

IF YOU BUILD IT THEY WILL COME

Several years ago the swimming pool was added to the wings of the health center. This created an enclosed area of approximately one acre. The horticulture committee decided to make this an enclosed garden which has become known as the Courtyard Garden. Eighteen rooms of continuing care and assisted living look out onto this pleasant garden area. Residents are not only able to view the changing seasonal flowers, but also the birds that have found this a safe place to nest and rear their young. Several female mallard ducks have built their nests and hatched their young since the garden area was constructed. The average clutch size has been about 10 ducklings. Since the ducklings cannot fly, they must be herded out through the doorway openings in order to find food in the nearby ponds.

In all but two of the summers there have been 2 nesting robins for a total of about 25 nests that produced over 100 young. There have been 9 song sparrow nests producing about 30 young. The song sparrow has such a beautiful song which makes for pleasant listening in the garden area. There have been 6 goldfinch nests fledging over 20 young. They are interesting because they don't nest until July when their food source is plentiful. This year we were fortunate to have a pair of cardinals choose a low growing shrub for their nesting site. Four young cardinals were fledged from this nest in June. We also had a mourning dove build its nest in the grape arbor.

There are over 100 varieties of flowers blooming through the growing season. Some 17 different species of butterflies have come to sip the nectar of the flowers

including the tiger swallowtail, black swallowtail, spicebush, viceroy, small copper, grey hairstreak, red spotted purple, painted lady, buckeye, meadow fritillary, red admiral, cabbage, silver spotted skipper, clouded sulfur, spicebush and monarch. Also attracted to the garden are honey bees, bumble bees, flies, lady bugs, ants, aphids, and praying mantises. So besides viewing the flowers and birds, you might also see a variety of insects which visit the Courtyard Garden.