



SHAWNEE COUNTY EXTENSION MASTER GARDENERS

PRAIRIE POLLINATOR DEMONSTRATION GARDEN

A prairie pollinator garden contains mostly native prairie plants that are perfectly adapted to our climate and are drought resistant. They require little maintenance, no fertilizers nor pesticides. A succession of flowers from early spring through late fall attract and support pollinating bees, butterflies, moths, hummingbirds and more.

PLANT SELECTION AND MAINTENANCE PRINCIPLES

Make plants native to your region the most frequent choice. When choosing hybrids of natives, avoid those that have made major changes to the plant, especially flower structure. These flowers may have lost their ability to produce nectar and pollen or may be so complex, as to prevent the pollinators access. (i.e., double flowers). Native cultivars that have been bred for improved disease resistance or a more compact plant, may not be a problem and are a good second choice.

Choose nectar and pollen rich flowers in a range of shapes, sizes, and colors. Be sure both tubular and cone shape flowers are included. Larval host plants for the butterfly species you wish to support are also important to include.

Have several different plants in bloom from early spring through late fall to provide nectar and pollen.

Plant in drifts or groupings. This helps the pollinators find your garden.

Avoid landscape fabric. This allows your plants to expand and gives ground nesting bees and insects access to spots of bare ground. Allow some areas to remain mulch free for the same reason.

Wait until spring to clean up your pollinator garden debris. Some pollinators overwinter in leaf litter, others in hollow stems. Keep leaves in place. Tall stalks can be cut to 18 to 24 inches and the tops bundled and stored out of sight until late spring.

Avoid pesticides. Follow the control steps of Integrated Pest Management: cultural (plant choice, diversity, adequate water) biological (beneficial insects, birds) and physical control (thinning, pruning out infected stems). Omit chemical treatments.

HELPFUL ADJUNCTS TO PLANTINGS

Butterflies like an area protected from strong winds. A large rock or two in a sunny location allows butterflies to warm themselves. A salt lick or mud puddle provides minerals necessary for butterflies.

A red hummingbird feeder among tubular flowers can help attract hummingbirds.

EXAMPLES OF PLANT BLOOMING SEASONS

Spring Flowering Natives	Bloom Time
Eastern Redbud Tree (<i>Ceris canadensis</i>)	April
Spice Bush (<i>Lindera benzoin</i>)	March
Moss Phlox (<i>Phlox subulata</i>)	March to May
Blue star (<i>Amsonia hubrichtii</i>)	April to May
Purple poppy mallow (<i>Callirhoe involucrata</i>)	May to June
Beardtongue (<i>Penstemon grandiflora</i>)	May to June
Rose verbena (<i>Glandularia canadensis</i>)	May to August
Blue false indigo (<i>Baptisia australis</i>)	May to June
Summer Flowering Natives	
Black eyed Susan (<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>)	June to September
Narrow leaf coneflower (<i>Echinacea angustifolia</i>)	June to July
Butterfly weed (<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>)	June to August
Blanket flower (<i>Gaillardia spp.</i>)	June to September
Fall Flowering Natives	
Dotted Gayfeather aka. Blazing Star (<i>Liatris punctata</i>)	August to September
New England Aster (<i>Symphotrichum novae</i>)	September to October
Stiff Goldenrod (<i>Solidago rigida</i>)	August to October
Non-Native Plants for Pollinators	
Catmint (<i>Nepeta spp.</i>)	April to September
Bugleweed (<i>Ajuga reptans</i>)	May to June

References:

- <https://extension.psu.edu/planting-pollinator-friendly-gardens?msclkid=3b8f0354c1d011ecb9754023f13171b9>
- <https://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/gardening.shtml>
- Homepage | Pollinator.org
- <https://grownative.org>

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