

Butterfly Garden Adds to the Serenity at Walnut Village

In many ways resident Phyllis Fryer is a pioneer among her neighbors. Phyllis is one of the charter residents who moved to Walnut Village when it debuted in 2009.



The monarch butterfly garden at Walnut Village.

“We reserved our cottage before the community was built,” Phyllis remembered. “We saw the artists’ drawings and were excited about the village concept. More than a decade later, it’s as wonderful as ever to live here.”

In 2021, Phyllis was a catalyst for creating the community’s butterfly garden, waystation and monarch haven, natural features that bring beauty and inspiration to many at the community.

Walnut Village’s journey to building the garden and waystation began when Phyllis was looking for colorful plants to enhance her own patio garden. “I saw these yellow plants and I liked them,” Phyllis said. “I had no idea what they were but I brought them home. Pretty soon, other residents commented on how butterflies were fluttering around my cottage. I later learned the plants I had chosen were milkweed, the food for monarchs.”

According to the Center for Biological Diversity, the monarch butterfly has been decreasing toward extinction due to threats from pesticides, development and global climate change. Over the last 20 years, monarch populations have fallen by more than 80%.

As more and more residents learned about the dwindling monarch population, they became enthusiastic about protecting it. Some purchased their own milkweed plants to grow in their cottage gardens and on their patios and balconies. They also approached Life Enrichment Director Judi Marsh about creating a community-sponsored butterfly garden and waystation.

“We are a resident driven community,” Judi said. “Our serenity garden was the perfect spot to make their vision reality. It’s always been a quiet place and during the spring and summer, the milkweed blooms and we get quite the monarch population.” Other colorful, fragrant and flowering plants in the garden include azaleas, verbena, salvia and yarrows. Benches, chairs and tables make it the perfect haven for butterflies and humans alike.

The waystation serves as a habitat for monarchs to rest, breed, lay eggs, and get nectar during their migration and provides a source of food for caterpillars. It is certified by Monarch Watch, a non-profit, education, conservation and research organization.

Walnut Village has joined other Front Porch communities that have established gardens, meeting regularly on Zoom to discuss best practices for maintaining the gardens and to just talk butterflies.

“Butterflies are a deep and powerful representation of life,” Judi said. “It’s a perfect reflection of life here at Walnut Village - beautiful, vibrant and exciting.”