

STEP ONE

## Make a plan for your pollinator garden.

Thoughtful design and planning will make your pollinator garden stunning and affordable, with minimal maintenance.



## Things to consider when planning your pollinator garden.



### Light

Gardens need at least six hours of sun per day



### Water

A water source is absolutely necessary. Your hose should easily reach your garden. Watering cans may be enough for container gardens.



### Surface

Gardens can go in-ground, in a raised bed or in pots or containers.



### Traffic

A little distance from active play areas and pet spaces will keep your corner of beauty safe.



STEP TWO

## Be a designer.

Your garden can be a reflection of your taste and personality.  
Have fun with it!



# Plants that will flourish and blossom for years include:

LISTED EARLY BLOOMERS TO LATE SUMMER BEAUTIES.



## Evening Primrose

*Oenothera fruticosa*  
Yellow or Soft Pink  
12-18"

[Learn more](#)



## Cranesbill Geranium

*Geranium maculatum*  
purple  
8-15"

[Learn more](#)



## Ironweed

*Vernonia noveboracensis*  
Deep Reddish-purple  
5-8"

[Learn more](#)



## Beardtongue

*Penstemon digitalis*  
White and Pink  
18-36"

[Learn more](#)



## Tickseed

*Coreopsis lanceolata*  
Yellow  
12-24"

[Learn more](#)



## Coneflower

*Echinacea purpurea*  
Lavender  
18- 36"

[Learn more](#)



## False Indigo

*Baptisia tinctoria*  
Yellow or Blue  
36-42"

[Learn more](#)



## Bee Balm

*Monarda didyma*  
Red, Pink, or Purple  
18- 36"

[Learn more](#)



## Blackeyed Susan

*Rudbeckia fulgida*  
Yellow  
18- 36"

[Learn more](#)



## Anise Hyssop

*Agastache foeniculum*  
Purple  
18- 36"

[Learn more](#)



## Swamp Milkweed

*Asclepias incarnata*  
Pink  
24- 36"

[Learn more](#)



## Butterfly Weed

*Asclepias tuberosa*  
Orange  
18"

[Learn more](#)



## Mountain Mint

*Pycnanthemum muticum*  
White  
12-24"

[Learn more](#)



## Blazing Star

*Liatis spicata*  
Purple  
20-24"

[Learn more](#)



## Goldenrod

*Solidago sempervirens*  
Yellow  
24-36"

[Learn more](#)



## Aster

*Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*  
Blue  
24-36"

[Learn more](#)



## Things to consider when planning your pollinator garden.



### Rule of 3

Plant for 3 seasons: spring, summer, and fall; aim to have 3 different species in bloom each season; and plant in groups, at least 3 of each variety.



### Height

Plants can range from 6"-6' Consider the size of your space. For example: Tall plants can look great against a wall or fence; Walkways can look beautiful lined with knee high blooms.



### Color

Pick what you love. Some plants come in a variety of colors, so read labels carefully. Different colors attract different pollinators.



### Season of Blooms

Nature offers plants that bloom early spring through late fall. Pair early flowers with later bloomers to have color all season.



## Host and Nectar Plants

Host plants support pollinators throughout their life cycle as homes and as food. Some species need specific plants. Monarch butterflies, for example, require *Asclepias* species for their survival as they are the only plants on which the caterpillars can feed.

Other plants are beautiful and good nectar (food) sources.

With a mixture of larval host plants and nectar sources you can attract pollinators throughout their life cycles.



## Native and Non Native Plants

While native plants are essential host and nectar plants, some non-native plants are good nectar sources. Limit the use of non-native species to 15% or less of your pollinator garden.

Also, it is more beneficial for the pollinators to use straight species as often as possible rather than hybrids that are often developed for commercial sale.



## Generalist and Specialist Pollinators

Some pollinators are supported by many types of plants (“generalists”); some plants are the only source for specific pollinators (“specialists”). Plant for the specialists since their plants also serve generalists.

For more information: [Planting Pollinator-Friendly Gardens \(psu.edu\)](https://psu.edu)



## Don't Forget the Annuals

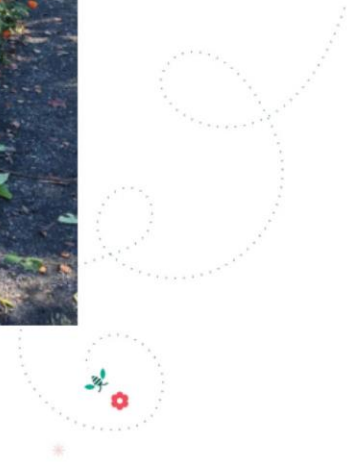
Annual flowers need to be replanted every Spring. Perennials return year after year. Both have value to the pollinators. Some recommended annuals include zinnias, cosmos, and sunflowers. Pollinators also love annual herbs when they flower: Dill, Parsley, and Cilantro are common favorites.

STEP THREE

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## Dig in and start planting.

Now comes the fun part!



## Here are some planting tips to help ensure success.



### Assemble

Find or invest in basic gardening tools like a shovel, trowel and gloves. Depending on your chosen garden location you will need: Raised bed materials (metal or wood), soil or compost, plants/seeds and mulch.



### Prep

To convert an existing lawn or planting area, remove current grass or plantings and turn the soil to loosen it. Raised beds can be constructed of metal or wood. Large pots or containers also work. All new gardens need 1-2" of topsoil and/or compost mixed into old dirt.



### Arrange

Cluster like plants together, about 18" apart, in groups of 3 or 5. Pollinators appreciate the easy access of a mass of flowers. Clumps of color are also visually appealing to people.



### Front to Back

Shorter plants go in front so they don't block the view of the beauties behind them. Staggered height plants are also easier to tend!



### Weed Block

Gardens built near invasive weeds may benefit from weed-block fabric. Common Mid Atlantic invaders are mugwort, nutsedge, bindweed, and crabgrass.



### Soaker Hose

Inexpensive soaker hoses save water by efficiently getting to the base of the plant. Soaker hoses go under mulch. They are twirled around plants and pinned in place with cheap landscape staples.





## Mulch

2-3" of hardwood mulch atop the garden will suppress weeds, enrich soil and retain moisture.



## Fencing

Wire or wood fencing can provide a visual and functional barrier in gardens where people walk and pets linger.



STEP FOUR

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## Nurture and enjoy!

Create a space to relax and enjoy your beautiful plants and watch the pollinators come and go.



## Be a good host and keep your pollinators happy!



### Avoid Chemicals

Avoid herbicides and pesticides, including mosquito control services. Chemicals will harm pollinators and disrupt the balance of the ecosystem by killing predators that naturally get rid of pests. Chemicals tend to be overused and misused, with excess washing into storm drains and harming aquatic wildlife.



### Offer Pollinators Water

Water sources, like a birdbath or a butterfly puddler, will attract pollinators and help them stay hydrated.

## Keep your garden healthy and watch it thrive season after season.



### Summer Maintenance

Water every other day. To best judge if watering is needed, jab a stick into earth. If it does not go down approximately six inches, then you need to water!

Weed. All the time.



### Fall Maintenance

Be a lazy gardener; don't clean up for winter. Bugs are pollinators that keep gardens healthy. They live in the rotting foliage and help break it down, adding nutrients back into the soil for next year's growth.



### Spring Cleaning

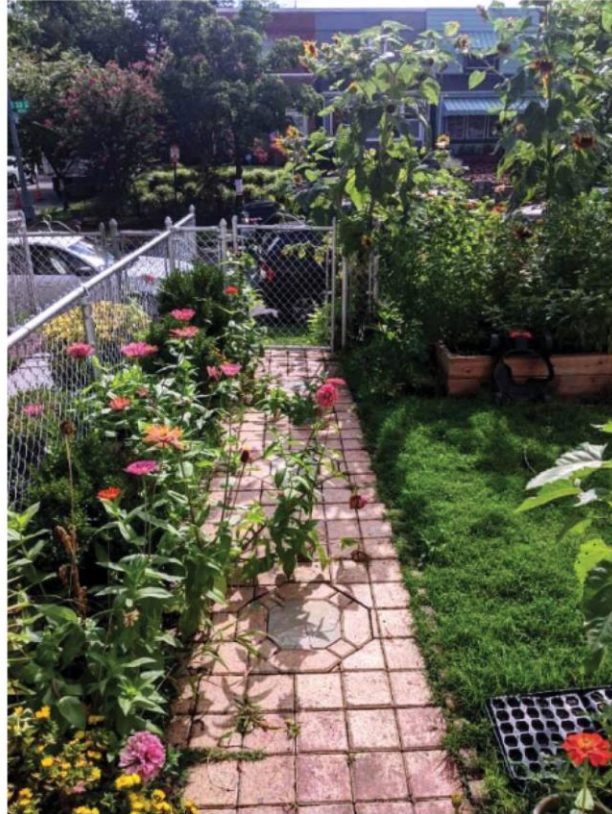
Take out all dead and dying plants and replace with new ones. Add approximately 1" of leaf mulch or compost to the entire garden. Gently nestle hardwood mulch around your plants.

STEP FIVE

## Share your garden and add it to our pollinator map.

We can turn the District into a flourishing pollinator haven. Send your address and a photograph of your garden to [info@dcnatives.org](mailto:info@dcnatives.org) and we will add it to our DC Natives map.

SHARE YOUR GARDEN





## Native Plant Nurseries

### LOCAL

Earth Sangha • Springfield, VA  
Watermark Woods • Hamilton, VA  
Chesapeake Natives • Upper Marlboro, MD  
Bona Terra • Friendship, MD  
American Plant Food • Bethesda, MD

### ONLINE

Plant More Natives  
Direct Native Plants  
Prairie Moon Nursery

