

TIPS FOR A POLLINATOR GARDEN

Choose native plants

- Native plants establish better and bring in more pollinators.
- Plant in clusters to create a target for pollinators.
- Leave small areas for wildflowers and “weeds”.
- Mix plants with diversified sources of nectar like shrubs, trees and flowers.
- Select plants for a continuous bloom throughout the growing season.
- Select sites that are not windy and offer at least four to five hours of sunlight per day.
- Consider planting a pollinator strip as a garden border or wildflower border along a field edge.

Welcome beneficial insects

- Native solitary bees like mason bees and leafcutter bees are the ecosystem’s most important pollinators. The Henri Studio pollinator is perfect for them.
- Butterflies.
- Flies pollinate even more than butterflies.
- Other insects like praying mantises, ladybugs and beetles prey on pests like lacewings and aphids.

Go easy on the chemicals

Deter pests in alternate ways, using less toxic substances such as:

- Diatomaceous earth.
- Neem oil.
- *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt).

If you must use pesticides, read and follow all label directions carefully.

Mix in companion plants

- Pair up the right plants to naturally repel pests and attract pollinators and improve each plants’ health and yields.
- Mix flowers and vegetables together as many types of flowers confuse the “bad” pests.

Encourage birds

- Provide clean water in a shallow dish, bowl or birdbath with perches of half-submerged stones.
- Mount bird feeders and nesting boxes.
- Plant flowers that attract hummingbirds and make hummingbird nectar.
- Don’t cut down sunflowers, coneflowers and black-eyed susans in the fall. Their seed heads provide a valuable source of winter bird food.

Be water-wise

- Select plants with care – know if you are in a dry or wet area and plant accordingly.
- Avoid wasting water by installing a drip irrigation system, placing water right where you want it.
- Harvest rain water with by setting up a rain garden or installing a rain barrel.
- Use organic mulches to ensure moisture goes right into the soil and does not run off.
- Consider reducing the size of an all-grass lawn.
- Convert some of your land into a meadow or native wildflower border.

Article abridged from “6 Tips for Building a Pollinator Garden” by the 2023 Boys Town The Old Farmer’s Almanac (almanac.com).