

Hardy Plant Society  
2019 Grant Final Report

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The objective of the Outdoor Classroom Restoration project at DEEC was to add native plants to the raised beds in the garden with an eye towards attracting pollinators. Creating a robust native landscape would attract more wildlife for close-up encounters as well as provide education about native pollinator plants. The Outdoor Classroom had other gardening needs to be addressed at the same time related to care of the trees and shrubs that were part of the original planting that were surrounded by vines or had died altogether from repeated beaver browsing.

With the funds from Hardy Plant Society, we were able to purchase several flats of plugs of native pollinator plants from North Creek Nurseries. We also received an in-kind donation of a White Fringetree from Delaware Nature Society's Native Plant Sale, and several perennial divisions from Serah Pesce's home garden. We also purchased gardening hand tools, gloves, mulch, and fencing. A full breakdown of expenditures can be found in Table 1.

We lined up the planting of these wonderful natives with a week in June when we hosted the incoming 9<sup>th</sup> grade cohort of Delaware Futures, a statewide youth development organization. 2019 was the 10<sup>th</sup> year of this partnership. Around 25 young people complete a week of service learning through marsh restoration projects that introduce them to "green jobs" skills. As DEEC is a small operation without a large corps of volunteers, we benefit greatly from many strong hands going to work in our educational spaces.

The Delaware Futures cohort that worked on the Outdoor Classroom did a marvelous job with clearing, planting, mulching, and designing. With the help of Serah Pesce, they learned the needs of the plant species provided, chose proper locations for them, designed the planting layout of the beds, and planted them according to proper spacing and depth.



*2 Delaware Futures youth plant native plant plugs in Outdoor Classroom.*



*1. Delaware Futures youth present project at the Summer Marsh Experience final ceremony*

Establishment of the plantings was shared between Willa Rowan and the summer Education Intern, Kayla, as they were on-site every day. The biggest establishment challenges were the browsing pressures from DEEC's triple-threat: groundhogs, deer, and beavers. We put up some plastic netting as fencing for the raised beds, which did seem to help, and we will be putting up chicken wire fencing as a more permanent solution in spring 2020.

The Outdoor Classroom plantings received some instant appreciation, for we had summer camps for the rest of the summer and used the space for games and insect netting. One specific camp, titled "Butterflies in Bloom", went a little further to explore the different flowers and make a "toad abode" for a toad they found in the beds.



4. Summer Camper holding an American Toad.



3. Summer Campers making a "Toad Abode"

In the Fall and Spring, the Outdoor Classroom gets the most visitation from school and group field trips. This fall, we once again hosted all 4<sup>th</sup> graders from Christina School District for our Land and Water program. The station where we learn about erosion and the dangers of habitat loss is held in the Outdoor Classroom, so we were very grateful to have interesting habitat for the students to explore while they were there.

Total engagement:

Summer camp 2019 (week-long campers): 65

School/group programs, Fall 2019: 2522

Public programs & events, Fall 2019: 1300

This coming year, we're looking forward to some tree plantings that can hopefully provide some shade for explorers of the Outdoor Classroom. We will also be dividing successful perennials that come back up to fill in any holes, putting up chicken wire fencing, and of course, always weeding!

The below figures and pictures show expense tracking, flowering results, and educational materials created for the Outdoor Classroom. Educational materials were created by Willa Rowan with help from DeINature staff. In Spring 2020, we'll place plant labels in the raised beds as well once we see which plants come back and where.

Table 1. Expense tracking for Outdoor Classroom

<b>Purchases</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Vendor</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>
	6/10/2019	North Creek Nurseries	perennial plugs	182.22
	6/12/2019	North Creek Nurseries	perennial plugs	182.22
	6/12/2019	The Home Depot	gloves, hand tools	45.27
			mulch, wire	
	7/12/2019	The Home Depot	fencing	123.27
			<b>Total</b>	<b>532.98</b>
<b>In-kind donations</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Donor</b>	<b>Description</b>	
	5/6/2019	DNS Plant Sale	White Fringetree	
	6/17/2019	Serah Pesce	assorted perennial divisions	



5 & 6. Joe-Pye Weed, Blue Mistflower, and Culver's Root in the Outdoor Classroom.

A hearty thanks to Hardy Plant Society for this grant. It transformed what little upland space we have at DEEC into a welcoming, flowering space for games and exploration. With continued care, it will continue to develop into a pollinator hot spot that our educational programs as well as casual visitors can see up close.

# FLOWER HUNT

Join our pollinators who search for nectar and pollen by looking for colorful flowers. How many different types of native flowers you can find in the Outdoor Classroom?



Anise Hyssop



Joe-Pye Weed



Common Milkweed



Phlox



Blue Star



Wild Bergamot / Bee Balm



Blue Mistflower



Culver's Root



Wild Ginger



Cardinal Flower



Yellow Coneflower



Black-Eyed Susan



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# INSECT HUNT

Use this guide to identify who's buzzing, flying, hopping, or crawling around. Check on plants, on the ground, and in the air for insects. Look, but don't touch!



Black Swallowtail



Tiger Swallowtail



Painted Lady



Red Admiral



Cabbage White



Clouded Sulphur



Monarch



Spotted Lanternfly



Blue Dasher



Common Green Damselfly



Widow Skimmer



Common Whitetail



Bumblebee



Honeybee



Carpenter Bee



Yellow Jacket



Boxelder bug



Milkweed bug



Leaf Bug



Spur-throated Grasshopper



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