



# Creating A Pollinator Garden

The key to creating a successful pollinator garden is to provide pollinating insects and other critters with a place to raise their young and ensure that they have a reliable food source from spring to late autumn. Common pollinators in gardens include bees, wasps, butterflies, moths, flies, beetles, birds, and even ants. Because there is such a variety of pollinators with many different requirements, the best strategy is to grow many different types of flowering plants that produce nectar and pollen.

With that goal in mind, here are the steps to creating a space that is beautiful and welcoming to pollinating insects.

### 1. Size and location

Six to eight hours of sunlight is ideal. You can introduce pollinator plants into an existing bed or make a new bed.

### 2. Soil

Assess your soil. Is it sandy and well-drained or more clay-like and wet? The type of soil will determine which plants will thrive, depending on their requirement for good drainage and fertility. Have your soil tested if you are unsure of your soil type. Soil pH should be between 6.0 and 7.0.

### 3. Irrigation

Watering is important, especially during plant establishment, which can take 1 to 3 years. Determine how you will provide water to your plants. Use soaker hoses or other watering methods to direct water to the root zone.

### 4. Plant Selection

- Seek a diversity of flower shapes, sizes and colors.
- Ensure continuous flowering from early spring to late autumn.
- Use native plants, including shrubs and trees, which provide early and abundant flowers.
- Use non-natives that offer pollen and nectar.
- Plant single-flowered varieties which offer easily accessible pollen and nectar, compared to double flowers.
- Place pollinator flowers in larger blocks to keep foraging energy efficient.

Consult recommendations from the Oregon State University Garden Ecology Lab for candidates when it comes to attracting native bees. *Native Plant Picks for Bees* is an Oregon State University publication that offers many suggestions. <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/pub/em-9363-native-plant-picks-bees>

### 5. Size Considerations

Start small and increase the size of your garden over time, whether you are making a new bed or adding containers. Observe frequently and watch to see what pollinators are attracted to your plants. Are there bees, butterflies, hummingbirds or birds?

## 6. Flowering Duration

The goal is to design a garden that has blooms from early spring until late autumn. Use annuals and bulbs, such as California poppy, Oregon iris and camas, to supplement shrubs and perennials and increase plant diversity. If you have space, many native trees and shrubs, such as Manzanita and California lilac, bloom early in the growing season and offer abundant floral resources.

## 7. Maintenance

The garden benefits from regular weeding and watering. Lightly mulch to reduce weeds. Leave areas of bare soil to provide habitat for native nesting bees.

## 8. Pesticides

Protect pollinators by using an Integrated Pest Management approach to controlling pests and diseases in your garden. Choose resistant plants to minimize occurrence of pests and diseases, prune off infected parts and use other cultural and biological controls for problems. Use chemicals only as a last resort.

## 9. Fall Cleanup

Keep non-diseased leaves, plant stems and seedheads in the garden until late spring, to support overwintering of pollinator larvae, eggs, pupae and adults.

## University & Other Resources

### *Pollinator Garden Plans*

<https://ucdavis.app.box.com/s/h88bp60ucq6mk82w9v8eubtvuqecw1bi>

### *Enhancing Urban and Suburban Landscapes to Protect Pollinators*

<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/pub/em-9289-enhancing-urban-suburban-landscapes-protect-pollinators>

### *Native Plant Picks for Bees*

<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/pub/em-9363-native-plant-picks-bees>

### *Analytical Laboratories Serving Oregon*

<https://www.oregon.gov/ODA/programs/Pesticides/Documents/2020/AnalyticalLabsServingOregon.pdf>

### *Native Plant Nurseries*

<https://portlandnativeplants.org/native-plant-nurseries>

## Master Gardener™ advice

Contact local OSU Extension office for Master Gardener advice. Check this site for contact information

<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/find-us>

For 10-Minute University™ handouts and class schedule, visit <https://cmastergardeners.org>.

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