Hamilton County SWCD
Backyard Conservation

Pollinator Garden

What is a pollinator garden?

When pollinators like birds, bees, and butterflies visit flowers to feed, they unintentionally pick up pollen. When they visit another flower to feed, the pollen can fall off onto the flower's stigma (pollination) and may result in successful reproduction of the flower. Pollinator gardens are gardens, large or small, planted with a variety of native wildflowers that attract pollinators .

Create a pollinator paradise in your yard

1. Before beginning any project, check homeowner association covenants, as well as local and county ordinances. Do not work in a drainage, utility, or other easement without the proper permits.
2. Think about what pollinators you hope to attract. Do you want bats, birds, bees, or other pollinators?
3. Plant native wildflowers! Native pollinators have developed a complex relationship with native flowers over thousands of years. Providing native species encourages the diversity and success of the plant and animal!
4. Avoid pesticides!
5. Many pollinators must pass through multiple 'stages' to develop from their immature form to their adult form. Often, different plants or habitat types are necessary for this process. You can provide the plants necessary to facilitate this transformation (see back for suggestions!).
6. Pollinators are attracted to bright colors and varying sizes and shapes of flowers. Plant flowers in clumps of 3+ plants.
7. Select a variety of plants that bloom at different times of the year to provide nectar and pollen throughout the growing season.

Pesticides & Pollinators

Pesticides can kill more than their target pest and have devastating affects on already threatened pollinators. Some pesticides kill pollinators outright and some have subtle after effects that limit a pollinator's ability to thrive. Pesticides can also kill the beneficial natural predators that keep pest insects in check.

Avoid using pesticides! If you feel you must, read and follow the label. Be sure to not apply any pesticide to a flowering plant or tree and leave a buffer zone between sensitive habitats and water.

After limiting your pesticide use, consider buying organic foods and products that did not use pesticides in their production.

Why do pollinators need our help?

Two thirds of the crops humans use for food production depend on pollination by insects but there has been a worldwide decline in these species due to:

- Habitat loss, degradation, & fragmentation
- Pesticides use and misuse
- Competition from non-native and invasive animals and diseases
- Disease

Food products that depend on pollinators:

- Apples
- Blueberries & Strawberries
- Chocolate
- Tomatoes
- Coffee
- Kidney & Green Beans
- Potatoes
- Vanilla
- Almonds & Walnuts
- Many more!

In the US, honeybees, native bees, and other insects produce over $40 billion dollars worth of products annually!

Attracting Bees:

- There are 416 bee species in Indiana. Some 'social' bees live in colonies while other 'solitary' species live alone or in very primitive colonies.
- Some bees build hives (Ex. Bumblebees), some nest in the ground (Ex. Squash bees, mud bees), and some bore into wood to nest (Ex. Giant Carpenters).
- You can target a specific bee variety by researching it's nesting habitat and providing a suitable environment.
- Providing native flowers is the easiest way to attract bees to your garden.
- Cavity nesting bees will nest in dead or decaying wood so consider leaving a wood or brush pile or supplying a 'bee block'.
- Some bees are active all season and some are not. Plant a variety of plants with bloom times across the entire growing season.

You may be concerned about attracting bees to your yard… don't *bee*! More often than not, bees are a blessing. Avoid placing bee attracting plants near high traffic areas like walkways and doors. Consider creating a standalone pollinator garden bed elsewhere. If you have a nest of problem bees, look for a mutually beneficial solution- such as having the hive relocated if possible.

Bee Block- www.humanesociety.org

Bee blocks can be purchased or built from plans available online.

fnpsblog.blogspot.co

Attracting Butterflies:

- There are approximately 150 species of butterflies in Indiana. They range in size from having a wingspan of one inch to a wingspan of six inches.
- Butterflies begin as larvae (caterpillars) and have very specific food habits. For example, Monarch larvae only feed on milkweed, so providing this food source is crucial. They then become pupae, and finally develop into colorful adults that feed on nectar. Plant a variety of fruit and nectar plants to provide for various life stages and species.
- Cluster plants with bright, diverse blossoms with blooming periods throughout the entire growing season.
- Butterflies appreciate warm weather, so providing a stone or statue in your garden will give them an inviting place to bask.
- Water is just as important for butterflies as f or other wildlife. A shallow dish of water or a depression in a rock that retains water should be sufficient.

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Your pollinator garden can be any shape and size and have a formal or natural look. Consider the pollinator species you want to attract and specific plant considerations such as sun/shade, soil moisture, blooming period, etc., when making your plant selections. Contact the SWCD for help with plant selections and sourcing native plants.

Pollinator Garden Plant Suggestions

Dependent butterfly in parentheses. This is not a complete list.

Common name	Genus	Common name	Genus	Common name	Genus
Milkweed (Monarch)	*Asclepias spp.*	Wild Indigo	*Baptisia spp.*	Coneflower	*Echinacea spp.*
Joe Pye Weed (Painted Lady)	*Eupatorium spp.*	Aster	*Aster spp.*	Cardinal Flower Great Blue Lobelia	*Lobelia spp.*
Leadplant	*Amorpha spp.*	Blazing Star (Eastern Tiger Swallowtail)	*Liatris spp.*	Bee Balm	*Monarda spp.*
Ironweed	*Vernonia spp.*	Penstemon	*Penstemon spp.*	Wild Lupine (Karner Blue **Endangered*)	*Lupinus perennis*
Black cherry, tree	*Prunus pensylvanica*	Dogwood, tree	*Cornus spp.*	Basswood, tree	*Tilia americana*
Spicebush, shrub (SpicebushSwallowtail)	*Lindera benzoin*	Serviceberry, shrub	*Amelanchier spp.*	Viburnum, shrub	*Viburnum spp.*

Contact the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District for a free consultation and recommendations for your property!:
1717 Pleasant St. • Noblesville, IN 46060
317.773.2181 • www.hamiltonswcd.org

Learn more about pollinators and how you can help!
www.hamiltonswcd.org/BYC
www.xerces.org/pollinator-conservation/
www.pollinator.org/gardens
Certify your wildlife garden at: http://www.nwf.org/How-to-Help/Garden-for-Wildlife.aspx