

Plant a pollinator garden!

Now it's your chance to help feed the insects that help feed you; pollinators. Without them, we wouldn't have many of the tasty fruits and veggies we rely on. They visit flowers for food (nectar) and in turn carry pollen from plant to plant. So, for Earth week, let's celebrate pollinators by planning a garden habitat just for them!

1.) Choose a location.

Your garden doesn't have to be big- any size will help! Pick a place with lots of sun.

2.) Check the soil type.

See if it's rich, sandy or clay soil and how well it drains.

3.) Prepare the site.

Till and remove weeds. Make raised beds if you want. Add soil and compost as needed.

4.) Choose plants.

Select a wide variety of native plants with different colors of flowers and blooming times. This will attract diverse pollinators and provide them with food spring, summer, and fall.

5.) Plant your garden.

Plant seeds or seedlings so each has

~1 square foot space. Place tall plants in the center. Cluster plants to help pollinators in foraging. Surround garden with a border of mulch. Leave some areas of bare soil for ground nesting bees.

6.) Care of garden.

Weed by hand. Do not use pesticides.

Provide water in saucers with rocks in them. Leave some hollow stems and leaf litter for pollinator nests. (Or make a pollinator house like we showed earlier.)

Native plants are key.

Choose native plants or seedlings. Beware of 'wildflower' seed mixes as they often include invasive plants. Make sure the plants have not been treated with pesticides that will harm pollinators.

Here's a list of native plants for your garden:

Milkweed species

Joe-pye weed

Great blue lobelia

Cardinal flower

Bee balm (and bergemot)

Smooth blue aster

