

The Pollinator Garden at Garland Farm

Project Status Report, 6 August 2016



Life and Death in the Garden

This photo shows a honey bee that has been killed by a white crab spider. These spiders move sideways, somewhat like crabs; hence their name. A crab spider sits for hours or days, waiting for its victim to land nearby. The spider grabs its prey with its powerful long front legs, and inserts its jaws into the prey to paralyze it. The poisonous venom it injects is an enzyme that breaks down the internal parts of the prey, allowing the spider to suck its victim dry. Everyone is someone's dinner.

Notice the reddish pollen on the bee's hind legs, which tells us it had fed for a while on the lupines in the field.

We continue to monitor the pollinator garden frequently, to assess what bees are present and what flowers are in bloom.

Megan Leach (graduate student at UMaine) has made about six trips to Garland Farm since early May. She has taken more than 400 photos of bees, including the one above. She has seen many species of bees, including honey bees, a few species of bumble bees, several leaf cutter bees, many sweat bees, mining bees and others. The flowers also attract flies, wasps and other pollinating insects. It's a busy place.

I have also visited the garden periodically this summer, to monitor which flowers are open through the season. The flush of lupines, oxeye daisies and dame's rocket (right) was beautiful.



Now, in the dry midsummer, fewer flowers are available for the pollinators. That's what we're figuring out in this first season: when adequate pollinator resources are present, and what time-gaps need to be covered by plants that we install on the site. We've already planted a clump of milkweeds (*Asclepias syriaca*) and a clump of butterflyweeds (*Asclepias tuberosa*), which will provide very popular bee-pollinated flowers in midsummer, starting in 2017.

It turns out that Beatrix Farrand's own garden is very important to the bees of Garland Farm. In the dry midsummer when few flowers are available in the pollinator garden, the bees are making the trip to the Terrace Garden, where they're finding abundant pollen and nectar.

I'm looking for a few interested people with diverse skills, to work on this project. Let me know if you're interested. My email address is lois.stack@maine.edu

Respectfully submitted by Lois Berg Stack