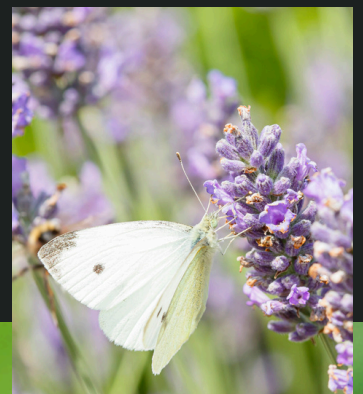


# THE GARDEN

EXPERIENCE




Kiva-Marie Belt  
Johanna Skibsrud  
Trecia Schell





# FEED THE BIRDS

JOHANNA SKIBSRUD



"The Ephemeralization Project" is a series of site-specific community-arts events conceived by Pictou County-born writer Johanna Skibsrud. The goal of the project is to emphasize poetry and art-making as sustainable resources fundamental to building new pathways for thought and action. The project borrows its name from architect and systems theorist Buckminster Fuller who, in 1969, argued that even as exponential population growth guaranteed increased consumption of the world's resources, advances in technology would lead to increased "ephemeralization": "the doing of ever more with ever less." A future of "truly sustainable" rapid industrial development seemed, to Fuller, to be within our grasp.

This re-activation of Fuller's project fifty-plus years later draws attention to the link between the "dream" of technological ephemeralization and the material realities of waste production, exploitative labour practices, and rapid climate change. It also suggests the urgency of reconnecting, in a collective and expanded sense, with the act of dreaming and re-visioning. "Feed the Birds" was conceived as part of an ongoing series of community actions and art practices that endeavor to reclaim, critique, subvert, and reimagine Fuller's utopian vision of a sustainable future. It is art, not technology, this series suggests, that promises to do "ever more with ever less." Inspired by the impulse of the children in Mary Poppins to "ephemeralize" their tuppence rather than capitalize on it—by feeding pigeons in front of St. Paul's Cathedral— "Feed the Birds" invites reflection on our collective participation in a system of interconnecting values and relations far more complex than we can conceive of individually, or even as a species.

*She paused, as though she were remembering events that happened hundreds of years before that time.*

— **PL Travers, Mary Poppins.**





It may be that our greatest tool for recognizing ourselves within this larger system is our capacity to recognize and appreciate the beauty of the world around us. As you visit the garden we invite you to pause and reflect on the ongoing movement, growth, and transition that give rise to that beauty—which each moment, including this one, contains. We also invite you to

- learn about, and/or share your current knowledge about the role of native plants and pollinators in Nova Scotia forests, farms, and gardens
- consider how environmental and climate pressures have affected—and will continue to affect—the migratory patterns of human and animal populations
- reflect on the complex histories, the vast networks of memory and relation, and the ongoing imaginative work that give rise to the idea of place— and the potentials of community.

Please also add your thoughts, memories, wishes, dreams, and pledges to the future on the “wishing tree” at the center of the garden—and, if you have any to spare, we encourage you to deposit some pocket change in the piggy banks that have been installed in the garden to “feed the birds.” Any offerings will be donated to local accredited bird and wildlife organizations. In this way, our small, individual acts of generosity may be “ephemeralized”—transformed from “less” to “more” through reflection, hope, and collective action.

**Ephemera:**

1. An insect that (in its imago or winged form) lives only for a day. In modern entomology the name of a genus of pseudo-neuropterous insects belonging to the group Ephemeridae (Day-flies, May-flies). 1676–
2. transferred and figurative. One who or something which has a transitory existence. 1751 –

**Ephemeral:**

- 1.a. Of diseases: Beginning and ending in a day. 1576–
- 1.b. Of insects, flowers, etc.: Existing for one day only, or for a very few days. 1826 –
- 2.a. In more extended application: That is in existence, power, favour, popularity, etc. for a short time only; short-lived; transitory. 1639–

**Ephemeralization:**

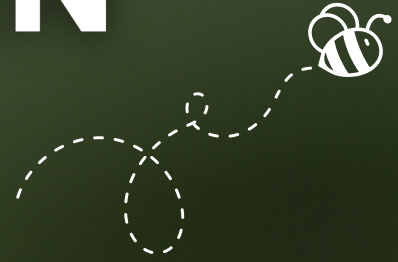
The practice or process of rendering (more) ephemeral; spec. Buckminster Fuller's word for the production or evolution of machinery smaller and lighter than that previously used for the same purpose. 1960–

(from the Oxford English Dictionary, 1989 ed.)



# THE GARDEN DESIGN

KIVA - MARIE BELT



In every garden, plants bloom on different days and in different seasons, so the experience one has on a given day is unique and fleeting. No one can ever have exactly the same experience in a garden more than once. No two people - even at the same time, in the same place - can experience the garden in the exact same way. The light and the temperature varies; plants grow, blossom, and fade. We each bring with us to the garden our experiences, our perceptions, and our inner life. Each moment is unique and precious. The garden calls upon us to release our past and future, to focus on this present moment before it is gone.

Many of the plants in this garden are native wildflowers and shrubs of Nova Scotia, some of which are at risk of extinction due to loss of habitat. These wild plants are living ephemera. They are things perceived as mundane ('just a weed'), yet some of us choose to preserve them because we believe in their importance.

Plants are the backbone of our ecosystem, supporting insects, birds, and subsequently everything else. Making space in our gardens for ecologically important plants gives us an opportunity to connect with wildlife, to help them find something that they need. Swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*), for example, is one of only two native species here in Nova Scotia that can serve as a host plant for the Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*). By planting a swamp milkweed, we now have a chance to witness a monarch egg become a caterpillar, which eats the leaves of the plant. It will later form a chrysalis on a shrub, fence, or other woody structure. After a few weeks, it will eclose as an adult butterfly, and the cycle begins again. So many precious moments, all from something as simple as digging a hole and putting in a plant.

My hope for this garden is to create a place of beauty that invites people to linger and connect with the natural world. I hope you'll sit for a spell, make a wish on the wishing tree, and enjoy the moment - while it lasts

## Recommended reading:

- Johnson, Lorraine 2017. *100 Easy-to-grow Native Plants for Canadian Gardens*.
- Tallamy, Douglas W. 2009. *Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife With Native Plants*.
- Boland, Todd 2014. *Wildflowers of Nova Scotia: Field Guide*.
- Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library Resource Hub for Gardening: <https://www.parl.ns.ca/resources/gardening.php>





# HELPING POLLINATORS

KIVA - MARIE BELT

Recommended beginner-friendly perennials (plants that grow back every spring) for supporting pollinators:

## Golden Alexanders

Latin name: *Zizia aurea*

- Bloom time: Spring
- Light: Full Sun
- Soil Moisture: moist (but not fully waterlogged) soils

Native to Nova Scotia

Notes: This is a native host plant for Black Swallowtail (*Papilio polyxenes*) butterflies. Many other pollinators are also attracted to their golden blooms which appear in May before many other flowers.



## Chives

Latin name: *Allium schoenoprasum*

- Bloom time: Late Spring - Early Summer
- Light: Full Sun
- Soil moisture: performs best in well-draining soils with low water requirements, and is a fantastic container plant.

Native to Nova Scotia

Notes: One of few common kitchen herbs native to both Europe and North America, Chives are a delicious cousin to onions and leeks. Generalist bees like bumblebees love their stunning purple blooms. They grow well in containers.



## Swamp Milkweed

Latin name: *Asclepias incarnata*

- Bloom time: Late summer
- Light: Full Sun or Part Shade
- Soil moisture: performs well in heavy, wet soils, but is extremely adaptable to other conditions

Native to Nova Scotia

Notes: Do not plant near grazing livestock, as this plant is toxic if ingested in large quantities. Host plant for Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*) butterfly caterpillars. Many other pollinators like hummingbirds, bees, and hoverflies love to drink nectar from the cheery pink flowers. They also grow well in containers.



## New England Aster

Latin name: *Symphyotrichum novae-angiae*

- Bloom time: Late summer - Autumn
- Light: Full Sun
- Soil moisture: any, very adaptable plant

Native to Nova Scotia

Notes: This is a rapidly-growing plant that can reach 1.8 meters (6 feet) in height, or sometimes even more. Put them in an area where they will have at least 45 cm (18 inches) of space all around them to fill in and flourish. They are extremely attractive to a wide variety of bees.



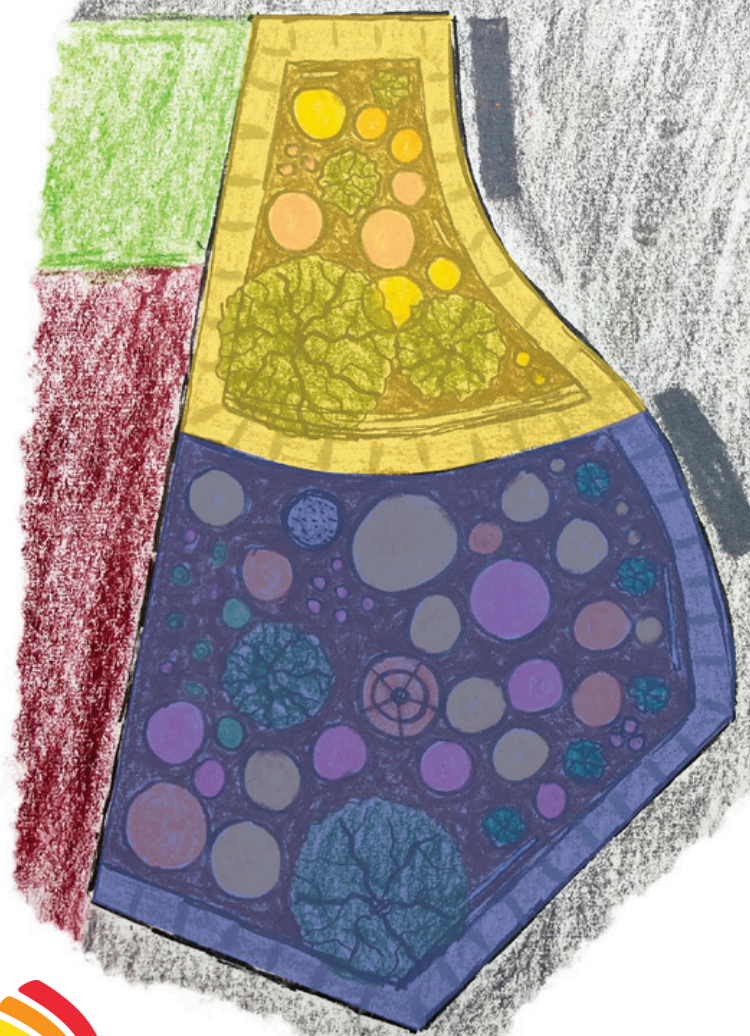


# THE GARDEN DESIGN

KIVA-MARIE BELT

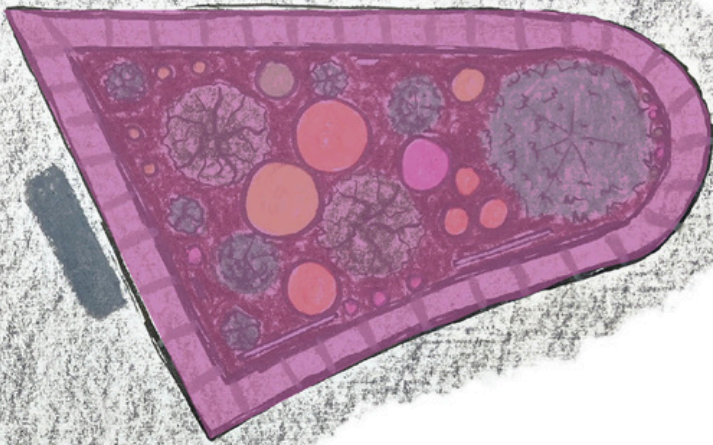
## Northwestern garden bed:

- Ilex verticillata* (Winterberry)
- Vaccinium corymbosum* (Highbush blueberry)
- Weigella*
- Dasiphora fruticosa* (Shrubby cinquefoil)
- Geranium maculatum* (Cranesbill)
- Echinacea purpurea* (Coneflower)
- Anaphalis margaritacea* (Pearly Everlasting)
- Coreopsis* (Tickseed)





- Allium schoenoprasum* (Chives)
- Liatris spicata* (Blazing Star)
- Polemonium reptans* (Creeping Jacob's Ladder)
- Penstemon hirsutus* (Hairy Beardtongue)



Eastern Garden Bed:

- Juniperus chinensis* (Juniper)
- Amelanchier* (Serviceberry)
- Hamamelis virginiana* (Witch Hazel)
- Picea glauca* (Dwarf Alberta Spruce)
- Lavandula angustifolia* (English Lavender)
- Antennaria neglecta* (Field Pussytoes)
- Sempervivum* (Hen and Chicks)
- Symphotrichum cordifolium* (Heart-Leaved Aster)
- Fragaria vesca* (Woodland Strawberry)
- Echinacea purpurea* (Coneflower)
- Elymus hystrix* (Bottlebrush Grass)
- Anaphalis margaritacea* (Pearly Everlasting)
- Sedum*
- Stachys byzantina* (Lamb's Ear)
- Campanula rotundifolia* (Harebell)
- Physostegia virginiana* (Obedient Plant)

Southwestern garden bed:

- Ilex verticillata* (Winterberry)
- Lavandula angustifolia* (English Lavender)
- Ageratina altissima* (White Snakeroot)
- Osmundastrum* (Cinnamon Fern)
- Asclepias incarnata* (Swamp Milkweed)
- Asclepias tuberosa* (Butterfly Milkweed)
- Hydrangea*
- Dicentra spectabilis* (Bleeding Heart)
- Clematis virginiana* (Virgin's Bower)
- Eutrochium* (Joe Pye Weed)
- Geranium maculatum* (Cranesbill)
- Symphotrichum novi-belgii* (New York Aster)
- Digitalis purpurea* (Foxglove)
- Muhlenbergia capillaris* (Muhly Grass)
- Podophyllum peltatum* (Mayapple)
- Monarda didyma* (Bee Balm)
- Paeonia* (Peony)
- Zizia aurea* (Golden Alexanders)
- Oenothera biennis* (Evening Primrose)
- Pulsatilla vulgaris* (Pasque Flower)
- Aquilegia canadensis* (Red Columbine)
- Penstemon hirsutus* (Hairy Beardtongue)
- Astilbe* (False Goat's Beard)
- Veronica* (Speedwell)
- Rosa* (Rose)
- Chelone* (Turtlehead)





# A short history of wishing trees

JOHANNA SKIBSRUD

In the United Kingdom, the history and living tradition of wishing, or coin trees, probably originated in Pagan times. Much like throwing a coin into a “wishing well,” coins or ribbons were tied onto, placed at the foot of, or embedded at the base of trees as a way of materially representing wishes, prayers and gratitudes. By suggesting the possibility of exchange (between a material object in one’s possession and an immaterial wish or prayer), wishing trees direct our attention to the ongoing interrelation between material resources and immaterial forces—as well as between natural and human-made structures and systems of value, and between “past,” “present” and “future” forms.

Versions of the wishing tree tradition can be found in almost every corner of the globe and with our own we hope to celebrate this ancient recognition of the inseparability of the physical world from the elemental, non-figural forces that continue to shape it. In more recent times, coin trees have been discouraged due to the threat the literal imposition of human wishes (in the form of metal coins) sometimes pose to living trees. It’s our hope that this project helps to revitalize the act of wishing by replacing a model of imposition with one of extension.

As you make your wish by depositing a coin into one of the piggy banks found in the garden, \* tying it to the “wishing tree,” \*\* or simply spending a moment in quiet reflection, we hope you’ll consider, with us, the following questions:

- How might we begin to collectively rethink the connection between human desire, production, and consumption and the resources that are drawn upon to support all three?
- How might we expand on the concept of “sustainability” by considering not only the immediate and apparent needs of our selves and our community, but also by imaginatively projecting beyond our selves toward the complex web of interdependence and relation that supports the continuance of all life?

\*All proceeds will be donated to local accredited bird and wildlife organizations.

\*\*We ask that you use the materials provided and that you secure your wish carefully to the wishing tree, but not too tightly. Thank you!



# Migration and Movement: Making Connections

JOHANNA SKIBSRUD

A major aim of the **Feed the Birds** garden project is to invite reflection on the deep history of migration and movement on this planet, as well as the vulnerability shared by both human and animal populations as environmental and climate conditions change.

The garden has been designed as a dedicated space of appreciation and wonder. We hope that you will pause to consider the invisible pathways that, via the flight trajectories of bees, butterflies, and other pollinating insects, connect this garden to other (and to future) natural places in Nova Scotia and beyond. We also hope that you will consider how these pathways inevitably intersect with, and mutually impact, the pathways of human and animal populations both in our current era and in the years to come.

*The numbers put out by agencies and organizations regarding the future displacement of people caused by climate change are in live debate and range between 150 million and 1 billion by 2050. According to one report, these displacements will be "staggering," without an antecedent in human history. – Todd Miller*

*Finding expressive creativity encoded in every form of agentic matter brings about a perceptual change, which entails a critical self-reflection on our part as humans and our moral accountability. It also enables us to be part of the Earth's physical systems so that we cannot perpetuate forms of injustice, both ecological and social – Serpil Oppermann*



# Suggested Further Readings:

## Literary Gardens

- Ang, Li, *The Lost Garden*
- Bennett, Jackie, *The Writer's Garden: How Gardens Inspired the World's Great Authors*
- Burnett, Frances Hodgson, *The Secret Garden*
- Brine, Duncan, *The Literary Garden Recreating Literature's Most Beautiful Gardens*
- Hardie, Alison and Duncan M. Campbell, *The Dumbarton Oaks Anthology of Chinese Garden Literature*
- Dungy, Camille, *Soil: The Story of a Black Mother's Garden*
- Eng, Tan Twan, *The Garden of Evening Mists*
- Farr, Judith, *The Gardens of Emily Dickinson*
- Gilbert, Elizabeth, *The Signature of All Things*
- Gleason, Judith, *Leaf and Bone: African Praise Poems*
- Kelly, Julia, *The Last Garden in England*
- Kimmerer, Robin Wall, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teaching of Plants*
- Kincaid, Jamaica, *My Garden Book*
- Kroetsch, Robert, *Seed Catalogue*
- Kunitz, Stanley, *The Wild Braid*
- Lovell, Posey, *The Kew Garden Girls*
- Maalouf, Amin, *The Gardens of Light*
- Madenga, Tadiwa, *The Garden Letters of Yvonne Vera*
- Milton, *Paradise Lost*
- Montgomery, LM *Anne of Green Gables*
- Pollan, Michael, *The Botany of Desire: A Plant's Eye View of the World*
- Tsukiyama, Gail, *The Samurai's Garden*

## DIY vegetable and Pollinator Gardens and simple things YOU can do to support a healthy planet

- Mours, Alex. *Growing Vegetables in Nova Scotia : Garden Planner And Log Book for Local Backyard Gardeners | Greenhouse and Organic Gardening: Nova Scotia Garden Planner Log Book, 2022*
- Feron-Matthews, Diana. *Gardening in Nova Scotia: Gardening Log Book for Canadian Local Backyard Gardeners (Adults and Kids Alike), 2023*
- Adams, Denise. *Atlantic Coastal Gardening: Growing Inspired, Resilient Plants by the Sea, Nimbus, 2016*
- Boland, Tood. *Wildflowers of Nova Scotia, Boulder Books, 2014*
- *One Hundred Plants to Feed the Bees: Provide a Healthy Habitat to Help Pollinators Thrive. Xerces Society. Storey Publishing, LLC (2016)*



- 100 Plants to Feed the Monarch: Create a Healthy Habitat to Sustain North America's Most Beloved Butterfly. Xerces Society. Storey Publishing, LLC (2021)
- Erickson, Laura. 100 Plants to Feed the Birds: Turn Your Home Garden into a Healthy Bird Habitat. Storey Publishing, LLC (2022).
- Flottum, Kim. The Backyard Beekeeper, 5th Edition: An Absolute Beginner's Guide to Keeping Bees in Your Yard and Garden, Quarry Books, 2024
- Tout, Ellen. How to Reduce Your Carbon Footprint: Practical Ways to Make a Real Difference, Watkins Publishing, 2022
- Garcia, Eduardo, Things You Can Do: How to Fight Climate Change and Reduce Waste, Ten Speed Press, 2022

### **Garden recipes**

- Mihesuah, Devon A. Recovering our Ancestors' Gardens: Indigenous Recipes and Guide to Diet and Fitness (At Table), University of Nebraska Press, 2020
- Nightingale, Marie, Out of Nova Scotia Gardens: Delicious, Nutritious, Vegetable Recipes, Nimbus, 2008
- MacKinnon, Andy. Edible and Medicinal Plants of Canada, Partners Publishing, 2016
- Butts, Kayla. Garden to Table Cookbook: A Guide to Preserving and Cooking What You Grow: Use Your Homegrown Produce in Over 100 Seasonal Recipes for Canning, Jams, Mains, Desserts and More. Fox Chapel Publishing, 2023

### **Migration and Movement: Making the Connections**

- Bittle, Jake, The Great Displacement: Climate Change and the Next American Migration
- Dykman, Sara, Bicycling with Butterflies: My 10,201-Mile Journey Following the Monarch Migration
- Halpern, Sue, Four Wings and a Prayer: Caught in the Mystery of the Monarch Butterfly
- Heisman, Rebecca, Flight Paths: How a Passionate and Quirky Group of Pioneering Scientists Solved the Mystery of Bird Migration
- Miller, Todd, Storming the Wall: Climate Change, Migration, and Homeland Security
- Weidensaul, Scott, A World on the Wing: The Global Odyssey of Migratory Birds

### **Garden books for kids**

- The Ultimate Bees Book for Kids: Discover the Amazing World of Bees. Jenny Kellett. Bellanova Books, 2023
- Give Bees a Chance. Bethany Barton. Puffin Books, 2019.
- A Kids Guide to Backyard Birds. Eliza Berkowitz, Gibbs Smith, 2023
- Lonely Planet Kids 101 Small Ways to Change the World, Aubre Andrus, Lonely Planet, 2018
- The Little Book of Backyard Bird Songs, Andrea Pinnington, Firefly Books, 2016





# THE PROJECT

## A COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY GARDEN PROJECT

All are welcome to drop by, and enjoy!

The gardens are maintained by the deCoste Culture Hub staff (Library and Theatre), the Town of Pictou Public Works, and volunteers with the Pictou & Area Garden Club. The stonework was installed by Scott Porter. The benches were designed by Dale Archibald, and additional plant source and purchasing guidance was provided by Robert Parker.

For more ideas and resources for planting your own pollinator garden, the impacts of climate change on human and non-human migration, recipes, and more, please visit the Library's seasonal gardening resources displays, and suggested reading lists featured in the library's collection online.

## MURRAY FAMILY PUBLIC LIBRARY

 99 Water Street, Pictou, NS  
the deCoste Culture Hub

Monday : 10am - 5pm

Tuesday : 10am - 8pm

 Wednesday : 10am - 8pm

Thursday : 10am - 8pm

Friday : 10am - 5pm

Saturday : 10am - 5pm

 (902) 485-5021 ;

 pictou@parl.ns.ca

 [www.parl.ns.ca](http://www.parl.ns.ca)

