



A word about Minnehaha Master Gardeners: We are volunteers trained through the South Dakota State University Extension [Master Gardener Program](#). The mission of MMG is to enhance and supplement community educational efforts of the SDSU Extension Master Gardener Program and to provide research-based education and information on horticulture and environmental stewardship. For more information on becoming a Master Gardener, visit [SDSU Extension Master Gardener volunteer program](#)

Stay in touch with Minnehaha Master Gardeners' news: [on Facebook](#), [our website](#), or [email us](#).

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Find out more about us!





A project of the
Community Food Security Network
hosted by Sioux Falls Thrive



JOIN US!

Thursday, Sept. 25

Gleaning and Processing Day

We are looking for donations of produce from area gardeners, volunteers to pick up this produce to deliver to our production site at Wesley United Methodist Church, and volunteers to help turn that produce into ready-to-eat food for local organizations to distribute. To learn more or to sign up, scan the QR code at right or visit foodrescue605.org.





What's the Buzz? Creating a Pollinator Garden

Katrina Manley, Master Gardener

There is nothing quite as exciting as getting “buzzed” by a hummingbird! This recently happened to me as I worked in my backyard pollinator garden.

It has long been a dream of mine to provide places that encourage and welcome pollinators. This project has been a labor of love and continues to be a work in progress.

So how does one create such a place? My advice: start small with flexible goals.

Questions to think about as you begin:

- Where will your garden be located? Sun, shade, or mixture? Size and shape?
- What is your timeline?
- What animal species are you hoping to attract?
- Types of plants? Natives only? Perennials? Annuals? Mixture?

My experience has been frustrating, peaceful, eye opening, challenging, fulfilling and sweaty! I had to let go of my ideas of perfection and symmetry. I also needed to be flexible while welcoming messiness and inconsistencies. All the while, I found the process to be very rewarding.



The beginning

My first challenge as I began: create a clean slate. At the end of the first summer, I marked out a circle and covered it with layers of cardboard. A layer of compost was added next.

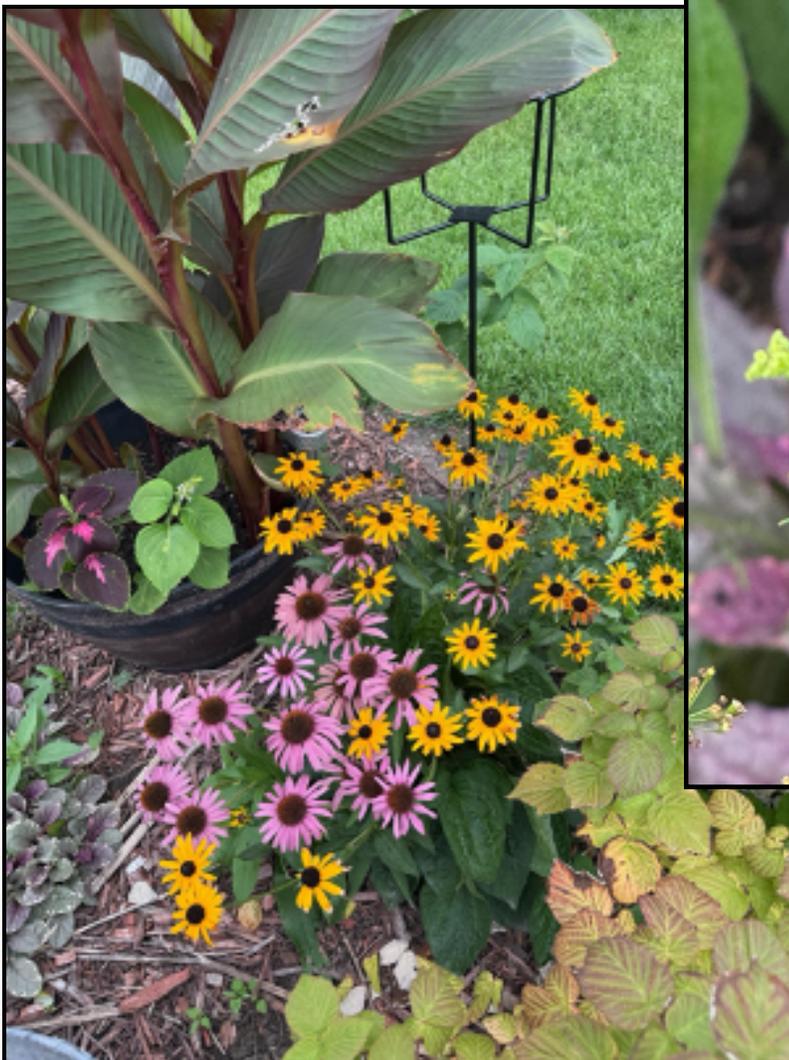
I kept these layers wet and weighted down with random objects such as large sticks, poles, etc. Finally, I covered the area with untreated grass clippings and mulched leaves.

In the spring, another layer of compost was added. And then the fun began! I sketched out a simple, flexible plan. My first addition was a packet of native wildflower seeds. From there I

added plants of all kinds: natives, non-natives, perennials, annuals, all the while thinking of color, size, shape, and light requirements. I purchased plants as well as thinning my established perennials. The garden is ever changing and I am continuously learning.

Will a pollinator garden be in your future?

Below: Cannas in pots



Above: I found my first swallowtail caterpillar in the dill!

“The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature. To nurture a garden is to feed not just the body, but the soul.” Alfred Austin

Got FIGWORTS? I Do!

Donna Breed, Master Gardener

If you are looking for a nectar-rich plant to add to your garden, look no further.

Figwort is the answer.

I just learned about this plant from the Loess Hills Wild Ones as I perused the list of native plants available for their July sale. I didn't know anything about figwort so I Googled it and found great information.

The first fun fact was in the 1880s figwort was known as "Simpson's Honey Plant" and was widely planted across the Midwest by beekeepers. If that name was still used today, it might be better known. I now have both Early Figwort (*Scrophularia lanceolata*) and Late Figwort (*Scrophularia marilandica*) planted in my new, ever-expanding pollinator garden and hope my experience with it produces all the wonderful things I discovered about it. Read on for many more fun facts.

Figworts have a special rating from the Xerces Society because of their value to insects, particularly native bees, butterflies, birds, and wasps. It is labeled as a plant that supports biological control due to the parasitoid insects it attracts.

If that isn't enough, one of the main birds that feed on it are ruby-throated hummingbirds.

The flowers are small and two-lipped (described as honey-pot, miniature snapdragon or small unique bucket shape) and appear to drip nectar. If you plant both early and late figwort, you will have flowers from May through October.



Early Figwort (*Scrophularia lanceolata*)

Bloom: May-July

Height: 4-6 ft

Sun and Soil: Preference is for light shade, but you will find it in open fields and ditches if there is dense vegetation surrounding the base of the plant.





Late Figwort (*Scrophularia marilandica*)

Photo: Prairie Moon Nursery

Bloom Time: July-October

Height: 4-6 feet

Sun and Soil: Late Figwort, also known as Maryland Figwort, grows well in average garden soils, both on the wet or dry sides, and thrives in full sun but also tolerates up to 70% shade.



I saved the best news for last, at least for me, and that is the deer-resistance claim. There are many acrid compounds in the tissue of figwort that make it taste bitter and deter deer from browsing it.

I hope mine thrive so I can collect seeds, spread them around our place and share some with my MMG friends, too.

On that note, even though figworts do produce lots of seeds and will spread, it is not considered invasive. It can be easily controlled by weeding or dead-heading to prevent the seeds from maturing.

I kept wondering why I hadn't heard about this plant before, and I think I figured that out as well as I read more. Figworts are described as tall, gangly, weedy-looking plants with inconspicuous flowers. I've never sought out a tall, gangly, weedy-looking plant until now!

Resources used for the creation of this article:

<https://xerces.org/blog-> Plants For Pollinators: Figwort

<https://prairiemoon.com> - Prairie Moon Nursery - Figwort

<https://www.honeybeesuite.com/fun-with-figworts-the-sticky-scrophularia/> Figworts and their sweet surprise: a treasure trove of nectar

Photo credits:

Xerces Society Blog: [Plants For Pollinators: Figwort](https://xerces.org/blog-)

[Prairie Moon Nursery](https://prairiemoon.com)

What is Catfacing?

Carla Goetsch, Master Gardener



That special time of the year is upon us: **home grown tomato season!**

However, there seems to be more ugly-looking tomatoes this year. This condition, called catfacing, is when the tomato is malformed with deep indents, rough scars, uneven ripening, and sometimes delineated segments.

Most of the time, a catfaced tomato is still edible but may have a higher incidence of mold, fungi, or insect conditions in the folds. The likelihood of catfacing may be based on the type of tomato, with heirlooms being the most susceptible. The larger the tomato, the more likely catfacing can occur.

The reason behind it is a bit unknown but weather may be the most likely reason. Very early in the season, when the blooms are forming, two or more blooms close together can fuse and create the catfacing.

This summer has been hot, humid, and wetter than average. There was likely an abundance of moisture that allowed for more blooms causing them to be close together.

The good news is that these tomatoes are completely edible, but they do not look pretty. Be aware that the creases may welcome mold or insects into the folds.

Preventing catfacing is a bit labor-intensive.

When a tomato plant produces an abundance of blooms (Megablooms), hand removing the most terminal (at the farthest end of the stalk) can reduce the likelihood of catfacing. A good time to do this is about the time you are removing the unwanted suckers or the bottom leaves.

Avoiding excessive nitrogen in fertilizers may also help. A higher percentage of potassium and phosphorus to nitrogen ratio would be a better choice if fertilizing. As always, even watering of the plant makes for nicer tomatoes.

So, what do you do with a catfaced-tomato? Cut the folded, services out and eat it, enjoying every bite while the season lasts.

Transforming Boulevards Into Pollinator Gardens

Pam Conklin, Master Gardener

Across Sioux Falls, a quiet transformation is taking root. Once dominated by thirsty, high-maintenance lawn turf, neighborhood boulevards are being reimagined as vibrant pollinator gardens.

By replacing grass with native flowers and grasses, residents are creating colorful, living corridors that support bees, butterflies, and birds—species vital to the region’s ecosystems and food systems. These gardens require less water and fewer, or no chemicals, making them more sustainable and resilient during South Dakota’s changing climate.

They also add curb appeal and a sense of community pride. From purple coneflowers to blazing stars, each boulevard becomes a patch of prairie beauty, stitching together habitats across the city.

What was once a strip of unused green space is now a thriving ecosystem at eye level.

Pollinator gardens on the boulevard prove that small, local changes can make a big difference—for nature, for neighbors, and for the future.

Getting started:

Know your city and township regulations first. In Sioux Falls, visit siouxfalls.gov - (<https://www.siouxfalls.gov/health-safety/code-enforcement/categories/parking-strip-guidelines>)

You can create a beautiful, pollinator-oriented boulevard space in Sioux Falls, but you’ll need to be mindful of city regulations. Stick to low-growing native flowers or approved ground covers, maintain height limits, and avoid non-living materials or decorative structures.

Summary Table

Category	Allowed / Required	Restrictions
Ground Cover	Living plants (approved by city)	No rock/concrete; limited mulch or edging
Plant Height	≤ 36" from curb top	Must not block sidewalk or visibility
Structures	Not allowed	No fences, walls, pavers (beyond 25% limit)
Trees (optional)	Permit required; approved species only	Must follow spacing, clearance, and placement rules
Maintenance	Property owner’s responsibility	Must keep neat and replace dead plants

Other things to consider:

Know your hardiness zone. Research SD native plants. I've included a short list of pollinator plants that you may like, but you don't need to limit yourself. Decide how and when to prepare your site.

Since the Sioux Falls and surrounding area is in the Northern Great Plains (USDA Zone 4b–5a), you'll want hardy, drought-tolerant native perennials that thrive in boulevard conditions (hot, dry, compacted soils, limited watering). Here's a truncated list of pollinator-friendly native plants that should fit within Sioux Falls' boulevard rules (under 36" height, low-maintenance, colorful, and supportive for bees, butterflies, and birds):

Flowering Perennials

- Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea angustifolia*, *E. purpurea*) – Long-blooming, bee & butterfly favorite.
- Black-Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*) – Bright yellow flowers, attracts bees & butterflies.
- Blanketflower (*Gaillardia aristata*) – Heat- and drought-tolerant, vivid colors.
- Prairie Smoke (*Geum triflorum*) – Unique pink plumes, early nectar source.
- Wild Bergamot / Bee Balm (*Monarda fistulosa*) – Purple blooms, attracts hummingbirds & bees.
- Showy Milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*) – Essential for monarch butterflies.
- Butterfly Milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) – Bright orange blooms, pollinator magnet.
- Prairie Phlox (*Phlox pilosa*) – Fragrant pink flowers, butterflies love it.
- Maximilian Sunflower (*Helianthus maximiliani*) – Taller (up to 6 ft), but can be placed strategically.

Bloom Times

Early (Apr–Jun)

- Prairie Smoke (*Geum triflorum*)
- Golden Alexanders (*Zizia aurea*)
- Penstemon (*Penstemon digitalis*, *P. grandiflorus*)

Mid (Jun–Aug)

- Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea* spp.)
- Black-Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)
- Blanketflower (*Gaillardia aristata*)
- Wild Bergamot / Bee Balm (*Monarda fistulosa*)
- Butterfly Milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)
- Showy Milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*)
- Prairie Phlox (*Phlox pilosa*)

Late (Aug–Oct)

- Maximilian Sunflower (*Helianthus maximiliani*)
- Aromatic Aster (*Symphyotrichum oblongifolium*)
- Smooth Blue Aster (*Symphyotrichum laeve*)

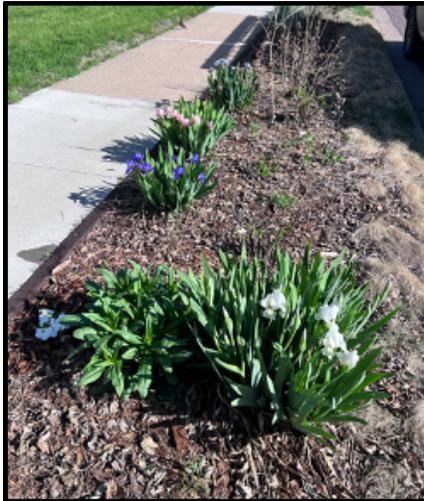
Grasses (for structure & habitat)

- Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) – Compact, blue-green foliage with fall color.
- Prairie Dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*) – Elegant, fine-textured, fragrant.
- Sideoats Grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*) – Small, clumping grass, seed spikes feed birds.

Other Pollinator-Friendly Natives

- Golden Alexanders (*Zizia aurea*) – Umbel blooms, great early nectar source.
- Aromatic Aster (*Symphyotrichum oblongifolium*) – Late-season blooms, vital for migrating pollinators.
- Smooth Blue Aster (*Symphyotrichum laeve*) – Supports over 100 pollinator species.
- Penstemon (*Penstemon digitalis*, *P. grandiflorus*) – Early-summer blooms, bees and hummingbirds

**Below are views of my boulevard starting in later winter to now.
Come back next month for practical “how to” methods
and steps to get you started.**





MMG Beautifies the Fairgrounds as a Thank You for Hosting the Annual Plant Sale

Kathy Buseman, Master Gardener

Each year, after the frenzy of the Annual Plant Sale, the Minnehaha Master Gardeners (MMG) set about planting flowers throughout the W.H. Lyons Fairgrounds as a thank you for allowing MMG to use the grounds for the Plant Sale.

This year, we tried some new things, and several of us checked on them during the summer to see how they were progressing (and some even weeded them). That is a huge commitment on the part of MMG members.

Here are just a few of the beautiful planters that greeted attendees at the Sioux Empire Fair this summer.

Some background about the Plant Sale:

The MMG Plant Sale started in 1991. Its purpose is to raise money for scholarships for SDSU and SETC horticulture students. Proceeds from the sale fund \$1000 scholarships for two SDSU students and two SETC students each year.

The Sale is held on the Saturday before Mother's Day, which will be May 9, 2026, at the W.H. Lyons Fairgrounds in the Women's or Fine Arts building.





The Fairgrounds is a good partner, as they do not charge us rent but ask us to fill the flower planters around the fairgrounds. This year, we planted 16 planters. The goal is to have flowers in bloom at fair time, and this year they looked great! The fair staff does the watering, after MMG does the planting.

Plants are collected for the sale in three ways:

1. MMG members start plants to sell or donate plants from their gardens
2. SETC's horticulture department allows us to start plants there, and they provide space for us to grow them until the plant sale.
3. MMG does "digs" at either MMG members' homes or private homes that allow us to dig up plants the owners wish to donate to us.



The Plant Sale has evolved into a substantial project that requires the assistance of many Master Gardeners. It takes three days to set up tables, retrieve plants from SETC, and collect plants from homes that have digs. Next, the plants are labeled and priced.

The sale is a massive event, with most plants gone within two to three hours. Then it's time to clean up and plan for the next year.



Summer Flower Centerpieces

JoAnn Christensen, Master Gardener

I always say August is the month of flowers.

It's very easy to create masterpieces from the plethora of flowers and greens in our gardens. You can brighten someone's day or bring garden treasures inside to enjoy at home.

It's simple to create an arrangement. Many people like fresh flowers once a week. I keep small vases on hand from garage sales to create simple designs. Look for vases with a wide base to avoid tipping.

Select flowers that are fresh and not spent. The newer the bloom, the more life it has in your arrangement. If petals release easily, the flower may already be spent. When bringing flowers from the outside, check for insects. If the flowers or greens are sturdy enough, they can be gently dipped in water. Aim for arrangements to be about 2/3 the height of the vase.

Begin with greens. In the summer, you can use carrot greens or herbs like parsley. Don't cut the entire carrot top off the carrot, but you can remove one stem. I use herbs from my herb pot. Oregano that goes to flower has beautiful, small blossoms.



Cut "greens" stems as long as possible. Greens can be herbs or carrot tops. You can always cut the stems shorter but you can't make them longer. Cut them until you obtain the desired length. Find larger or interesting flowers for the focal point. Add flowers around the focal point turning your vase as you add other flowers so it is balanced on all sides. Only stems should be visible in the vase. Avoid leaves in the water.

I add a capful of peroxide to my arrangements to keep the water clean. Change the water every few days to keep the arrangement fresh. Enjoy!



Oregano and mini roses



Carrot tops (greens), zinnias and dill.



Dianthus, various herbs



Zinnias and carrot tops



Love-in-the-mist greens,
dill, zinnias, raffia bow