

Mamaroneck Avenue School Sensory Garden Project

By Shannon Gallaher

Last year, as part of my Girl Scout Gold Award, I decided to create a sensory garden for special needs students at the Mamaroneck Avenue Elementary School. I consulted with the Native Plant Center, Valhalla to help plan and select plants that would provide sensory stimulation for the students.

I started the project in the spring of 2022. I was given an L-shaped raised bed in a sunny corner location as part of a new school garden scheme. I drew a plan of the garden to scale and used it to decide which plants to buy.

Since it was important to provide a safe space for the students, I researched the plants thoroughly to be sure they were not toxic. I chose easy to maintain plants which were compact and would not outgrow the space.

The garden was completed in June 2022 and has been a great success! The students have been utilizing the garden and have seen positive effects with how comfortable they are in the school environment.

Lamb's ear has been a student and personal favorite addition to the garden and has been the most used perennial in the garden by the students because of the positive effects it has on sensory stimulation.

Sensory garden plant list:

Lamb's Ear	<i>Stachys byzantina</i> 'Helene von Stein'
Purple Coneflower	<i>Echinacea purpurea</i> 'PowWow Wild Berry'
Hairy Beardtongue	<i>Penstemon digitalis</i> 'Husker Red'
Chives	<i>Allium schoenoprasum</i>
Pink Muhly Grass	<i>Muhlenbergia capillaris</i>
Yarrow	<i>Achillea</i> 'Moonshine'
Eastern Bee Balm	<i>Monarda bradburiana</i>
Switchgrass	<i>Panicum virgatum</i> 'Shenandoah'
Anise Hyssop	<i>Agastache foeniculum</i> 'Blue Fortune'
Creeping Phlox	<i>Phlox stolonifera</i>



Eastern Bee Balm (left) is a compact, drought-tolerant perennial which will not spread as aggressively as other bee balms. It blooms in May and attracts friendly, furry bumblebees, making it ideal for school gardens – Editor.