

# Create A Pollinator Friendly Garden



## Plant native species.

Native plants and native pollinators depend on each other for survival. Flowering plants need pollinators to reproduce and pollinators need native plants for food.



Native plants come in a variety of shapes, colors and smells to attract specific pollinators. The red color and long tube shape of the Cardinal flower attracts hummingbirds, but it doesn't attract bees, because it lacks a scent. Unfortunately, most native pollinators cannot or do not eat nonnative plants. "When native plants disappear, the insects disappear, impoverishing the food source for birds and other animals" – Doug Tallamy, Author *Bringing Nature Home*

## Grow a diversity of native plants.

Grow a variety of native plants to provide flowers throughout the growing season. Be sure to



include some early blooming plants such as Redbud trees and late blooming plants like New England Asters. Use plants with different flower colors and shapes to attract a diversity of pollinators. Cluster plants of the same species together to make it easier for pollinators to locate and feed on these plants.

## Eliminate insecticide and pesticide use.

The widespread use of insecticides is one of the major causes of pollinator decline. Most insecticides do not discriminate between



"good" and "bad" insects. Mosquito sprays kill small, beneficial pollinators as well as mosquitoes. Pesticides applied to plants are absorbed into plant tissue and can be found in the pollen and nectar. Bees, butterflies and young insects are harmed by this residue. Avoid buying plants from nurseries using neonicotinoid pesticides.

## Grow host plants.



Many pollinators have tiny, larval stages that only eat certain plants, called host plants. Milkweeds are host plants for the Monarch caterpillar. An oak tree is an excellent host plant as it

provides food for over 500 insect species. Asters, goldenrods and viburnums also support numerous caterpillar species.

## Leave dead foliage and stems in the garden until spring.

Hollow stems and plant foliage provide winter protection for insects. Seed heads contain food for birds. Many insects winter over in the leaf litter at the base of host plants.

