**Save Our Pollinators** (taken from The National Gardener, spring 2013)

We’ve all heard in the last few years that honeybees have been disappearing in record numbers due to various hive disorders. Butterfly populations are also dwindling. It’s vital that we as gardeners do all we can to protect and increase the pollinator population however we can. Here are a few facts you may not know:

* Flowers clustered in clumps of at least four feet in diameter are more attractive to pollinators than scattered individual flowers.
* A succession of flowering plants that lasts from spring through fall will support a range of bee species.
* Flowers of different shapes will attract different types of pollinators.
* Pesticides are a major threat to insect pollinators.
* The value, in dollars, of pollinators’ services to our food industry is estimated to be upwards of $4 billion dollars!

**Great Backyard Bird Count** (taken from The National Gardener, spring 2013)

This past Spring, bird watchers from 101 countries made history in the first global Great Backyard Bird Count, Feb. 15-1 8, 2013. In the largest worldwide bird count ever, bird watchers set new records, counting more than 25 million birds on 116,000 checklists in four days, and recording 3,138 species, nearly 1/3 of the world’s total bird species. Some key findings:

* Top five most reported species: Northern cardinal, Dark-eyed Junco, Mourning Dove, Downy Woodpecker, House Finch.
* Top Five Most common birds: Snow Goose, Canada Goose, Red-winged Blackbird, European Starling, American Coot.
* Finch Invasion: a massive number of northern finches moved to the U.S. from Canada. Scientists believe this is due to fluctuations in crops of conifer cones.
* Hurricane Sandy: The weather system causing Sandy also blew some European birds to North America. The colorful Northern Lapwing was reported in Georgia, New Jersey, and Massachusetts during GBBC.
* For more information, visit: www.birdcount.org