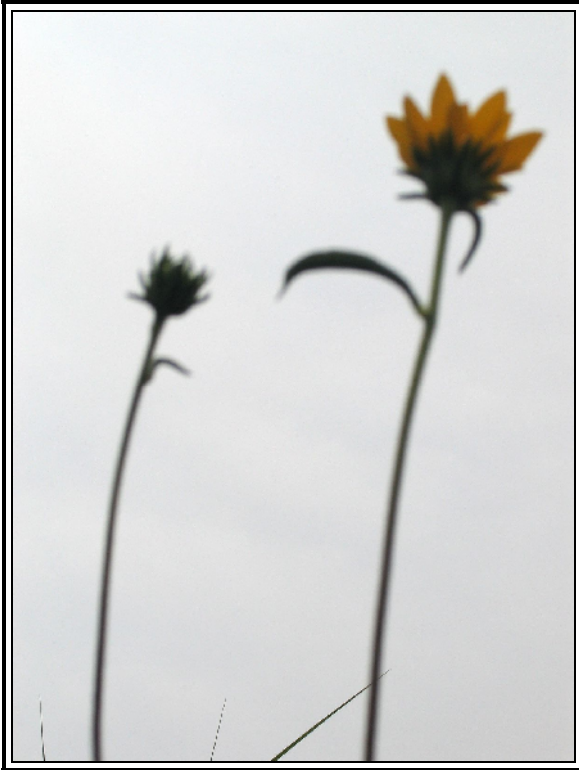


"My poem describes one tall flower."



The Native Prairie Teaching Garden committee would like to acknowledge the terrific support of the Mattawan Consolidated School Buildings and Grounds Crew throughout this project and the Wildflower Association of Michigan through a Glassen Education Grant given in March 2010.

Not Just a Pretty Place...

The Later Elementary Native Prairie Teaching Garden is not just another pretty place. It's an outdoor classroom that will give students direct hands-on learning linking to curricula in many subjects and ...it's out in our courtyard!



"What's a perennial?" "Is dirt alive?"



"I can measure the growth."

Mattawan Later Elementary
Mattawan, Michigan

Michigan Native Prairie Teaching Garden

For all children to explore...



For all teachers to use...



An outdoor classroom and teaching tool to
examine our natural world





Outdoor Classroom

The plants in our prairie garden are all perennial and include native grasses, sedges and wildflowers indigenous to Southwest Michigan.

Teachers will use the garden to teach concepts in science such as life cycles and living organisms; in math – measurement; in social studies - natural resources of Michigan; and in language arts - a variety of writing projects including journaling, poetry and other descriptive writing.

Yes, the garden will be a pretty place! While adding beauty to our school environment, the garden is most importantly a teaching tool...one that can also help foster a sense of environmental appreciation and stewardship in students at Mattawan.

Out in Our Courtyard

Making the courtyard more useable for teachers and students has been discussed for some time. The courtyard, initially grass with two pine trees, is surrounded on three sides by classrooms. In 2008-2009, teachers planted several Michigan native plant species in the middle of the courtyard.

In the fall of 2009, a parent committee began fundraising and exploring how to develop a courtyard garden. Thanks to a grant award and individual donations, the garden took shape. Preliminary designs came from Hidden Savanna, a local native plant nursery. Staff from the Kalamazoo Nature Center then finalized the plant layout and helped with plant selection.



Community Support

On June 5, 2010, teachers, staff, parents, and students gathered to plant the garden! More than 500 plugs of approximately 38 types of native grasses, sedges and wildflowers were planted in an area approximately 20' x 40' feet.



What's Next?

Developing more garden plots over the next several years will offer more learning opportunities.

The goal is to eventually have the courtyard filled with gardens, places for children to sit and tables for them to work.

How Can You Help?

The Native Plants Teaching Garden is supported by the Mattawan Later Elementary Association of Parents (MLEAP).

- **Be a part of it!** Volunteers are welcome to help plan, care for and further develop the garden.
- **Make a contribution!** All donations, large and small, can help purchase native plants or fund future phases of the garden. Donations are accepted in the Later El office or can be made to MLEAP via PaySchools.

Interested in finding out more? Please contact the Mattawan Later Elementary School office at 269-668-3361, ext.8500.