



Thoughtful Gardener

HEATHER ANDREWS ON HER PINEHURST GARDEN

Photo by Nicole Wood Photography

Heather Andrews of Pinehurst is a world traveler, photographer and avid gardener. In previous issues of *Blue Mountain Living*, Heather has combined her love of global adventure with her passion for plants by contributing stories of her travels to the gardens of England and the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, as well as features on the wilderness-inspired landscaping and gardens of Omni Bedford Springs Resort in Pennsylvania.

Heather's own garden is – as all living things are – a continuous work in progress. Last year, she shared a story on the value of pollinator plants in our gardens, featuring photos from her own yard. And last fall, our photographer Nicole Wood dropped by to take photos of both the glorious garden, capturing the changes of late summer and early fall – and its resplendent gardener!

With early spring's April showers and hope of May flowers, we thought we'd revisit the garden and share the FAQ Heather answers about her outdoor living space.

And to learn more about participating in gardening with a focus on local, native plants and sustainable practices, **follow Heather's Facebook page @thoughtfulgardener**. She is also on Instagram @lynease_.

Q: Was the garden always this way?

No, it wasn't. This house was a foreclosure, and while the bones of the garden were good, it was neglected. Where the pollinator garden sits now was a play area. It was highly compacted clay soil, with bright blue shredded play material (recycled shredded tire rubber). I still dig remnants out to this day. There are many non-native plants in the garden, and slowly I am replacing them with natives, which ultimately will be less maintenance and better for water retention. A nice watershed creek crosses the back of our property, and my goal is to prevent runoff if possible since that creek feeds into the Chesapeake, the third largest watershed in the world.



Q: Why raised gardens?

The raised beds started with leftover stone from the house. We have a significant slope, and our landscaper created multiple tiers to give me more planting surface area. He filled that with topsoil, which gave me a blank canvas.

The raised gardens in the pollinator garden were partly to resolve compacted soil, and partly because I can move the beds as I wish and reconfigure them. That area has completely evolved over the last year, and truly is a labor of love.

Q: Why are vegetables mixed in with your perennials?

My Granddaddy Andrews always had an acre garden. He mentioned to me on one of our frequent garden walks that the garden always produced more when his honeybees did well. I purposely planted pollinator plants to attract more bees. Pennsylvania has lots of native bees, and they are the main pollinators for many crops and native plants. If you visit the garden, you will literally hear the buzz as they work. Some are as large as a quarter, and I have never been stung. The garden harvest is impressive for such a small area, and this is due to the plethora of pollinators.

Q: Any recommendations for others who don't have space for a beehive? Or who have a limited space for a garden?

Absolutely. You only need a hedgerow of pollinator plants to make an impact. The University of Clemson just did a study, and the hedgerow beat out honeybees in terms of pollination by 30%! (And for the record, I don't have a beehive.)

Q: How did you decide what to plant?

I am a Southern gardener, so learning what would work here was a bit of trial and error. I started reading, attending local native plant sales and local garden meetings, learning from the master gardeners/local gardeners. Penn-Cumberland garden club has a meeting on the second Monday of every month (penncumberland-gardenclub.org). They are very active in the community, sponsor competitions, host trips to gardens and preserves, and teach local classes such as seed starting. You do not have to be a member to participate. They are starting an evening club soon to enable more people to participate.

Q: Any style?

Definitely eclectic! I like to think of the garden as a symphony – you want things to bloom in succession, not necessarily all at the same time. This is good for the pollinators as well, it keeps them well fed throughout the seasons.

Q: Any resources you recommend?

Yes!

PA Plants by type and bloom season at <https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Conservation/WildPlants/LandscapingwithNativePlants/Pages/default.aspx>.

Bee Smart (plants by zip code, super helpful when shopping).

Xerces.org has pollinator lists by zone (We are 7a).

Native plant finder by zip code nwf.org.

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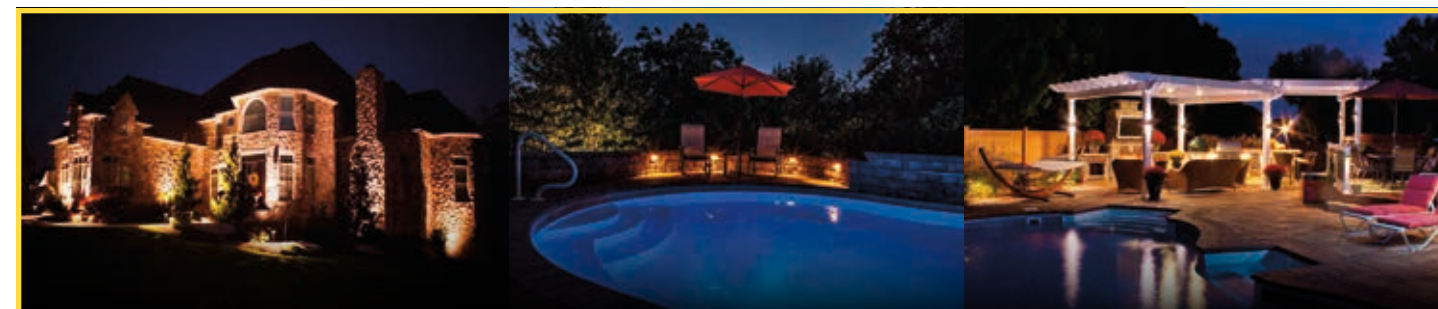
In addition, my garden is a certified monarch way-station (Cat-a-Pillar Haven). If you want to learn more about monarchs and certifying your yard: monarchwatch.org My blog is Thoughtful Gardener on Facebook, I feature videos of what is happening in the garden, other gardener's gardens for inspiration and general helpful information.

Q: Where do you get your plants?

Many of the native plants that now reside in the pollinator garden were obtained from local native garden sales and plant swaps. There are also many nurseries and growers that grow PA natives. I also share seeds and are happy to provide anyone seeds that wants them. I just need your address- which you can PM me on Facebook @thoughtfulgardener. Lastly, I can thank the birds. I have many plants that have "popped" up that I did not plant. I can only give thanks to the creatures that planted them for me.

Q: Any future plans?

The back grass will be removed next season and a larger pollinator garden is planned. I hope to be able to attract even more butterflies and birds. If you have been to Giverny, France (Claude Monet's garden), it is the inspiration for the next phase of the garden.



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