



The Garden Next Door Reader's Guide

Read | Learn | Explore



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Published by River Horse Children's Books





How to use this guide:

Grab your butterfly net, binoculars, and magnifying glass, and get ready to have some fun! In this guide, you'll get to explore the different plants and animals that call *The Garden Next Door* home. You'll also learn more about native plants and how to start a pollinator patch of your own.

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What's a native plant?

According to The National Wildlife Federation, "a plant is considered native if it has occurred naturally in a particular region, ecosystem, or habitat without human introduction." This means that native plants have had thousands of years to co-evolve with native wildlife, including other native plants. Native plants evolved to thrive in the climate and soils where they live. They also provide food and shelter for native wildlife, which is essential to preserving local biodiversity.

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Where is The Garden Next Door?

It would be impossible to have a book about native plants without first choosing a specific place to serve as its inspiration. That's why Illinois was selected. Illinois is home to many plants and animals that people near and far can recognize, making it the perfect setting for *The Garden Next Door*. Better yet, Illinois' state insect is the monarch butterfly!



THE BENEFITS OF NATIVE PLANTS

1 FOOD FOR INSECTS, FOOD FOR YOU

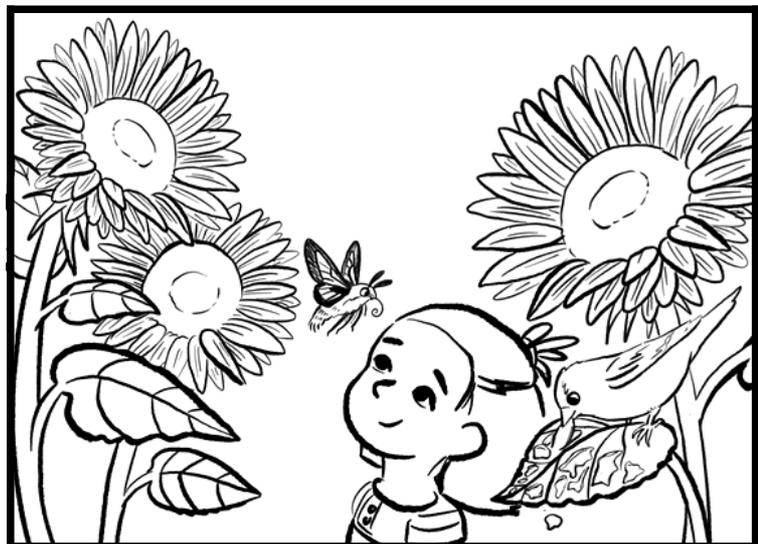
Native plants are an important food source for native insects. Many native insects can only eat one specific type of native plant, which is called its host plant. For example, milkweed is the monarch's host plant: monarch caterpillars can only eat milkweed leaves. Without native plants, native insects don't have anything to eat! Additionally, native bees, butterflies, wasps, moths, beetles, flies, birds, and bats rely on the nectar of native plants. When these animals go from plant to plant, they carry pollen with them. In this way, native wildlife pollinates native plants—and many of the fruits and vegetables that we rely on for food.

2 HOME IS WHERE THE NATIVE PLANTS ARE

Native plants attract native insects, but they also attract plenty of other animals. That's because a lot of animals eat insects. For example, some songbirds feed their babies hundreds of caterpillars every day! Besides insects, animals also eat the fruits, nuts, and seeds that native plants produce. In addition to food, these plants create important habitats for wildlife to hide from predators and to raise young.

3 EASY TO GROW—EASIER TO ENJOY

Planting native means less yard work and less mowing. Plus, because native plants are adapted to a particular region, they tend to be easier to grow. Once they're established, native plants generally require less watering and maintenance. That means more time enjoying the native plants you plant, and less time caring for them!



GROWING YOUR OWN NATIVE PLANTS

Just like the children in *The Garden Next Door*, you can grow native plants too. Before you begin, here are some important tips to keep in mind:

YOU DON'T NEED A BIG YARD TO GROW NATIVE PLANTS. IF YOU HAVE A DECK, PATIO, OR PORCH, PLENTY OF NATIVE PLANTS WILL GROW FINE IN POTS AND CONTAINERS.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR HELP. MANY LOCAL GARDEN SHOPS, BOTANICAL GARDENS, AND NURSERIES SUPPORT PLANTING NATIVES. WHEN IN DOUBT, ASK!

POLLINATOR NONPROFITS AND UNIVERSITY WEBSITES ARE GREAT PLACES TO LEARN MORE ABOUT NATIVE PLANTS IN YOUR AREA. IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR RESOURCES AND INFORMATION, START THERE.

NATIVE PLANTS CAN SERVE OTHER PURPOSES. FOR EXAMPLE, HAVE A WET YARD? PLANT A NATIVE RAIN GARDEN. WANT PRIVACY? PLANT A NATIVE BORDER. NEED SOME SHADE? PLANT A TREE (OR TWO).

IT'S NOT ALL OR NOTHING. IT'S OKAY IF YOU GROW NON-NATIVE PLANTS. JUST MAKE SURE THAT THOSE PLANTS AREN'T INVASIVE—AND PAIR THEM WITH NATIVES.

DEPENDING ON WHERE YOU LIVE, YOU'LL WANT TO PLANT NATIVES IN THE SPRING OR FALL. STARTING DURING THE BEST SEASON WILL HELP THOSE PLANTS TO THRIVE.

ONCE YOU PICK WHERE YOU WANT TO PLANT YOUR NATIVES, SPEND A DAY TRACKING HOW MANY HOURS OF DIRECT SUNSHINE IT GETS. THAT'LL TELL YOU WHETHER TO GROW NATIVE PLANTS THAT REQUIRE DIRECT SUN, PART SUN, OR SHADE.

NEED INSPIRATION? NOT SURE WHAT NATIVE PLANTS YOU LOVE? TAKE A HIKE IN A NATURAL AREA OR VISIT YOUR LOCAL BOTANICAL GARDEN TO GET SOME IDEAS. MANY APPS AND FIELD GUIDES MAKE IT EASY TO IDENTIFY NATIVE PLANTS!

GARDEN DETECTIVE

CAN YOU FIND THESE ANIMALS IN THE GARDEN NEXT DOOR?

BIRDS

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (P. 3)

BARN OWL (P. 13)

BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEES (P. 25)

AMERICAN GOLDFINCHES (P. 22)

EASTERN BLUEBIRD (P. 26)

HOUSE WREN (P. 20)

REPTILES

EASTERN GARTER SNAKE (COVER)

EASTERN FENCE LIZARD (P. 18)

MAMMALS

EASTERN GREY SQUIRREL (P. 5)

AMPHIBIANS

AMERICAN TOAD (P. 26)

ARACHNIDS

FLOWER CRAB SPIDER (P. 24)

CAN YOU FIND THESE ITEMS IN THE GARDEN NEXT DOOR?

BIRD BATH (P. 25)

SEEDLINGS (P. 28)

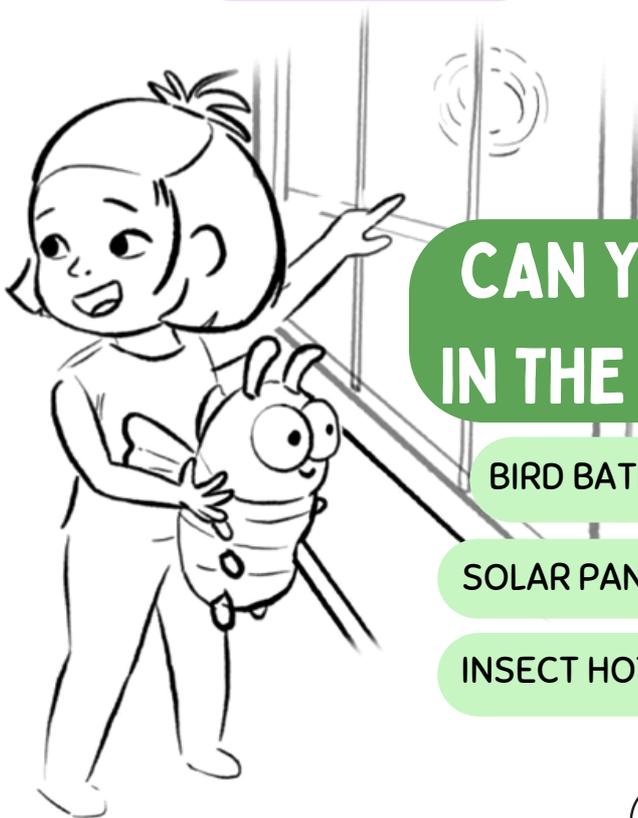
SOLAR PANELS (P. 19)

BIRD HOUSE (P. 26)

INSECT HOTEL (P. 26)

WATERING CAN (P. 27)

POND (P. 19)



GARDEN DETECTIVE

**CAN YOU FIND THESE INSECTS
IN THE GARDEN NEXT DOOR?**

BUTTERFLIES & MOTHS

COMMON BUCKEYE (P. 29)

BLACK SWALLOWTAIL (P. 29)

EASTERN TIGER SWALLOWTAIL (P. 9)

QUESTION MARK (P. 21)

HUMMINGBIRD CLEARWING MOTH (P. 22)

EASTERN-TAILED BLUE (COVER)

RED ADMIRAL (P. 29)

GREAT SPANGLED FRITILLARY (COVER)

MONARCH CATERPILLAR (P. 23)

MONARCH BUTTERFLY (P. 29)

FIERY SKIPPERS (P. 21)

DRAGONFLIES

COMMON BLUE DASHER (P. 25)

LANCE-TIPPED DARNERS (P. 10)

BEETLES

EASTERN FIREFLIES (P. 14)

SEVEN-SPOTTED LADYBUG (P. 23)

GOLDENROD SOLDIER BEETLES (P. 24)

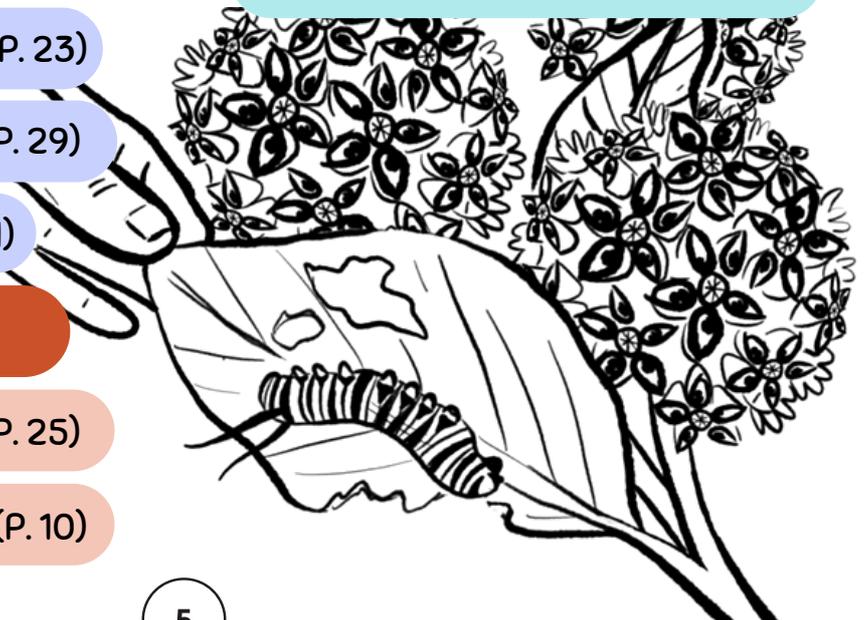
BEES & FLIES

LEAF-CUTTER BEE (P. 29)

AMERICAN HOVERFLY (P. 22)

GREEN SWEAT BEE (P. 24)

EASTERN CARPENTER BEE (P. 20)





GARDEN TOUR



TREES

- (1) BUCKEYE
- (2) WHITE OAK
- (3) EASTERN RED BUD
- (4) RIVER BIRCH
- (5) SUGAR MAPLE

GRASSES

- (6) SEA OATS
- (7) INDIAN GRASS
- (8) BIG BLUESTEM

CAN YOU FIND THESE FLOWERS IN THE GARDEN NEXT DOOR?

WRINKLELEAF GOLDENROD (P. 24)

BLUE WILD INDIGO (P. COVER)

WILD BERGAMOT (P. 21)

PRAIRIE PHLOX (P. 26)

COMMON MILKWEED (P. 23)

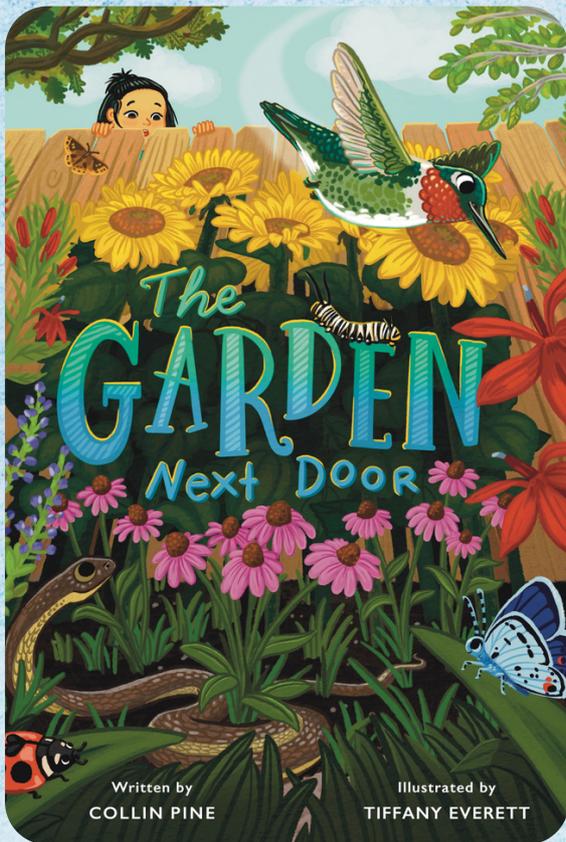
PRAIRIE IRIS (P. 25)

BLUE SAGE (P. 17)

WHITE WILD INDIGO (P. 29)

CARDINAL FLOWER (COVER)





Talk About The Garden Next Door:

"A charming introduction to the spectacular biodiversity that can flourish just beyond our back doors if given a chance."

- Dr. May Berenbaum, National Medal of Science laureate and entomology professor at the University of Illinois

"... an important and timely message ..."

- Heather Holm, pollinator conservationist and author, Pollinators of Native Plants

"I wish all families would read this gentle call to action ... and do their part to share their land with their own wild neighbors."

- Nancy Lawson, author, The Humane Gardener

The Neighborhood of Support:



About the creators:

Collin Pine's passion for gardening is rooted in western Pennsylvania, where his childhood summers were spent putting tomatoes into colanders and raspberries directly into his mouth. His love of nature led him to get a degree in environmental science, before serving as a Peace Corps volunteer in Cameroon. Today, Collin lives in Oakland with his husband and their pet banana slug. When he isn't writing, Collin is probably either tending to his plants, bonding with the backyard birds, or baking zucchini bread.

Tiffany Everett is a children's illustrator passionate about science, nature conservation, and learning new things. She earned her BFA in Illustration from the Savannah College of Art and Design. After several years of full-time travel exploring the American West, first by school bus, then by camper van, Tiffany now lives in a cute old house with her husband and two spoiled dogs. When she's not drawing, she may be found trying out a new recipe, watching an animated show, foraging for wild edible plants, or planning her next camping trip.

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