

# CREATE A POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY GARDEN



Gardening connects us to nature while providing important habitats for wildlife, especially pollinators. It doesn't matter where you live; even a single square foot of wildflowers can provide food for bees, butterflies, and birds.



**PREPARE:** Before creating your pollinator garden, learn what plants will thrive in your space and what they need.

- **Learn about native plants.** Native plants grow naturally in your area and include many different types of mosses, ferns, trees, shrubs, and wildflowers. They are well adapted to the local growing season, climate, and soils, and are able to survive without needing a lot of extra care. You can research what plants are native to your area using [nwf.org/NativePlantFinder/Plants](https://nwf.org/NativePlantFinder/Plants) as a guide.



- **Be diverse.** Pollinators feed on plants in spring, summer, and fall. Select a variety of plants that bloom at different times of the year so you can provide for pollinators throughout their life cycles.




- **Plan for timing.** Native plants take time to grow. To save time, you can use organic and pesticide-free plants that started growing at a nursery or garden center. Planting from seeds can be more economical, but it will take more time. Plant seeds in fall or winter so they can develop before their spring/summer blooms.



- **Use materials to support the plant or garden.** Potting soil or nutrient-rich compost makes a great foundation for portable/aboveground gardens and can be added around seeds and plants placed in the ground. If weeds are a problem, use mulch around your garden. Most importantly, stay away from chemical fertilizers or pesticides, which can kill pollinators and harm the environment.



**PLANT:** To help pollinators, all you need is one square foot. So let's get gardening!

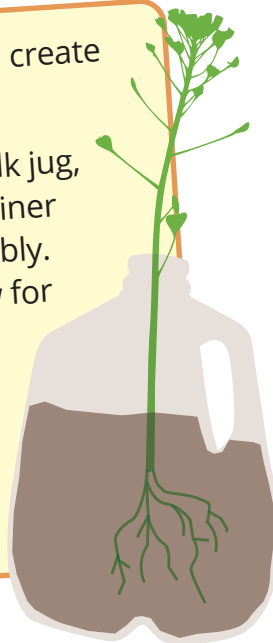
- **Find a good spot.** If using a natural space outside, make sure the ground and soil are suitable for plants. If the ground contains little vegetation, create a planter out of recyclable material such as an old tire, a wooden trough or pallet, some burlap fabric, or a trash bag. 
- **Don't forget the essentials.** Many native plants that attract pollinators prefer full sunlight or partial sunlight with some shade. If your garden is not exposed to precipitation, make sure to water it periodically to keep the soil moist.
- **Spruce up your pollinator space.** Cluster planting to provide pollinators shelter and camouflage from predators. Make small piles of branches to attract butterflies and moths. You can also provide things such as hollow twigs, rotten logs, and fallen plant material for nesting bees.

**WHAT'S NEXT?** Keep track of your new visitors and monitor your garden's progress. Create a science journal to record observations and changes to your garden throughout the year. You can download the [SEEK](#) app by iNaturalist to track and identify new species that you discover.



**FOR AN INDOOR GARDEN:** No outdoor space? No problem! You can create a pollinator garden on your balcony, porch, or windowsill.

- **Find a container.** Try recycling! You can reuse containers, such as a milk jug, tin can, or box, to make an ideal plant home. Make sure that the container is deep enough to allow the roots of the plant to grow and fit comfortably. Also, remember to punch holes in the bottom of the container to allow for drainage; otherwise the roots will rot.
- **Plant the seeds.** Fill the planter with potting soil, leaving about half of an inch at the top (for seeds). If planting a plant, make sure to allow enough space for the roots. Disperse the seeds, cover them with soil, and place the planter in a spot where it can get some sun!





WILD CLASSROOM



# WILDFLOWER JOURNAL



Planting a garden of wildflowers native to your area is a great way to provide food and a resting place for your local pollinators. As your flowers grow, keep track of your garden's progress and your new visitors.

Record key moments and any other observations in the science journal below.

Seeds before planting

Date \_\_\_\_\_

PHOTO/DRAWING

Observations:

---

---

---

---

---

---

Wildflower sprouts appear

Date \_\_\_\_\_

PHOTO/DRAWING

Observations:



---

---

---

---

---

---

Seedlings are 1 inch tall

Date \_\_\_\_\_

PHOTO/DRAWING

Observations:

---

---

---

---

---

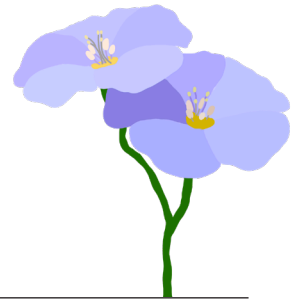
---



Continue to next page!



WILD CLASSROOM



Wildflower buds appear

Date \_\_\_\_\_

PHOTO/DRAWING

Observations:

---

---

---

---

---

---

Flowers bloom

Date \_\_\_\_\_

PHOTO/DRAWING

Observations:

---

---

---

---

---

---

Now that your wildflower garden has grown, answer the questions below, based on what you've learned:

What do plants need to grow?

Why are native plants such as wildflowers important?

What organisms have visited your wildflower garden (e.g., bees, butterflies)?

