

Aren't we called to be gardeners?

Our creation story says we are called to be gardeners. How we understand our role as gardeners has been an intentional focus of Christian churches since their beginnings. The church forests of Ethiopia are a fascinating example and really interesting to learn about:

<https://emergencemagazine.org/story/the-church-forests-of-ethiopia/>. We think you will enjoy it.

The FBC Green Team Garden Group is trying -to assist people to make room and plant some native pollinator and bird feeding plants and their gardens, yards or on their patios.

- a) Alice Grow has generously offered to be **“Ask Alice”** which means you can: contact her, describe or send photos of your garden area and ask for suggestions about what to plant and where to get those plants. In a few cases, we may be able to supply you with some local native plant species (spp.) which are the most efficient way to support our local plant/insect/bird web of life. Other plants aren't so local or aren't so native but do support pollinators or provide bird food (e.g. Purple Coneflower (Echinacea purpurea.) The Plantsmen nursery near Ithaca is a reliable guide and sells many local native species and other pollinator-friendly plants.
- b) Here is a **Plant List** of some local, native perennials for folks beginning to garden for pollinators and birds around Ithaca. If you have space, there are also many wonderful shrubs & small and large trees. Look these up in the resources below to see how much sun, moisture, and what type of soil they need.

Basic Finger Lakes Native Perennials for Pollinators/Birds

Early blooming - Golden Alexanders (Zizia aurea); Cranesbill-Wild Geranium (Geranium maculatum);

Mid-season Blooming – Milkweeds: Swamp Milkweed (Asclepias incarnata), Common Milkweed (Asclepias syriaca), Butterfly Milkweed (Asclepias tuberosa) ; and Wild Bergamot (Monarda fistulosa); Bee Balm (Monarda didyma); Foxglove Beardtongue (Penstemon digitalis); Hairy Beardtongue (Penstemon hirsutis).

Mid-late season Blooming- Cardinal Flower (Lobelia cardinalis), Great Blue Lobelia (Lobelia siphilitica); Cutleaf Coneflower (Rudbeckia lanciniata)

Late season Blooming- New England Aster (Symphotrichum novae-angliae); Goldenrod spp. e.g. (Solidago flexicaulis or Solidago caesia); Sneezeweed (Helenium autumnale).

c) **Basic Resource Links** about pollinator/bird friendly plants for the Finger Lakes.

1. Finger Lakes Native Plant Society www.flnps.org . Explore tabs and find native plant profiles and native plants of garden interest.
2. Habitat Gardening in Central New York <https://www.hgcny.org> . This is the Syracuse chapter of Wild Ones, a national organization. They have many resources available for free including an annual Buyers guide for native plants in central New York. They offer a six-part on-line discussion course called “Caring for Our Piece of the Earth” and many other book suggestions, readings and more.
3. Planting for the birds. The Audubon Society has a nice website where you can put in your zip code and they will send you a list of plants for your area that can be used to support birds. <https://www.audubon.org/native-plants/list/35cf261b-6965-4ac6-8bac-6a8a4acfb4fd>.
4. Planting for pollinators and insects. Excellent science-based group that has recently been developing clear and concise tools for people in any environment (site assessment, plant lists etc.) to help pollinators. www.Xerces.org.
5. A classic and revered group, Native Plant Trust website is great. They also offer classes, articles and more. www.nativeplanttrust.org