

Welcome to the Education Garden

Undergraduate students and farm staff design this garden to be a **hands-on educational experience**, growing a variety of fruits, vegetables, flowers and herbs for PreK-12 students and the public to taste their way through our farm ecosystem. We demonstrate **permaculture and agroecological concepts** for aspiring food growers to apply in their own settings, while producing healthy food for Merry Lea programs and events.

Permaculture:

We apply patterns observed in our local, natural ecosystems to our farming techniques, bringing together social, cultural and ecological contexts for producing healthy, accessible food.

Agroecology:

Merry Lea Sustainable Farm works with the surrounding ecosystems to grow food: sharing our land with wildlife for the benefits they provide.

This garden is designed and maintained by college students alongside farm staff, for learners of all ages to **connect with their food and the value of growing food in new, purposeful ways.**



Merry Lea
Environmental Learning Center
of Goshen College

Companion Planting for Native Bees and Plants

BY GLEN MALAST

Glen is a 2022 Agroecology Summer Intensive student and graduate of Knox College. They designed garden beds 7 and 13 using companion planting techniques.

"We must save the *right* bees! Native bees are hard workers who get little attention."



WHAT IS COMPANION PLANTING?

It is a gardening technique that entails planting **more than one plant species** close together, because they interact specifically with each other in a way that's **beneficial for one or both plants**.

This bed features multiple companion plants, including bush green beans, which provide nitrogen (a nutrient) for the tomatoes.

AT LEAST
20%
OF U.S. NATIVE BEES
HAVE DECLINED



The bush bean plant pulls nitrogen from the air and stores it in the ground in nodules, which form on the roots of the plants. When the beans come close to the end of production, the plant releases the nitrogen into the soil. This makes nitrogen available for other plants.

WHY DESIGN THIS GARDEN BED FOR NATIVE BEES?

Native bees do most of the pollination for the food crops we depend on, and they are disappearing. I planted native wildflowers with certain foods to encourage more of these pollinators, and thus hopefully increase the harvest.

Native plants are essential to the survival of almost all native insects, and we get to benefit from the fruits and vegetables that are produced as a result of their pollination.



Merry Lea

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TOMATO

EL TOMATE



PLUM



LA CIRUELA