmen

Writing an article about ecology and butterflies was a no brainer for me. I have always had a passion for butterfly gardening in the Sandhills. Many years ago I had the pleasure to create two such gardens for two different schools in Moore County. The first butterfly garden was at the front entrance of Pinehurst Elementary School on Dundee Road in Pinehurst. The other was created outside a science classroom at West Pine Middle School in West End. At the time my son was attending these schools and I wanted to share my passion for gardening and nature with them. Both gardens were designed and created to attract butterflies, both the adults and their larva. I would like to share some information that will enable you to create such an environment in your garden.

Creating a butterfly garden can be simple or complex. Consider the garden through the eyes of a butterfly. In other words, you should consider their wants and needs along with your own. Know that the plants you select have to be able to grow in your locale. Also realize that there may be plants near you in a natural setting that already attract butterflies. It will be necessary to know the species of butterflies you are trying to attract. This way, the plants you select will attract the adults as well as the larva. The real key to gardening for butterflies is attracting both stages of the butterflies.

Larva food plants are different than the plants used by the adults for nectar. They are used specifically for the larva of the butterfly - a caterpillar. The adult "smells" the plant to be sure it is the right one. Each larva plant will be specific for



different species of butterflies. For egg laying, almost all species use 'native' plants, but occasionally the cultivated ones can be used. A lot of weeds and trees are used for larva plants as well. Some species of butterflies will have two to three broods in a single season. Keeping a supply of larva plants around for all broods can be challenging. If you are not a caterpillar lover, you may have to learn to tolerate and appreciate these creatures. I recommend that you try to identify the caterpillars you see in your garden. There are wonderful guide books available and there is the internet for reference. Monarch butterflies will use species of *asclepias* to lay their eggs on and Swallowtail butterflies will use plants in the dill family such as parsley, fennel and dill for their eggs. Once the eggs hatch into caterpillars they feed on the plant until such time they pupate and form a cocoon. Most of the time the cocoon or chrysalis is formed away from the larva plant.

The other spectrum to butterfly gardening is to attract the adults. This is done by having plants in your garden that produce nectar. For many adults, this is their only form of nourishment. Having plants that produce nectar, and large



amounts of it, will determine if they remain in your garden for you to enjoy. Certain plants produce high amounts of nectar. A few are Lantana, Butterfly Bush, Verbena and Abelia. If you have any of these plants in your garden, you have probably witnessed several different adult butterfly species attracted to them. The more sun you have for these specific plants will affect the amount of nectar secretion and the general good health of the plant as well.

There are other factors to consider, such as color, fragrance and flower shapes. All of these factors will have a bearing on butterflies being attracted to certain plants. Certain flowers even have visual markings that act as nectar guides to insects. These can be noted on plants such as garden phlox and verbena. Also, some butterflies are attracted to such things as tree sap, honeydew, overripe or rotting fruit, dung, carrion and mud. You would have to garden a little differently to attract these species of butterflies. For example, in lieu of creating tree sap (injured tree), you can try a process called sugaring. You can make an elixir in a blender with the following: can of beer (or rum), one pound of brown sugar, one-half cup of molasses and some very old fruit of some sort. Leave the mixture thick enough to spread, but with as much liquid as possible (the butterflies are after the liquid) and let it ferment for half a day in an uncovered container. After it has set, brush it on tree trunks or posts, placing it from ground level to shoulder height. Better yet, pour it into a large shallow dish and place it on the ground. The species of butterflies attracted to this form of nourishment are Buckeyes, Question Marks, Red Spotted Purples and Satyrs.

Hopefully – with this information and a whole lot of enthusiasm, you can enjoy these wonderful, beautiful creatures in your garden. I know I will be.



# The Sandhills Horticultural Gardens During Covid-19 continued from page 1

I wanted to say a big thank you to all of you. I am thankful for many things - here are just few.

- Thankful to our hard-working Garden staff; Amy Davis, and Josh Bustillos and the other special gardening angels helping to keep us looking good.

- Thankful to our fantastic program faculty and staff; Hilarie Blevins, Johanna Westmen and Ginny Ferguson for working so hard on planning and carrying out our bedding plant sale for three weeks, with social distancing, making class adjustments to online instruction and working in the Gardens.

- Thankful to our Horticultural Society Board members for their support and friendship that I have leaned upon during this time.

- Thankful to all our Horticultural Society members and volunteers for their patronage and support.

- And thankful to our students for adapting to a new format of study that is less than ideal for us or what we are accustomed to.

Thank you again, from our students, faculty, staff, volunteers, and the College.

It may sound cliché, but it is very true, “We are all in this together” Be Safe! And do good where you can.



## Horticultural Society Events & Workshops

*Tracye Reiland*

Well folks, this report will not be taking up much space in our newsletter. Events and Workshops, like everyone else's, have fallen victim to the Coronavirus. As of now, we are not planning to schedule any presentations or workshops from June through August. Hopefully, this cloud of uncertainty that we are living under will be greatly diminished by September and we can resume our programs then. If anything changes we will notify you via email and post updates on our Facebook page. Until we are able to meet again, please continue to enjoy our beautiful Gardens and stay safe and healthy.

## Summer Gardening Tips

- Fertilize centipede lawns with half a pound of Nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft. once in June only.
- Check irrigation or watering to supply about 1” of water per week.
- Prune shrubbery to maintain size always considering bloom time.
- Annual flowers can be liquid fed during the summer months for continual bloom.
- Apply pre-emergent herbicide in late August for winter weed control on lawns.
- Summer pruning of fruit trees can be done.

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