SUNSET PARK POLLINATOR GARDEN

Englewood, CO

Root Partnership / Joanna Paine Waldenmeyer MLA 2004, PLA, LEED AP

At Sunset Park – a three-acre neighborhood park – we installed a native plant pollinator garden. The homeowners in this park district were frustrated with previous park improvements, so Waldenmyer told the park district board that any redesign needed to be intentional with its design intent and show cues to care so people felt that the garden was an improvement to their existing park. homeowners.

The garden has a mowed turf band and a small crusher fines walkway with a bench. The design team used a matrix planting design that grouped native grasses between native perennials, creating a fuller look. Fourteen different flowering plant species were used for continuous blooming from Spring to Fall, and perennials were massed in groups and repeated throughout the garden. A thin layer of wood mulch was installed to help with evapotranspiration and to show that this was an intentional planting bed. Signage was installed to explain the native plant garden.





The 682 four-inch potted plants showed instant ecological value when bees began visiting them immediately upon delivery. When visiting the site a few weeks after installation, a homeowner came to talk to to the design team to say that she was thrilled to have this garden near her home. On a later site visit, Waldenmyer noticed a grandmother and her granddaughter playing hide and seek along the garden pathway. According to Waldenmyer, “I am happy that the garden has been positively received, and my hope is people take what they experience from this garden and replicate it in their own landscapes.”





SEAS SCHOOL FOR ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Design With Care: Joan Nassauer and the Importance of Ecological Design, Aesthetics and Management

The 2026 Whittemore Lecture in Landscape Architecture