

Developing a Pollinator Habitat

Planting nectar and pollen-rich flowers is a boon to bees, butterflies, moths, hummingbirds, and other pollinators that visit our gardens. We know that. And we know how important pollinators are to sustaining ecosystems. But we are continually being shown how much more effective our efforts to support pollinators can be if we turn our gardens, regardless of size, into habitats that can nurture and protect, as well as feed. Here are some recommendations from the experts for developing pollinator habitats:

- Delay spring garden cleanup until pollinators have had a chance to exit the dry stalks, litter, bark, soil, etc., where they’ve overwintered as larvae, pupae, or adults.
- Choose flowering plants that are native to the area. Pollinators will have evolved with them over the ages and will seek them out.
- Plan for a continuous food supply by having something blooming all season long.
- Aim for natural diversity by selecting plants of varied sizes, shapes, and colors. Plant more than one of each variety, drifts being more powerful attractants than specimens.
- Mimic nature by spacing plants close together, which provides safe shelter as well as “shade mulch” to discourage weeds. Placing rocks and small logs around offers great hiding and nesting places.
- If space allows, include pollinator-friendly native grasses like Big and Little Bluestem and shrubs such as Button Bush. And perhaps add some of the pollinator-friendly annuals mentioned in the Winter issue.
- Provide a water source in a shallow pan or birdbath, and keep it refreshed.
- Include some larval host plants, such as milkweed for Monarchs, members of the parsley family for Black Swallowtails, and Dutchman’s Pipe for Pipevine Swallowtails.
- Avoid pesticides. They may harm the pollinators you hope to attract. Besides, a natural balance of predator and prey insects is likely to prevent pest problems anyway.
- Deadhead throughout the season to keep flowers coming on.

Whether the gardens we start with are small beds or large expanses, they can offer so much more for pollinators than a stopover for food. If we take steps to provide the elements of a habitat, we can provide homes that sustain the life cycles of our partners in gardening.

—The Gardener at The Quarry Farm



A garden doesn’t need to be big to attract pollinators and provide beauty.

Good Online Reads & Videos

- Schmotzer, Constance. “Planting Pollinator-Friendly Gardens.” Pennsylvania State Extension, 5 July 2023, extension.psu.edu.
- Andrews, Jennie. “4 Ways to Convert Lawn to a Garden Bed.” HGTV, hgtv.com
- Ellsworth, Denise. “Attracting Pollinators to the Garden.” Ohio State University Extension, 25 February 2015, ohioline.osu.edu.
- Tallamy, Doug, and four others. “Pollinator Habitat 101: An Introduction and Refresher.” The Ohio State University Extension, College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. A Five-Session Webinar Series, u.osu.edu-pollinators 101. **EXCELLENT!**
- “Creating a Native Garden.” Ohio Department of Natural Resources. Ohiodnr.gov/discover-and-learn.
- Native Plant Lists. Ohio Department of Natural Resources; Division of Natural Areas and Preserves.
- 2005, Ten Fact Sheets.
- Koenig, Mara. “How to Build a Pollinator Garden.” U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Also: Celley, Courtney, “Top Plants for Your Pollinator Garden”;
- Wheeler, Justin. “For Pollinators’ Sakes, Don’t Spring into Garden Cleanup Too Soon.” Xerces Society, 13 March 2025.

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Do you have questions, want to schedule an outing or workshop for your group or keep up with what’s happening here? Email thequarryfarm@gmail.com, follow us on Facebook, Instagram and visit www.thequarryfarm.org or call 567-376-0705.

Donations to The Quarry Farm Nature Preserve & Conservation Farm, a 501(c)(3) public charity, are tax-deductible.

Spring 2025 Programs & Events

Dress for the weather, including good walking shoes, and meet in Seitz Family Pavilion, 1/8 mile north of 14321 Road 7L, Pandora. There is no fee to participate unless noted otherwise. However, tax-deductible donations are appreciated.

National Farm Animals Day

Thursday, April 10, 5:30–6:30 p.m.
National Farm Animals Day was established as a day to bring awareness to how animals on farms are treated. Americans consume/process more livestock per capita than any other country in the world. Many commercial brands are growing increasingly dependent on livestock supplies which leads to more animals being confined and placed under circumstances typical of factory farms. Visit with some of the farm animal sanctuary residents and hear their stories.

Women for the Land: Birding Workshop

Thursday, April 10, 6:30–8:30 p.m.
(Register by calling Putnam County Soil & Water Conservation District at 419-523-5159)
Identify birds with Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) educational staff as your guides. Enjoy early spring wildflowers as you hike The Quarry Farm’s nature preserve trails and enjoy stop at Steve’s summer kitchen bakery.

Spring Bird Migration Hike

Monday, May 12, 9–11 a.m.
Birds are everywhere, all the time, doing fascinating things. Right now they are moving from their southerly winter retreats to spring nesting grounds and summer homes. Dress for the weather and bring your binoculars as we document the many species of birds that migrate to and through Northwest Ohio. All recorded species will be submitted to the international Great Backyard Bird Count.

National Weed Your Garden Day

Friday, June 13, 10–11 a.m.
A weed is defined as a plant that possesses undesirable traits in a gardens. But did you know that some plants that are popularly considered weeds are more beneficial to soil and wildlife health than plants that are purposefully planted in gardens. In fact, certain plants that are very invasive and now banned from sale in Ohio were first introduced in gardens and landscapes. Learn about native and nonnative plants and pick up a recipe that will help you combat nonnative invasive plants by using them in the kitchen.





Mission Statement

It is our goal and mission to provide the opportunity for people of all ages to increase their understanding of the natural environment of Northwest Ohio and to interact with their fellow inhabitants in a sustainable manner.



Spring means twitter-pated wild turkeys blending into the floodplain trees. (Photo by Deb Weston)

The Quarry Farm Newsletter is a quarterly publication for supporters of The Quarry Farm Nature Preserve & Conservation Farm, a nonprofit organization in Pandora, Ohio.

On the cover: *A brilliant male Yellow-bellied Sapsucker hunted for Spring insects in pine bark. (Photo by Deb Weston)*

All photographs printed in this newsletter were taken on The Quarry Farm Nature Preserve & Conservation Farm.

www.thequarryfarm.org



Under One Big Sky

With several older farm animal sanctuary residents, the winter resulted in some medical challenges. Missy the Goat died. She was quite old and we brought her inside as she had become quite skinny as elderly animals often do. Although she made Quinn the Fox nervous, she explored the house and took great interest in everything and everyone until she appeared to have a stroke and passed on. Then we spent a week travelling round-trip to Columbus with a young goat (see story below.) Alphonse the Pot-bellied Pig, the youngest of two of the pigs rescued from a horrific 2014 hoarding situation by representatives of the Humane Society of Allen County and the Allen County Sheriff's office, began to decline. Due to the circumstances of his youth, Alfie was always very high strung. But he was still one of the first to show up for breakfast, Alfie was missing one morning. Anne crawled back into his barn nest and carried him out on a blanket. We took him into the house and wrapped him in hot water bottles. Alfie refused to drink, eat or stand. We drove him to Ohio State University Farm Animal Services in Columbus where he was sedated and examined. Rather than put him through the trauma of testing with a low expectation of comfortable recovery, he was humanely euthanized with all those present laying on hands to honor his passing.

The ice thawed by mid-March, making way for the March 14 Worm Moon Hike. A lunar eclipse the night before must have prompted Spring for the creatures in the nature preserve. Three American Woodcock called in the grassland and upland woods. One landed directly in front of us on the trail, offered us a good look at that strange, baseball-shaped bird with the long bill.

With guests coming to town, one family decided to include them in their first visit to this place. They met Steve in his kitchen as he was removing fresh sandwich rye bread from the oven. They walked the trails, sang and danced in Nature's Classroom (right), and took a loaf of fresh bread home to share.



Sometimes the Best Place is Someplace Else...

At this point in time, the farm animal sanctuary is primarily a senior living facility. The three donkeys are well into their 20s. At five, Clive is the youngest of the five pot-bellied pigs. The others, as well as Nemo the big pig, are at least 10. Brownie the Rouen Duck is at least five (*I just read that they can live to be five!*) As with humans, supplements joint health and anti-inflammatories are part of daily food prep. The residents came here to live out their lives in as much peace and freedom as possible. It's tough to admit when The Quarry Farm may not be the best place for them to do so.

Tommy the Boehr Goat was bottle-raised by a gentle boy who cared for him. He was initially named "Tongue-ey" because the little goat was unable to keep his tongue in his mouth. When Tongue-ey came here, we hoped that he would become part of the herd. Unfortunately, the other goats kept him at a distance. We found out why when we found him non-responsive on a January morning. We drove him to Ohio State University Farm Animal Services where he spent a week.

Resident Spotlight:
Stewie & K

Last Spring, this space was devoted to the bond between Bruce the Broad-breasted Bronze Turkey and K the Canada Goose. At the time, Bruce was elderly and moving with difficulty due to improper diet and care in his early life. K stuck by Bruce's side until the turkey passed in autumn. K was completely lost. He called and chased. He decided that Good Neighbor Casey was Bruce's stand-in, often patrolling her front porch and garage so he could converse with her when she filled the bird-feeder. As this was unsustainable for all involved, and because K was so domestically imprinted by misguided people who raised him, we put out a call to other sanctuaries who needed to rehome a turkey.

One rescue had just had a visitor who wanted to rehome a male—a Tom—but the rescue was in the process of treating hundreds of roosters seized that day from a Huron County cock-fighting operation. But we hit the jackpot when a dear friend put us in touch with someone who was moving and couldn't pack along Stewie and Sammie—a young pair of Broad-breasted Bronze Turkeys.

When we pulled through the gate with two turkeys in tow, K was calling through the fence to Casey. Then the glorious splendor that is Stewie—in full Spring hormonal color—stepped out of the carrier and K has not left his side. Sammie is absolutely fine with not having a randy Tom on her heels. Stewie is much bigger than K and is able to deflect K's adoration, As Casey noted a couple of days into the introduction, "It's a good thing that turkey doesn't have elbows, because that goose would be flying." A couple of weeks have passed, and K seems secure enough in his new friend that he is allowing Stewie to explore a bit on his own.



Tommy gets and gives love at Whispering Acres.

Brownie and the Brownettes could certainly hold their own. Although it is Spring and the two brilliantly-plumed males are rather obnoxious with the season, Brownie leads them around by their bills.

Thank you...

- ...to Debbie Leiber and Deb Weston for repositioning Bluebird boxes
- ...to David Seitz for honeysuckle and vine removal
- ...to Deb Weston and David Smith for monitoring bird migration in the preserve

Monetary Donations:

Carolyn Dion
Paula Harper



Sammie and Rowan finished the mobile chicken coop on March 30. Gerald the rescued fighting rooster isn't sure about his new camper, but Snowflake the hen is already inside the nest box.

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The prognosis was probable failure to thrive. His little body was unable to regulate it's temperature and he was unable to fight off parasites as healthy goats do with regular treatment. Our friend Tim Jasinki at Lake Erie Nature & Science Center put us in touch with Whispering Acres Farm Animal Sanctuary near Medina. This facility is home to a number of animals with special needs, and many of these animals are ambassadors for hospice therapy and veterans with PTSD. Tiny Tongue-ey—now Tommy—was immediately surrounded by equally tiny goats. Janine Smalley, the director of the sanctuary, sent photos of him at work, providing comfort to someone in need.

...and Sometimes the Best Place is Here

While making arrangements to transfer Tommy to Whispering Acres, Janine asked if The Quarry Farm would be able to accept any ducks. Someone had just surrendered two Rouen drakes. In addition to Brownie, there are two more Rouen ducks here.

