Miami County Courthouse Gardens
Marais des Cygnes Extension Master Gardeners—Paola

About the Gardens –

The Paola Lions Club and K-State Extension Master Gardeners secured a grant from the Lou Beahr Foundation in 2008 to enhance the Courthouse Lawn. The garden was begun in 2008 with the planting of a Cottonwood, the official Kansas State Tree. The Extension Master Gardeners have established a weekly maintenance crew, initially under the leadership of Patti Armstrong. Phyllis Benedict has been the Chairperson since 2012 and guides the Committee’s selection and placement of new plantings. In 2009 Miami County Road and Bridge Department built the meandering sidewalk and installed historical signage about Miami County and the City of Paola. After the drought of 2012, the irrigation system was installed to support the eight flower beds.

Kidney Bed has a Paw-Paw tree flanked by red Crape Myrtle, an Oakleaf hydrangea and surrounded by yellow ‘Going Bananas’ daylilies.

Southeast Corner Bed has drought tolerant plantings of Ninebark, Russian Sage, and Dwarf Weigelia.

South west Corner Bed has Plumbago, Roses, Peonies, and Shenandoah Grass

On the East side of the Courthouse Historic signs are surrounded by Daubs Frosted Junipers in front of the ramp. Wrought iron fencing, circa 1900 enclose a large oak tree.

The West Beds have more of a cottage feel. Pink Profusion Zinnias lead you up the walk to the West entrance. A riot of color from peonies, lilies, coneflowers, verbena, milkweed, butterfly bushes, beauty berry, and crepe myrtle invite an array of butterflies and bees from Spring until Fall.

Bed descriptions –

Formal Gardens on the South side surrounded by boxwood hedge, contain several verities of arborvitaes and junipers between 3 Yoshino Cherry Trees. Other plantings include ninebark, caryopteris, chase trees, and carpet roses.

Arbor Beds surrounded by boxwood and grey owl juniper are filled with asiatic and daylilies, peonies, Vanilla-Strawberry hydrangea. Purple flowering Clematis cover the arbors in spring and purple and white Hyacinth bean vines in the summer.

Special Features -

Four-foot bronze medallion with the garden’s logo sits at the sidewalk intersection on the south side of the Courthouse

Three massive wrought iron arbors were donated by Dougherty Steel in 2010

Two large Memorial benches provide resting and viewing space for visitors to the garden

Ornamental iron fencing and historic lighting that were originally part of the Paola Town Square were donated by the Swan River Historical Museum

A patio of memorial brick pavers is installed at the east entrance of the Courthouse

Monarch Waystation was created in 2011 and is maintained with annual plantings of Tropical Milkweed and perennial native Milkweeds

Favorite Plants
• Corkscrew Willow, taking advantage of moisture from the roof’s downspout on the southwest corner
• Lemon Chiffon Ninebark
• Vanilla Strawberry Hydrangea
• Japanese Kerria
• Tiger Eye Sumac
• Brazilian Verbena
• Tropical Milkweed
• Ornamental Lilies and a colorful variety of Daylily cultivars
• A world-class Peony collection, curated by Ken O’Dell
• Harry Lauder Walking Stick

Greatest Challenges

The county jail construction ripped out beds on the southeast corner and delayed future plantings and construction of a picnic table area. Weeding, since garden work day is only once a week. As the trees at the entrance of the Arbor Beds have grown, plants need to be changed from full sun to shade tolerant. Some of the plants on the east side of the arbors do not do well on the west side.
Guidelines for a Monarch Waystation from Monarch Watch

Monarch Waystations are places that provide resources necessary for monarchs to produce successive generations and sustain their migration. Without milkweeds throughout their spring and summer breeding areas in North America, monarchs would not be able to produce the successive generations that culminate in the migration each fall. Similarly, without nectar from flowers these fall migratory monarch butterflies would be unable to make their long journey to overwintering grounds in Mexico. The need for host plants for larvae and energy sources for adults applies to all monarch and butterfly populations around the world.

**Size.** A suitable Monarch Waystation habitat can be easily integrated into an existing garden. There is no minimum area requirement in order to certify your habitat; however, a truly effective Monarch Waystation will be at least 100 square feet. The total area may be split among several discrete sites at your location and there is no upper limit for the size of a Monarch Waystation habitat.

**Exposure.** Butterflies and butterfly plants need lots of sun; therefore, Monarch Waystations need to be located in an area that receives at least six hours of sun a day.

**Drainage and Soil Type.** Milkweeds and nectar plants will do best in relatively light (low-clay) soils. Good drainage is needed to avoid root rot and provide good aeration of the roots.

**Shelter.** To assure that the maximum number of monarchs survive in your habitat, the plants should be relatively close together. However, they should not be crowded - be sure to follow the planting guides specific to each plant. All monarch life stages need shelter from predators and the elements. Planting milkweeds and nectar plants close together contributes to this shelter for monarchs and other wildlife.

**Milkweed Plants.** To maximize the use of your habitat by monarchs, we recommend that you have at least 10 milkweed plants, made up of two or more species; however, a large number of plants (more than 10) of one species is sufficient. Milkweeds of different species mature and flower at different times during the season. By increasing the number of milkweed species in your habitat you will increase the likelihood that monarchs will utilize your property for a longer period during the breeding season.

**Nectar Plants.** Monarchs, other butterflies, and numerous pollinators need nectar. By providing nectar sources that bloom sequentially or continuously during the season (as many butterfly plants do) your Monarch Waystation can provide resources for monarchs throughout the breeding season and the migration in the fall. A Monarch Waystation should contain several annual, biennial, or perennial plants that provide nectar for butterflies.

**Management.** You should have a plan to sustain a Monarch Waystation. Specific actions you take will depend on the features of your habitat; however, some general examples include mulching, thinning, fertilizing, amending the soil, removing dead stalks, watering, eliminating insecticide use, removing invasive plant species, and incorporating additional features.

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“The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature” - Alfred Austin

Built in 1898, the magnificent courthouse was designed by George Washburn in the Romanesque style with a foundation of Carthage Limestone. The walls are made of fireproof pressed bricks and the roof is black with red slate on the tower and gables. The whole interior is quarter sawn oak with a natural finish. The clocks in the clocktower were donated by Paola Middle School students and installed in 1980. The building is still in use as the Paola Municipal Court as part of the City’s judicial branch. Establishment of the gardens was a joint venture between the Paola Lions club and the Miami County Kansas State Extension (now Marais des Cygnes District) Master Gardeners, who designed and have maintained the surrounding gardens in a period-appropriate style for 15 years.

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**A September to Remember**

Marais des Cygnes Extension District Master Gardeners Garden Tour

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