



## THE PROJECT: POLLINATOR GARDEN

The Thomas Elementary School Green Team created a Pollinator/Sensory Garden for their school, aiming to achieve several sustainability objectives. These included habitat restoration and biodiversity, access to healthy foods, outdoor learning space, and waste reduction, as well as the social-emotional objective of sensory regulation, enhancing children's interaction with the outdoor environment. Collaborating with Southernwood Gardens, the project involved 44 second and third-grade students who helped plant native pollinator plants in two raised beds. The garden provides educational, developmental, and ecological benefits, fostering responsibility, patience, and care among the students.

**Project Type:** Garden

**Students Involved:** 44

**Staff Involved:** 4

**Location:** Carbondale

**Grade Levels Involved:** 2nd & 3rd

**Number of Students Impacted:** 331



This project has already benefited our school in so many ways. It has been a wonderful outdoor learning space, giving the students an opportunity to get their hands dirty, learn about soil, fertilizer, local pollinator plants, observe the different root systems of plants, and so much more.

- Amy Britt-Simpson



## PROCESS

After receiving a mini-grant from the Illinois Green Schools Project, the school determined the garden's location with school administration; procured supplies including raised beds, soil, compost, fertilizer; and purchased native pollinator plants from Southernwood Gardens. The garden was established on a sunlit side of the school building, visible to students, parents, and staff. With the help of 44 students, the raised beds were built, filled with soil and compost, and planted with 40 pollinator plants. The students engaged in hands-on learning about soil, plant root systems, and garden maintenance, enhancing their ecological awareness and sensory experiences.

## OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

The garden has been a successful addition to the school, providing a valuable outdoor learning space and enhancing the campus's aesthetic appeal. Students actively participated in creating and maintaining the garden, fostering a sense of accomplishment and excitement. The garden supports the school's composting efforts and encourages biodiversity by attracting pollinators. The project's location allows it to be enjoyed by the school community on a daily basis, uplifting the campus environment. It also benefits the local community garden, The Little Red Hen Garden, by attracting pollinators. The initial success promises even greater impact in the coming school year as the garden continues to grow.

