



Pollinator Gardens and Food Forests Work Well Together

Carrie Regenstreif, Community Engagement Coordinator, Sudbury Shared Harvest, BFG Member

Planting pollinator gardens within food forest areas is a good way to ensure fruit production while creating habitat for pollinating insects. Sudbury Shared Harvest, a non-profit group based in northeastern Ontario, Canada, has been coordinating volunteer involvement in establishing community food forests on public properties since 2015.



Attracting pollinating insects to food forests ensures blossoms like these become apples

A food forest takes advantage of beneficial interactions between fruit and nut trees, shrubs, herbs, and other perennial plants, to create an area that mimics a forest ecosystem. The group learned everything it knows, including the importance of including non-edible plants chosen for their ability to attract pollinators, from food forest design coach Bonita Ford (www.LivinghEARTH.net).

Sudbury Shared Harvest has worked with individuals and community groups to establish a number of small food forests ranging from 300 to 8000 square feet, with patches of native flowers being an important element in each.

When embarking on the first project, organizers found it difficult to source native plants locally. It isn't difficult to grow a number of hardy fruit trees and other perennials in the Sudbury area, but there are few native plant nurseries, and so almost no locally native

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plants available for purchase. Sometimes, plants show up unexpectedly, so staff and volunteers make sure to identify them before deciding whether to remove them or let them stay.



Sometimes native plants show up unexpectedly, like these Canada Anemone

In the early days, the group often planted “nativars,” mistakenly believing them to be native to the local area. Other local groups, including the Coalition for a Liveable Sudbury and Pollinate Sudbury, have been instrumental in raising awareness in recent years about the value of planting locally native plants. As more people request true natives at local garden centres, more have become available. As they become more available, they are added to existing pollinator patches to increase native floral diversity.



To learn more about Sudbury Shared Harvest, see www.sudburysharedharvest.ca

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