

Pollinator Garden

Plant a Garden to Provide Habitat for Pollinators

Pollinator insects are important to the production of many agricultural crops and native plant species. We have food like apples, tomatoes, blueberries, cucumbers, and squash because of them. Approximately one in three mouthfuls of food and beverage require the presence of a pollinator. The declining number of pollinators can have an impact on crop yield, pollination rates, and production of food. One way you can help is to create a pollinator garden.

Select Native Plants

Selecting native plants for your garden and landscape can help pollinator numbers increase. Some caterpillars and butterflies only lay eggs on and eat specific native plants. If those plants are removed, these insects have lost their host plant. This also causes declining plant species because of reduced seed production. In addition, nectar from non-native plants is sometimes not enough to supply a pollinator with the food it needs. The amount of natural habitat in our landscapes has a direct influence on pollinator numbers.

Plant Diversely

There are important considerations when deciding plant selection. This includes plants of different color, shape, and bloom times. Early blooming plants give the pollinators emerging from hibernation a food source. Late blooming plants allow pollinators to stock up on food before going back into hibernation. Planting flowers of different shapes allows a variety of species to be able to feed. Some species prefer different colors such as blue, yellow, purple, violet, yellow, white, and red.



Monarch butterfly
USDA NRCS

Some plants for butterflies

Common Boneset
(*Eupatorium perfoliatum*)
New England Aster (*Aster novae-angliae*)
Swamp Azalea (*Rhododendron viscosum*)
Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*)
Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)
Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*)
Showy Goldenrod (*Solidago speciosa*)
Spotted Joe-Pye Weed
(*Eupatorium maculatum*)

Some plants for caterpillars

Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)
Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*)
Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*)
Parsley (Crispum)
Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*)
Sweet Gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*)
Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*)
Little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) **also provides overwintering habitat for other insects i.e., bumble bee queens, and wildlife **

Some nectar plants for bees

New York Aster (*Aster novi-belgii*)
Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)
Ironweed (*Veronica noveboracensis*)
Seaside Goldenrod
(*Solidago sempervirens*)
Sweet Pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*)
Ox Eye Sunflower
(*Heliopsis helianthoides*)
Round-headed bush Clover
(*Trifolium repens*)



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Food and Shelter for Butterflies

Colorful butterflies and moths add beauty to your backyard. These insects are very particular with their food choice. Sometimes the larvae eats something completely different than the adult. Adults require food in the form as liquid, nectar. When it comes to shelter, moths and butterflies are pretty simple. Since butterflies are usually out during the day and moths at night, putting a rock or garden sculpture in the sun allows them to rest and heat themselves up on it. They also require water. A small dish or object that has a depression in it should do sufficiently.

Attracting Bees and Bee Housing

Providing bee habitat in your yard can increase the quality and quantity of fruits and vegetables in your yard. They play a critical role in wild plant communities and gardens. One way to help them is planting flowers or vegetables. For housing, many nest in old tree stumps or mud, so try keeping areas as native and undisturbed as possible. Native solitary wood nesting bees build their nests inside hollow tunnels. Plants like teasel, bamboo, blackberry, and sumac have naturally hollow stems. You can make a simple bee nest from using PVS pipe, capping off one side, and filling it with reed grass stems. Keep them out of direct sunlight, rain, and do not move them until after November.



Bee House
USDA NRCS



Compost Filter Sock
Cape Atlantic Conservation District

Compost Filter Sock

Compost filter socks establish pollinator habitat and attract a large number of diverse species. A compost filter sock is a multifilament mesh tube filled with compost material suitable for establishing a seed bed for wildflowers and grasses. They extend the time in which a nectar source is available to pollinators. A seed mixture for the appropriate region is incorporated into the sock. The seed mixture blooms at different times throughout the year providing food, shelter and nesting sites for native bees. Since the socks are flexible, adhere to the contour of the land, and mobile, they are easily workable for almost any location including areas where no native soil exists.



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