



## Parent Corner Feature: Pollinator Gardens Provide At-Home Enrichment for Families

Cold winter temperatures may have you and your family looking forward to summer! Pollinator gardens are an enriching experience for the entire family that you can plan now and enjoy when warmer weather arrives.

NDAGC parent members Jake and Katyana Wiedenman (Fargo) and their children (ages 3, 6, and 8) began preparation

for their pollinator garden during the winter of 2021. A pollinator garden is designed with specific nectar and pollen producing plants, and has a goal of attracting pollinating insects. To aid in their design the family used a seed library which was available last spring at their local library. In March and April, they set up a germination station which helped the seeds begin to grow. These seedlings were eventually transferred to their pollination garden. As their garden grew Katyana and Jake found the library became a regular family destination in order to find books about the plants and insects in their garden! They also were able to visit a pollination garden via North Dakota State University (NDSU) for inspiration, and eventually applied to become a certified pollinator garden.

When asked what made the experience memorable for her family, Katyana said, “Our family enjoyed learning more about nature and how to help our pollinators. We all loved watching plants grow from seeds and the pride of having nurtured them together. Our daughter received a butterfly kit and we got to observe and watch a painted lady butterfly go through metamorphosis. We then released it in our pollinator garden. That inspired us to research pollinators, and our son took interest in monarch butterflies. We harvested milkweed pods, so we can plant them next spring for the monarch caterpillars. That was such a fun experience!”

The Wiedenman’s family garden is a wonderful example of at-home enrichment for young learners. These experiences can not only bring families together, they can also play a key role in your child’s development. According to the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), it is important for parents to nurture their child’s strengths by:

- Taking note of their interests and engaging in conversation.

- Allowing them to dabble in their interest areas, helping them find answers to their questions and providing opportunities to master new skills.
- Exploring community resources, including libraries, community centers, after school programs, museums, ecology and nature centers, art and dance studios, local businesses, and cultural festivals/groups.

NAGC asserts, “The greater a young child’s exposure, the more he can discover new talents in a variety of domains” (NAGC 2016). This means by providing your child an opportunity to explore and connect with the world in a new way you are facilitating not only their curiosity, but also enriching their world. When this occurs, the experiences will be rich with memories!

### **References and Further Reading:**

Hertzog, Nancy B. Ph.D., and Smutny, Joan Franklin (2016). Early Childhood [PDF File].

*National Association for Gifted Children*. Retrieved from

[http://www.nagc.org/sites/default/files/Parent%20CK/NAGC-Early%20Childhood-Tip%20Sheet\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.nagc.org/sites/default/files/Parent%20CK/NAGC-Early%20Childhood-Tip%20Sheet_FINAL.pdf)

For more information about pollinator gardens visit the following links on NDSU’s website:

[Build a Home Pollinator Garden](#)

[Visit our Demonstration Pollinator Gardens](#)

If your family has an enrichment experience you would like to share with other NDAGC parents, please let us know and submit your experience [here](#).