



*We champion stewardship of  
the land and waters.*

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**Valley Stewardship Network presents a workshop on *Landscaping with Native Plants to  
Attract Birds, Bees, and Butterflies***

VIROQUA, WI July 23, 2018 – If you have ever wondered how to add color and interest to your home flower garden while also attracting beautiful butterflies, dragonflies, and other pollinators, this workshop is for you! Valley Stewardship Network (VSN) is pleased to offer a fun and informative workshop focused on incorporating native flowers and grasses into your home garden.



*Photo by Melinda Knutson*

“No matter how small your garden space, you can still provide habitat for many native butterflies, including monarchs, by planting the right species. Many people are surprised to learn how important certain plants and garden features are for sustaining populations of native butterflies, moths, and bumblebees”, explains ecologist Melinda Knutson. “In addition, native plants make gardening easier because they tolerate drought, harsh soils, wind, and other adverse conditions better than horticultural plants. Once established, many native plants have deep root systems that make them especially drought tolerant.”

The event will be held at the McIntosh Memorial Library in Viroqua on August 25 from 10 am – 2 pm. The workshop will focus on how native plant species benefit both wildlife and the gardener. Topics will include plant selection, garden design, maintenance, and what specific

garden features will attract birds and native insects. We'll discuss how geography, soil type, amount of sun and shade, and your personal desires affect your choices of native plants.

Did you know that about one-third of our food comes from plants that require pollinators to produce seeds or fruit, yet pollinators are at risk? Honeybee colonies around the world have suffered unprecedented losses in recent years, and many once-common native bumblebees and butterfly species are disappearing. Examples include the monarch butterfly and rusty-patched bumble bee; both species were once common in the Midwest. Populations of the monarch butterfly have plummeted by approximately 90 percent in just the last two decades and the rusty-patched bumble bee was listed as federally endangered in 2017. Intensively developed agricultural and urban landscapes generally lack the habitat to support pollinators.

Many non-native trees, shrubs, and plants may be pretty, but they have little or no wildlife value. Even those non-native plants that have nectar, pollen, or berries are often blooming or fruiting at the wrong time for native bees, birds, and butterflies. Native plants offer pollen and nectar for bees, butterflies, and other insects and fruit and seeds for birds and mammals. The pollinators they attract also visit neighboring vegetable and fruit crops, which can increase food production. Learn how to beautify your home, reduce water and herbicide use, boost fruit and vegetable production, and support native birds, bees, and butterflies; attend the workshop and bring a friend!

Dr. Melinda Knutson, owner of Trillium Consulting, LLC and a retired regional biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, will teach the workshop. Dr. Knutson has more than 20 years of experience practicing ecology and gardening. She has studied birds, frogs, and their habitats, and worked with National Wildlife Refuges to design monitoring and conservation plans. In her younger years, she was a beekeeper and a farmer in southeastern Minnesota. She also enjoys incorporating native plants into her own yard.

The workshop is free, but reservations are required. Save your spot today at <http://valleystewardshipnetwork.org/product/landscaping-with-native-plants-to-attract-birds-bees-and-butterflies/>.

For questions or to register by phone, please call 608-637-3615 or email [info@valleystewardshipnetwork.org](mailto:info@valleystewardshipnetwork.org).



Valley Stewardship Network is celebrating 18 years of land and water stewardship in the Kickapoo Valley and adjacent watersheds. Best known for its water quality monitoring programs, VSN also offers outreach and education programs to help farmers, landowners, residents and visitors understand and support our local ecology for the health of our communities. More at [www.valleystewardshipnetwork.org](http://www.valleystewardshipnetwork.org)