

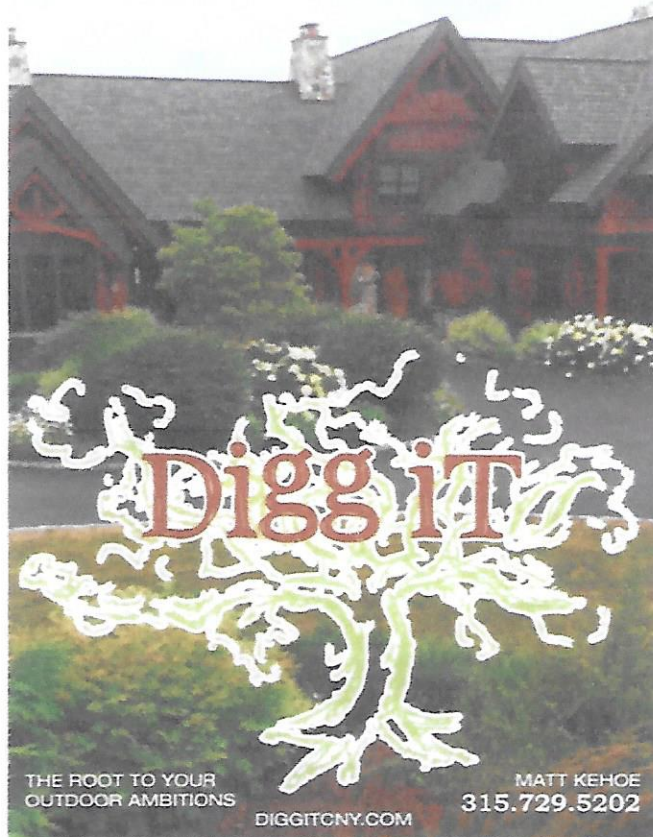
## lawn and garden By Renee Brown

### COME VISIT THE NEW YMCA COMMUNITY CENTER POLLINATOR GARDEN!

So many ideas or efforts are inspired by individuals who can envision useful new possibilities. Such was the case with the entrance to our Skaneateles YMCA and Community Center (SYCC). A fabulous building with a garden entrance that had been sedentary for several years. Enter Amy Rollieri, a Skaneateles Garden Club (SGC) member, SYCC Board of



Gretchen Hamlin and Ceme Curley (SGC members) and Dorothea Hughes (YMCA Executive Director).



Managers member, and regular attendee of the YMCA, who noticed the gardens' current state and recognized its potential. She comments, "The Community Center is often referred to as the 'Y,' however, it is 'our' space. It's our community's reflection. The gardens can be, and now will become, a teaching tool to all of the people who come and go. If we don't teach a love of nature and reinforce its value, what have we passed on to our children?" Words well-spoken. Following a few phone calls and inquiries as to what could be done, a committee was formed by several members of the SGC. What resulted was a transformation and revitalization of the original foundational garden.

Thinking back to high school biology class, one might remember that pollinator gardens are important because pollinators, like butterflies, bees and hummingbirds, rely on the plants in these gardens for food and habitat. Pollinators help to maintain the ecosystem and pollinate the plants that humans and animals eat. A pollinator is anything that helps carry pollen from the male part of the flower (stamen) to the female part of the same or another flower (stigma). The movement of pollen must occur for the plant to become fertilized and produce fruits, seeds, and young plants. Most pollinators feed on specific plant species - hummingbirds sip nectar from long, tubular flowers, while green sweat bees prefer more open-faced flowers. Non-native plants may not provide pollinators with enough nectar or pollen or may be inedible to butterfly or moth caterpillars. Planting a pollinator garden helps honeybees immensely. Bees rely on the nectar and pollen from nearby flowers for their survival. When flowers are scarce, bees can starve. By planting a pollinator garden, you're ensuring that bees have a source of food year-round. Pollinators have evolved with native plants, which are best adapted to the local growing season, climate, and soils. (Reference: National Garden Bureau < [www.ngb.org](http://www.ngb.org) >, National Park Service < [www.nps.org](http://www.nps.org) >)

Spearheaded by SGC conservation chairperson Ceme Curley, along with SGC members Gretchen Hamlin, Renee Brown, Susan Hayden and Pat Pohl, the garden is now an oasis for pollinators and native plants. Most plants in the garden were donated by garden club members. The garden will serve as an educational platform for school programs and other opportunities offered by the Community Center. Dorothea Hughes, SYCC Executive Director, remarks, "We are very appreciative of the Skaneateles Garden Club for designing and planting this beautiful and educational garden. We can't wait to share it with all of the children who come to the Skaneateles YMCA and Community Center and pass on the love and nurture of nature." The Community Centers Preschool Teachers Team continues on to say, "Recently, we have been incorporating more outdoor learning into our preschool curriculum. The timing of the butterfly garden fits well with our vision. The preschool teachers of our 2, 3, and 4-year-olds mentioned that the children enjoyed learning about the lifecycle of butterflies this past year, watching them transform from caterpillars into cocoons

and then releasing several Painted Ladies into the gardens. We are looking forward to incorporating more of the garden into future lessons, including making stepping-stones for the garden expansion."

The garden includes a host of native plants and pollinators, including Catmint, Daylily, Goat's Beard, Hairy mountain mint, Perennial sunflower, Perennial salvia, Scarlet beebalm, Spiderwort, Spirea, Sundrops, Turtlehead, Common zinnia, and Common milkweed. The area will be evolving each year as plants mature and more flowers are added.

Randy Powers, Rick Shibel and Dan Wright of Stifel graciously donated the informative plaque located at the entrance to the Community Center, highlighting facts related to butterflies and bees. A community working together to spread the importance of pollinators and native plants. Birds, bats, bees, butterflies, beetles, and other small mammals that pollinate plants are responsible for bringing us one out of every three bites of food.

Ceme Curley sums this project up by saying, "The Skaneateles Garden Club's vision for a butterfly garden is to bring the love of plants and flowers to all YMCA Community Center members. We hope to nurture lifelong garden enthusiasts of all ages. We thank everyone who has greeted us with amazing support and enthusiasm for this project."

Take a moment and stop by the SYCC. Stroll the pollinator garden plants that are labeled with their moniker, botanical name, and QR code for easy scanning to access more information about each plant. And while you're there, enjoy all that your local "Y" has to offer.



Would you like to share a story or images? Email [aline.moses@n2co.com](mailto:aline.moses@n2co.com).



New plant markers including the plant name, botanical name and QR codes for easy scanning of more plant information.



Preschool children exploring the garden.

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