



Worth County Fairground Master Plan

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach
Rising Star Internship
Northwood, Iowa
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Executive Summary

In 2004, Worth County partnered with Iowa State University's College of Design as well as Iowa State University Extension and Outreach to complete a Landscaping Master Plan for the fairgrounds. Through this plan, they guided the planning and beautification efforts of the Worth County fairgrounds. Since the plan's completion, Worth County has implemented many of the recommendations. The community has again requested assistance from ISU Extension and Outreach. This time the Rising Star interns helped update the plan. The interns met with community leaders and interested individuals to gather their ideas and assemble them into a plan that will be the basis for design changes into the future. The plan is a new and improved conceptual design that provides an update to the original fairground landscape master plan.

After two meetings with the Worth County Beautification Board, the interns developed suggestions about how to improve the fairgrounds. Additionally, the interns also thought public input would be important while developing the revised landscape master plan. To accomplish this, the interns participated in the Worth County Fair to survey people's thoughts about the fairgrounds. After the fair, the interns developed recommendations for the landscape master plan that reflected public input, and presented them to the Worth County Beautification Board. The board provided direction for the interns while also providing additional suggestions. Based on that, the interns made decisions about how to update the landscape master plan.

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Table of Contents

Public Input from Worth County Fairgrounds	4
Updated Master Plan	8
Update One: Landscape around Janice Hullinger Sculpture	10
Update Two: Murals on Grandstand	12
Update Three: Playground at North Side of Fairground	14
Update Four: Landscape of Butterfly Garden	16
Update Five: QR Codes around Plants	19
Reference	20

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Public Input from Worth County Fairgrounds

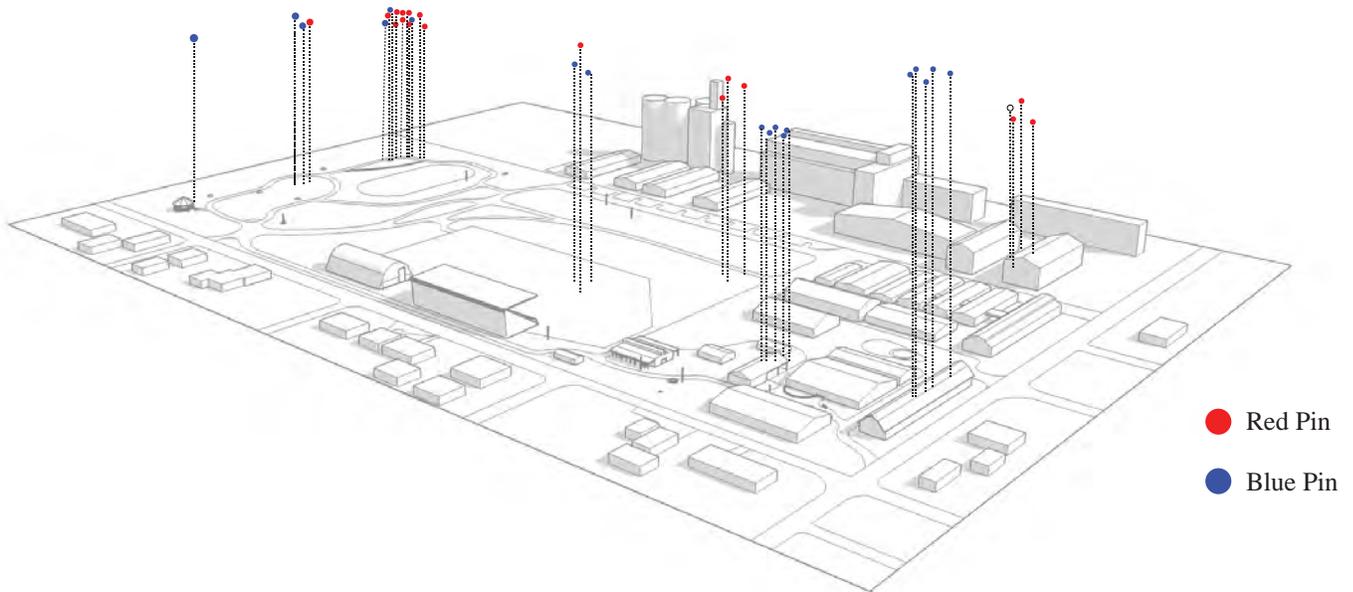
Introduction

The Iowa State University Rising Star interns have developed a revised landscape master plan for the Worth County fairgrounds.

The Rising Star interns contacted Dennis Johnson, Education Specialist for ISU Extension and Outreach Worth County, about setting up a booth during the fair to receive public input. The booth was located near the grandstand. The interns developed two ways to gather public input: colored pins and suggestion notes. Bowls were filled with two different colored pins: red and blue. People placed red pins on areas they believed the fairgrounds needed improvement, and blue pins on areas of the fairgrounds that they liked. People who didn't want to use the pins wrote suggestions on notes.



Information Gathered from Colored Pins:



Needs improvement:

The high number of red pins indicated that people were not very satisfied with the current situation of the butterfly garden. The interns believe that the low satisfaction was caused by too many weeds in the garden. Anecdotally, the interns were pleased to see how excited people were in wanting to help improve the fairgrounds.

Areas people liked:

Based on the number and location of blue pins on the map, people liked the following places: food stand area, GaGa pit, new office building, the Janice Hullinger sculpture and planters around buildings. The food stand area received the most blue pins. That was not surprising to the interns since it had recently received an extensive renovation. The next most popular location was the GaGa pit, which attracted different ages of people and was most popular among youth. The new office building was the third most popular location that people put blue pins. Most people stated that they liked the new office building because of its interior. The air conditioning may be another reason.

(Matteson J., McDonald E., Xie R., 2017)

Grandstand:

Some people wrote that the grandstand should be handicap accessible and ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant. The Americans with Disabilities Act is a federal law that requires public places to be accessible to people with disabilities. It requires the Worth County fairgrounds including the grandstand to include designated spaces where handicapped individuals may sit.

(Matteson J., McDonald E., Xie R., 2017)

Recommendations

Based on the public input, meetings with the Worth County Beautification Board, and the team's observations, the Worth County fairground landscape master plan had been revised to include suggested updates for the fairgrounds.

Butterfly Garden Theme

The interns met with the Worth County Beautification Board and learned that it has been working to expand butterfly habitat because of their concern about the Eastern Monarch Butterfly population decline. "The eastern monarch butterfly population has declined about 80% over the past two decades. Iowa is the center of the monarch's summer breeding area, and roughly 40% of all monarch butterflies are estimated to come from Iowa to Mexico during winter time," (Venture, T. M., 2017). In addition, they recently constructed a highway sign along Interstate 35 to make travelers aware of the monarch butterfly path. Creating a better habitat in Iowa for monarch butterflies could be part of the job while doing monarch conservation. Members of the Worth County Beautification Board want to do their part to help the monarch conservation program. A way station would be a good way to help monarch butterflies. Way stations provide "a garden with both nectar plants and milkweeds, where monarch can find food and reproduce," (Jenny, 2016). Then the board members decided to have a butterfly garden at the fairgrounds.

The Worth County Beautification Board believes that a butterfly garden will be one of the way stations for monarch butterflies during migration. The board believes that a butterfly garden is one of the most important features of the plan, and that the theme should be focused on the butterfly.

The Worth County Beautification Board should work toward making the entire fairgrounds property compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. This includes ensuring that the grandstand is accessible to people with disabilities and is compliant with the federal law.

(Matteson J., McDonald E., Xie R., 2017)



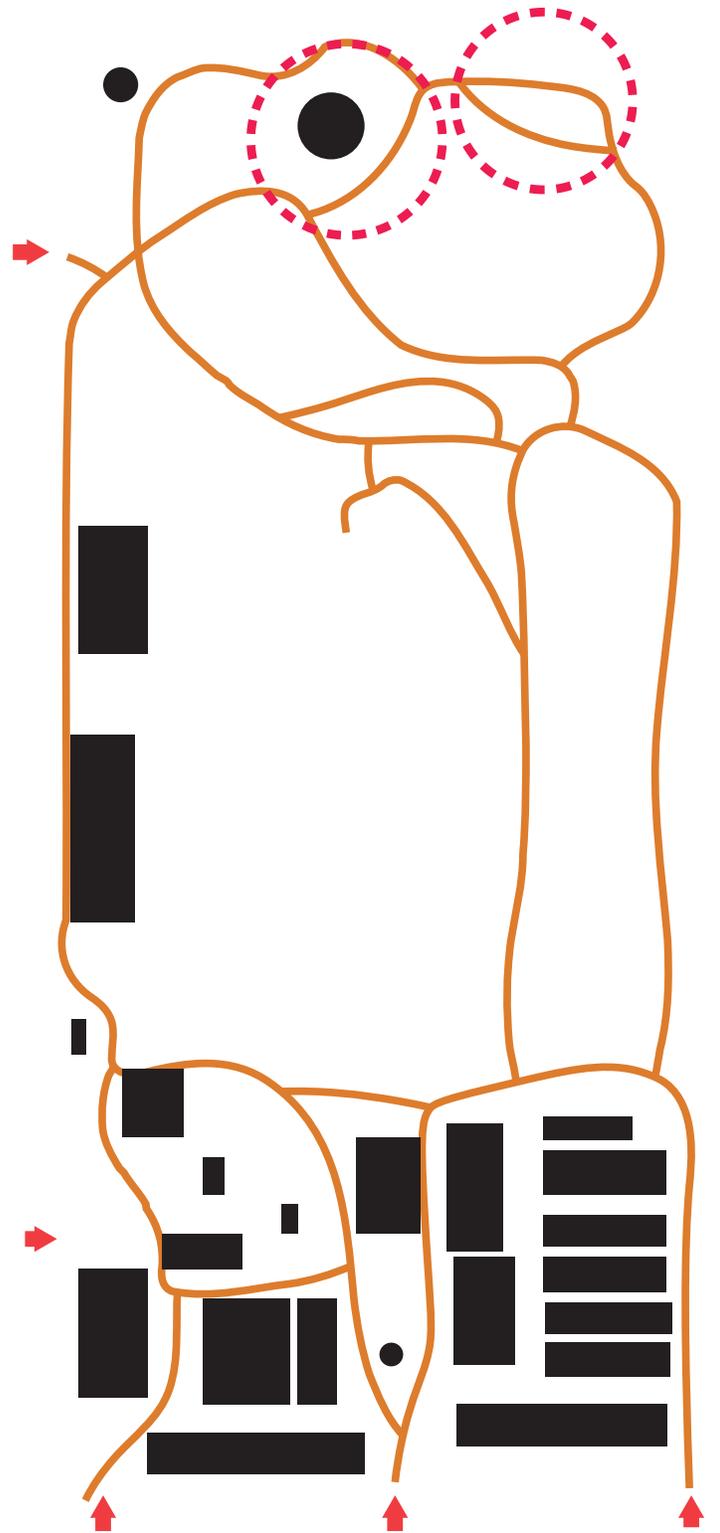
Updated Master Plan



- | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| ① New Office Building | ④ GaGa Pit | ⑦ Gazebo |
| ② Janice Hullinger sculpture | ⑤ Kids Education Garden | ⑧ Playground |
| ③ Food Gathering Area | ⑥ Grand Stand | ⑨ Butterfly Garden |



The major change to the master plan is improving circulation so that people can access all parts of the fairgrounds. To improve circulation, we suggest adding two new paths on the north side of the fairgrounds. One path may be close to the new playground, the other path may be close to the butterfly garden. New paths improve circulation and create better access to points of interest and are important to creating a different experience.



Update One: Develop Landscape around Janice Hullinger Sculpture



The Janice Hullinger sculpture is a significant entrance feature and is very important to the fairgrounds. However, as an important entrance feature of the fairgrounds, it could be more inviting. The interns recommend adding more flowers to the open space surrounding the sculpture. They will add beauty, interest and attract butterflies. Use flowers instead of bushes or small trees so that they do not cover up the view of the sculpture. Since many of the suggested flower species are similar to that of the butterfly garden, this suggestion also adds an element of cohesive nature to the fairgrounds.

The interns suggest adding a variety of colors of flowers. Colors like white, pink, purple and red create a hierarchy that lead people's sight to the sculpture. Also, flowers in this area could be used to strengthen the butterfly garden theme and provide a connection between these two places.

Suggested Plants:

Bee Balm

10"-12"

red, pink, purple

Partial to full sun

Performs best with consistently moist, but not soggy, soil.

Location

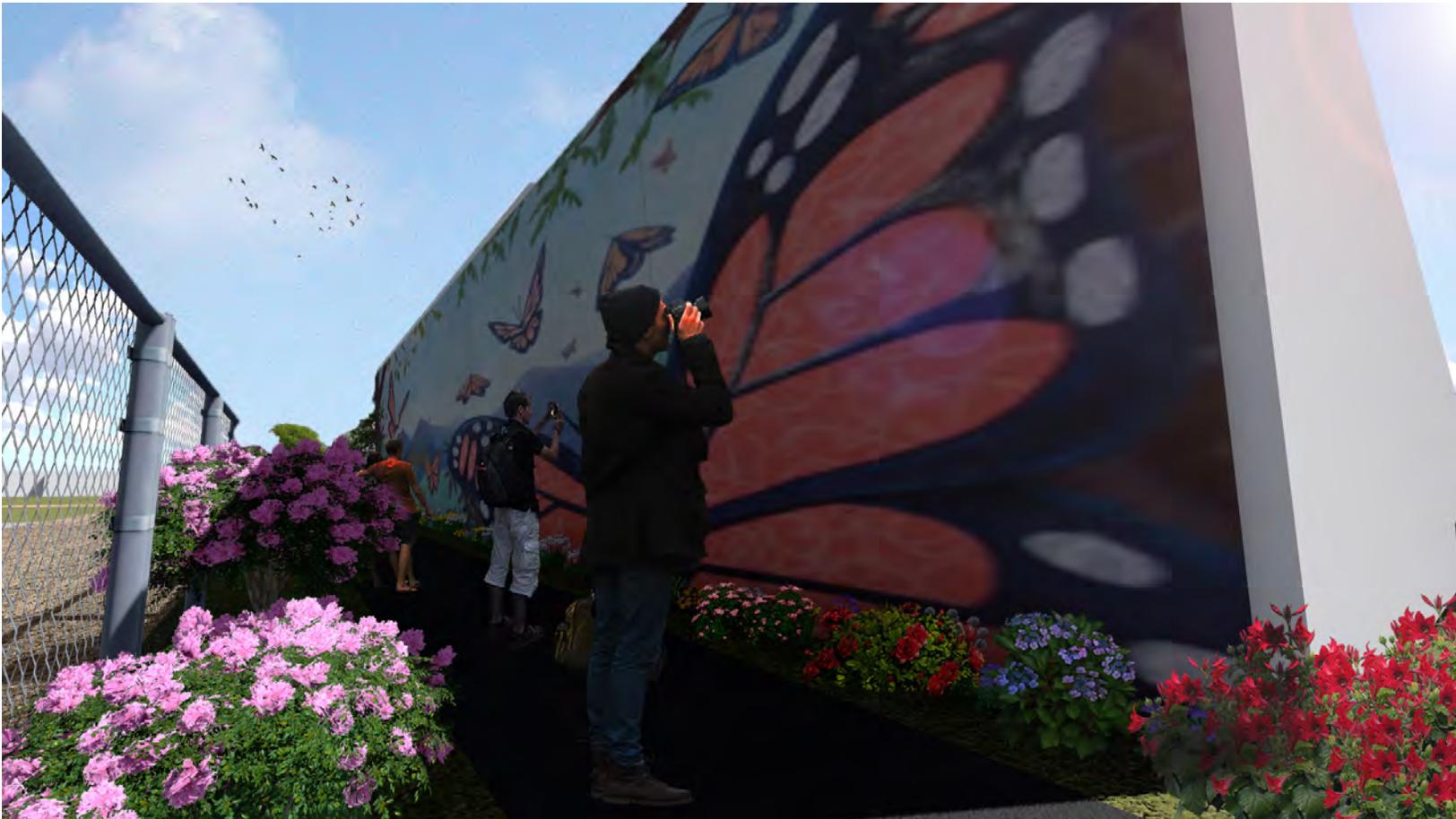


(Alliums, 2017)

Original Look



Update Two: Murals on Grandstand



The wall behind the grandstand is entirely painted white and plain. Since white paint was used for the grandstand, light reflection may be excessive on a sunny day. It is best to avoid that by adding colorful murals. Based on the butterfly theme, the interns suggest adding murals and colorful bushes to the back of the grandstand. This will replicate the feeling of walking through a field of flowers. The design could include plants such as hydrangeas and other colorful but low-maintenance bushes for this area. Bushes such as these are also drought-resistant and attract pollinator insects to maintain healthy plants. Flowers closer to the grandstand should include those that thrive in partial sun. Suggested flowering plants attract butterflies. They are suitable for this microclimate and they contribute to the butterfly theme.

Worth County officials were very excited about creating a contest to select artwork for the mural. The contest would be open for talented artist in Worth County. The contest would get the community members more involved in process of improving the fairgrounds.

Suggested Plants:

Hydrangea

4' - 6'

Pink, purple

Partial to full sun

Medium Moisture

Location



(Tilley, 2017)

Original Look



Update Three: Playground at North Side of Fairgrounds



The GaGa pit is a favorite place for children. However, there is a limitation of space inside the pit. The suggested location for the playground is on the north side of fairgrounds, near the butterfly garden. According to public input at the intern's public input session at the fair, a number of people commented that they had no reason to go to the north side of the fairgrounds. The interns recommend developing a new playground as a new point of interest to attract people to the north side of the fairgrounds. The playground would need to contain equipment for young children and would need to be a safe place to play. In order to ensure safety, rubber mulch, play sand or another kind of soft material would be a good choice for the playground.

Location



Original Look



Update Four: Landscape of Butterfly Garden



A butterfly garden needs to have an ecological system for butterflies to live. There are several things required to build a successful butterfly garden: 1) a sunny location 2) nectar and pollen sources 3) larval host plants 4) moisture 5) rocks 6) shelter 7) untidiness 8) protection from pesticides 9) planting 10) establishment. (Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, 2015). Different colors and heights of flowers create layers that make the butterfly garden more attractive.

Adding another path surrounding the butterfly garden provides a different experience while walking past the butterfly garden. To match the butterfly theme, we also suggest placing a monarch butterfly sculpture on one of the decorative rocks.

**Nectar
Plants:**

Provide food for butterflies.

**Host
Plants:**

Where butterflies lay their eggs and provide food for caterpillars

Location



Original Look



Suggested Plants

Joe Pye Weed
 3'- 4'
 Pink
 Partial shade to partial sun
 Native & Nectar
 (Heribi, 2010)

Showy Milkweed
 2'- 6'
 Pink
 Full sun
 Native & Host
 (Matt Lavin, 2017)

Globe Thistle
 1'- 8'
 Purple blue
 Full sun
 Native & Nectar
 (PLANTENTUIN ESVELD, 2017)

Swamp Milkweed
 4'- 5'
 White, pink, mauve
 Full sun
 Native & Host
 (The Ohytophactor, 2010)

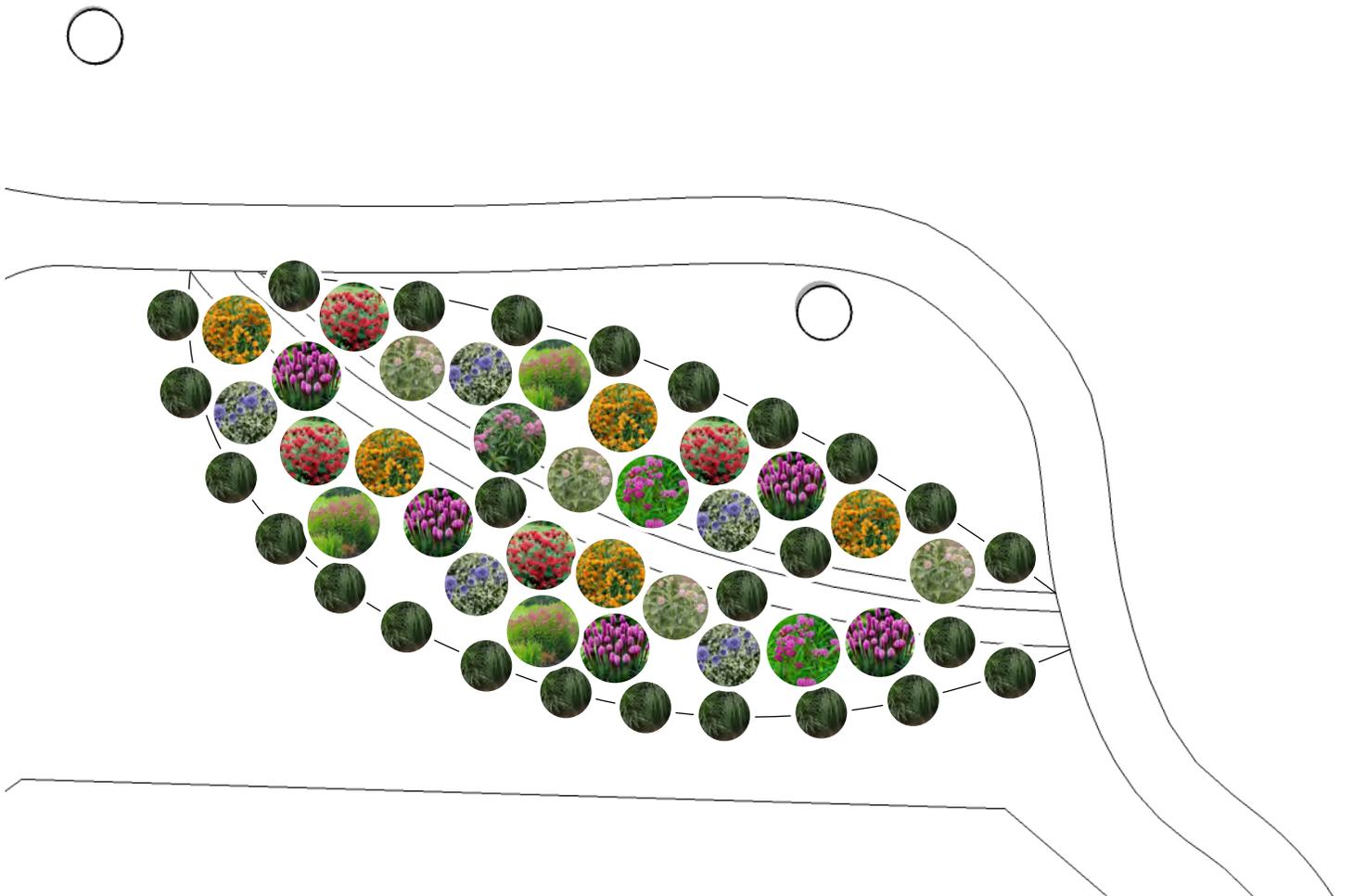
Common Milkweed
 4'- 6'
 Pink and white
 Full sun
 Native & Host
 (Barber, 2015)

Bee Balm
 10"- 12"
 Red, pink, purple
 Partial shade to
 Partial to full sun
 Some native & nectar
 (Alliums, 2017)

Tropical Milkweed
 2'- 3'
 Red-orange and yellow
 Full sun
 Native & Host
 (Ron, 2015)

Blazing Star
 2'- 4'
 Purple
 Full sun
 Native & Nectar
 (LONGFIELD GARDENS, 2017)

Prairie Dropseed
 2'- 3'
 Green
 Full sun
 Native
 (Wilson, 2017)



Update Five: QR Codes around Plants



Mobile phones have become part of our daily life. Based on that, we suggest that it could be an opportunity to combine entertainment with education through the quick response code (QR) code. The “Quick Response Code is the trademark for a type of matrix barcode (or two-dimensional barcode) first designed for the automotive industry in Japan. A barcode is a machine-readable optical label that contains information about the item to which it is attached.” (Search Engine Land, 2009). Anyone with a smart phone and an application can read the QR code placed on signs near the plants. The application on a mobile phone will provide people information about the plants as well as the path.

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