

# POLLINATOR GARDENS

## Creating a Pollinator Garden

Pollination occurs when pollinators unwittingly move pollen from the male anther of one flower to the female stigma of another as they search for sweet, nourishing nectar and protein-rich pollen. Pollen grains are moved between flowers by wind or animals that are pollinators. Successful pollination, which may require visits by multiple pollinators to a single flower, results in healthy fruit and fertile seeds and allows plants to reproduce.



About 75% of all flowering plants rely on animal pollinators and over 200,000 species of animals act as pollinators. Of these about 1,000 are hummingbirds, bats and small animals. The rest are insects such as beetles, bees, ants, wasps, butterflies and moths.

### ATTRACT POLLINATORS TO YOUR GARDEN

- **Use as many plants native to your region as possible.** Native plants have evolved closely with native insects and are well-suited to meet their needs. In fact, some pollinator species are entirely dependent on the availability of certain native plants. Whether using native or nonnative plants, try to use old-fashioned varieties. Many garden varieties that have been bred to look or smell nice for humans, often lack accessible nectar or pollen for animals.
- **Try to put in flowers with a range of shapes and sizes.** Trumpet or cup-shaped flowers, such as cardinal flower, honeysuckle, and bee balm, attract a wide range of pollinators. Pollinators with shorter tongues, such as small native bees and wasps, feed on tightly packed clusters of small flowers, such as those found on milkweed, zinnia, phlox, and mint. Hummingbirds feed on red, purple, or orange flowers with lots of nectar, such as bee balm, fuchsia, sage, and nasturtium.
- **Include a variety of flowers that bloom throughout the season.** By doing so, you will accommodate different pollinators' preferences and provide a sequence of pollen and nectar sources throughout different life cycle stages. Consider shrubs and trees, such as dogwood, blueberry, cherry, plum, and willow that provide nectar or pollen in early spring when other food is scarce.
- **Use containers, if necessary.** If your growing space is limited, consider growing the following types of pollinator plants in containers filled with a rich, well-drained soil mix: Aromatic herbs (coriander, catnip, mint, parsley, lavender); annuals (marigold, phlox, bachelor's button, zinnia, cosmos, salvia); perennials (bee balm, Shasta daisy, iris, coneflower, lobelia, delphinium).
- **Provide food sources (host plants) and overwintering places for eggs and larvae.** Although pollinators in their adult stages generally thrive on flower nectar and/or pollen, larval stages have

more of a taste for plant leaves. Allow a section of your yard to revert to wild grasses, weeds, and wildflowers (e.g., milkweed and Queen Anne's lace).

- **Provide water.** Pollinators such as butterflies will gather and sip at shallow pools, mud puddles, and bird baths; bees and wasps can use mud as a home-building material. Mud puddles also provide important minerals for some pollinators.
- **Avoid using pesticides and herbicides.** Many can be harmful to pollinators as well as pests. Herbicides may wipe out key plants (weeds) that are important for pollinators' food mix. If you feel that you must control pests, even homemade remedies will harm pollinators. Try to use barriers to keep out pests. If you do use homemade remedies such as garlic spray, or pesticides derived from plants or microbes, apply them only after sundown, when most pollinators have stopped their rounds.
- **Provide sites and materials for nesting and overwintering.** Leave cut plant stems exposed as certain bees will burrow in the pith, turn flowerpots that have drainage holes upside down, leave twigs and brush in small piles, create mud puddles, or put out pieces of string or other light fibers.
- **Reduce your area of lawn grass.** Grass lawns offer little food and shelter for most wildlife including pollinators

## POLLINATOR INITIATIVES IN GUELPH

Check out Pollination Guelph, <http://www.pollinator.ca/guelph>, a local group who are proposing a Pollinator Park on the grounds of the old Eastview Landfill site.

For more general information about pollinators or pollination, visit one of the web-sites below:



[www.pollinationguelph.ca](http://www.pollinationguelph.ca)  
[www.pollinator.org](http://www.pollinator.org)  
[www.pollinationcanada.ca](http://www.pollinationcanada.ca)  
[www.xerces.org](http://www.xerces.org)  
[www.nativeplants.msu.edu](http://www.nativeplants.msu.edu)  
[www.fws.gov/pollinators/](http://www.fws.gov/pollinators/)  
<http://libraryportals.org/PCDL>  
<http://nature.berkeley.edu/urbanbeegardens/>  
[www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/index](http://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/index)