



Ph: 203-484-2748  
Fax: 203-484-7621  
nature@iconn.net

518 Forest Road, PO Box 489, Northford, Connecticut 06472 [www.natureworksgardencenter.com](http://www.natureworksgardencenter.com)

## Pollinator Garden BASICS

### “So you want to grow a pollinator garden...”

Congratulations! You have just made a very important decision, one that is going to make your yard into a *very* HAPPY HABITAT.

#### **How do you start?**

The first thing to do is to learn to identify native and non-native plants. We can help! Some non-native plants are considered invasive. Work on eliminating those first. Are all non-native plants bad? No! If you grow and love peonies, lilacs, azaleas, bearded irises, and many other plants not native to CT, don't feel compelled to remove them. As long as they are not taking over and becoming a threat to native plants, you should focus on proper management. According to Doug Tallamy, the goal to strive for is to have 70% of the plants in your yard be native plants. It takes time and careful consideration. Many non-native plants are favorites of pollinators. Examples include zinnias, single dahlias, bronze fennel, early spring blooming bulbs, Mexican sunflower, and winter blooming hybrid witch hazels. Diversity is one key feature of a pollinator garden.

#### **Why focus on natives?**

Many of our native pollinators have co-evolved with native plants. They are called specialists. Others can use a wide range of plants. They are called generalists. The more developed your pollinator gardens become, the more you will get to know the pollinators that live in your yard.

#### **Some Basics**

- Use ORGANIC methods only. If you must spray, use an organic product, target ONLY the problem plant, and spray ONLY at dusk, after the pollinators have stopped flying. Never blanket spray. As your habitat matures, the good bugs will help control the bad bugs and you will find less and less problems.
- Your lawn hosts many pollinators. NEVER put poisons on your lawn. Period. Grow a mixed lawn containing flowers.
- Many pollinators overwinter in leaf litter. *Leave the leaves* wherever you can.
- Many bees are tunnel nesting and overwinter in plant stems. WAIT to clean up your garden until it is 50 degrees for one week in the spring.
- You must loosen up your standards about how "neat" your landscape should be. Leave some areas wild and natural; allow wildflowers and "weeds" to remain. Many pollinators (especially butterflies) are HOST SPECIFIC - they will feed or lay their eggs only on very specific plants that may not be the typical landscape selections. Try to reduce your lawn area. Instead, plant hedgerows, meadows, and lush border gardens.

#### **What to plant?**

Plant large masses of at least 3 types of plants in bloom for each month. We can help you choose them! Encourage diversity in all of your planting beds. Monocultures breed insect and disease problems. Mixing up the plants broadens the scope of the creatures that will live in your garden.

Incorporate herbs into your flower beds and landscapes. They are wonderful for attracting beneficial insects and butterflies.

#### **Natureworks Favorite Pollinator Plants**

*The list of pollinator plants is very long. To make it simple here are some of Natureworks' favorites listed in order of the months they bloom.*

#### **Winter bloomers**

Crocus, winter aconite, Hamamelis virginiana (native witch hazel), Lonicera fragrantissima

## **Herbs for pollinators**

Annuals/biennials- borage, caraway, dill, basil

Perennials-fennel, lavender, oregano, mints, Pycnanthemums (mountain mints), comfrey, lovage

**Cool season annuals-** calendula, pansies, snapdragons, sweet alyssum, violas

## **April bloomers**

Bulbs- Scilla, Chionodoxa, Pushkinia

Perennials/biennials: Caltha, single Hellebores, Mertensia, Pulmonaria

Woody plants- Acer, Prunus (plum, cherry, peach), Malus (apple, crabapple), Salix (willows)

## **May bloomers**

Bulbs- Alliums, Camassias

Perennials/biennials- Aquilegia, Baptisia, Dicentra, Euphorbia, Mertensia, Nepeta, Phlox (May pinks and woodland phloxes), Packeria (Senecio aurea), Polemonium, Polygonatum, Salvia, Zizia

Woody plants- Aronia, Azalea, Cercis, Fothergilla, Rhododendron, many Viburnums, Vaccinium (blueberries)

**Warm Season annuals-** Agastache, Asclepias curassavica, cosmos, lantana, dahlias (single), Tithonia (Mexican sunflowers), Phacelia (bees friend), Salvias, verbena (especially V. bonariensis), zinnias.

## **June bloomers**

Bulbs- Alliums

Perennials/biennials- Amsonia, Aquilegia, Baptisia, Digitalis, Geranium (cranebills), Heuchera, Lupinus, Penstemon, Papaver, Phloxes, Salvias

Woody plants- Azalea (upright deciduous), Hypericum, Ilex, Itea, Physocarpus, Sambucus (elderberry)

## **July bloomers**

Perennials/biennials- Achillea, herbaceous Alliums, Asclepias, Coreopsis, Crocosmia, Echinacea, Echinops, Eryngium, Heliopsis, Liatris, Leucanthemum, Monarda, Perovskia, Persicaria, Phlox, Rudbeckias, Salvias,

Woody plants- Buddleia, Cephalanthus, Hypericum, Lonicera (native varieties of honeysuckle vines)

## **August bloomers**

Perennials/biennials- Achillea, Agastache, Allium, Calamintha, Ceratostigma, Echinacea, Echinops, Eryngium, Eupatoriums, Gaura, Helenium, Hemerocallis (single daylilies), Hibiscus, Leucanthemum 'Becky', Liatris, Lobelia, Monarda, Persicaria, Phlox, Rudbeckias, Sedums, Veronicastrum

Woody plants- Buddleia, Caryopteris, Cephalanthus, Clethra, Hibiscus syriacus (rose of Sharon), Oxydendron

## **September bloomers**

Perennials/biennials- Asters, Calamintha, Ceratostigma, Chelone, Cimicifuga (Actaea), Eupatoriums, Gaura, Helianthus, Liatris, perennial mums (single flowers), Rudbeckias, Sedums, Solidagos (goldenrods), Vernonia

Woody plants- Buddleia, Caryopteris, Heptacodium

## **October bloomers**

Perennials/biennials- Allium thunbergii, Asters, Cimicifuga (Actaea) atropurpurea, Boltonia, Calamintha, Coreopsis tripteris, Eupatorium coelestinum and hyssopifolium, Helianthus (perennial sunflowers), perennial mums (single flowers), Heuchera 'Autumn Bride', Nipponanthemum (Montauk daisy), Sedums, Sanguisorba canadensis, Solidagos (goldenrods), Vernonia

Woody plants- Baccharis (salt bush), Buddleia

*In an effort to provide horticultural information, these educational documents are written by Nancy DuBrule-Clemente and are the property of Natureworks Horticultural Services, LLC. You are granted permission to print/photocopy this educational information free of charge as long as you clearly show that these are Natureworks documents.*