Pollinators and Plants

Over 80% of the native plants in our landscapes require pollinators to reproduce. Pollinators visit plants to feed off of pollen and nectar, and in the process move pollen grains from plant to plant. In this way the next generation of plants is produced. The diversity of colors, sizes, and shapes of plants you see in the landscape is a coevolution between flowers and pollinators.

Asters

Plants in the Aster family (*Asteraceae)* include sunflowers, daisies, The name Aster comes from the Greek word aster, which means star and refer to the shape of the flower heads. Asters have many compound flowers and are great nectar sources. Wild bees and honey bees are commonly seen on asters collection nectar and pollen. Goldenrods (*Soledago* spp.) are common Asters that are planted at the Macon Meadow. Watch for bees on these plants.

Sages (*Salvia* spp.)

Sages are woody perennial plants that have fragrant stems and flowers. Their tubular flowers attract many pollinators such as hummingbirds, butterflies, and bees. Sages add height and structure to landscapes and can act as windbreaks allowing smaller pollinators to visit flowers more easily.

Milkweed (*Asclepias* spp.)

Monarch caterpillars need milkweeds to grow and develop. There are over 100 milkweed species that are native to North America, many of which are used by monarchs. In Georgia it is common to see monarch on the common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*), butterfly milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), and on showy milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*). In addition to being the essential food plants for monarch caterpillars, milkweeds provide pollen and nectar to a variety of other butterflies, bees, and even pollen wasps. The natural screen in front of you is planted with common milkweed and butterfly milkweed. It can grow up to 8 feet tall.

Gardening Tips

- Choose an area with good sunlight for a pollinator garden or habitat
- Design your garden to bloom throughout the spring, summer, and late summer.
- Cluster your plants together to increase resource density – this attracts more pollinators.
- Reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides, especially those that are harmful to bees.