

POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY PLANTING

WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- HOW-TO GUIDE
- SEED PACKET
- GARDEN SIGN

4 STEPS TO YOUR NEW GARDEN:

- PREPARE THE SITE
Remove current grass, weeds and other plants of an area up to 2 metres squared.
- PLANT SEEDS
Gather equipment listed below and follow the directions on your seed packet.
- WEED AND WATER
As necessary in spring and early summer.
- WATCH WILDFLOWERS BLOOM
Enjoy the blooms of native flowers for years to come and the pollinators they bring!



HOW-TO

It's time to restore habitat at your school! We have included a packet of seeds native to your region of Canada. The best part about native plants is that they require little maintenance and will come back year after year. However, it is important to water and weed with students during the first spring until they are established. **Please be patient** as some perennials may take up to two years to flower. Follow the directions on your seed packet and have students help spread them.

What you'll need:

- GARDENING GLOVES**
For students to remove weeds or plant seeds. Available at most dollar stores.
- CULTIVATOR OR RAKE**
To loosen soil and mix in seeds.
- WATERING CAN OR HOSE**
To water the garden in spring..
- OPTIONAL: CLEAN SAND**
Can be mixed with wildflower seeds for even spreading.

If you are creating a new garden, you may also need:

- SOD CUTTER, TILLER OR SHOVELS**
To lift sod and other vegetation. Unfortunately, grass cannot simply be pulled out but must be removed at the root. A sod cutter or tiller should be used without students and prior to gardening lesson. Rentals available at most hardware stores.

GET THE FACTS

Some native seeds have germination inhibitors and others have tough seed coatings that require a period of cold weather before germinating. The best time to plant native seeds is in the early spring or in the fall.

What you shouldn't need:

- **Topsoil or potting soil.** Native or naturalized plants are accustomed to Canada's soil types. Adding these unnecessarily might enhance invasive species growth.
- **Chemical fertilizers and pesticides.** These can favour invasive plant species, deplete soil and farm pollinators.

Native, naturalized and invasives plants

Native plants are flora that have evolved in a geographic region without human intervention. These are important to our pollinators as they have evolved together over thousands of years. **Naturalized species** are non-native species that have been introduced to an area and have established a population. The term 'naturalized' is often used in reference to plants that are introduced species and do not have a negative impact on the ecosystem. Finally, **invasive species** are introduced species that out compete native species for

resources such as space, food or water. They can greatly reduce biodiversity in their new ecosystem.

For tips on how to remove pesky invasive weeds, go to: <https://cwf-fcf.org/en/about-cwf/faq/faqs/how-do-i-remove-non-native.html>

Identification help: You can also have students use the Seek by iNaturalist app to help identify what's growing in the new garden in spring.

Add to your habitat

Food, water and shelter are the three main requirements for life. Get your students thinking about these needs when creating the garden. Pollinators **feed** on the nectar or pollen of flowers from spring to fall and will need blooms across these seasons. The seeds you've planted will grow into flowering plants that provide food for pollinators.

What about **shelter**? There are many species of pollinators in Canada and they each require different shelters. Some solitary pollinators can live in bee hotels (this could be a great project for students in the spring) but they do need to be cleaned regularly. Other shelters include hollow stem plants, such as goldenrod, exposed soil to nest under the ground as well as log piles and other tree debris, like leaf litter. Leaf litter is especially important to pollinators that hibernate rather than migrate for the winter. Encourage students to 'leave the leaves' in their gardens at home this fall to help pollinators.

Finally, let's get students thinking about

GET THE FACTS

Monarch butterflies will only lay their eggs on milkweed plants. Their caterpillars eat the leaves of milkweed before forming a pupa or cocoon. Avoid use of leafblowers which can kill young monarchs.

water. Water can be as simple as having a puddling area in your garden to making a DIY "bee waterer" with students. Below is more information on how to create a pollinator watering station: <http://blog.cwf-fcf.org/index.php/en/beneficial-insect-water-dish/>

Other activities

Gardening activities can be done in the fall, spring and early summer. Why not use popsicle sticks and have students create plant labels for the native plants in your new garden? This will help your students learn how to identify plants.

The Seek app by iNaturalist can be used to help students understand the diversity of life. Use it in the new garden, you may even identify some pollinators!

A note on planting

Dependent on your locality, your seed mix may contain native grasses, which provide shelter, as well as naturalized flowers. See seed packet for more details. This garden will look 'wild' and that's okay! It will also attract, you guessed it, pollinators. Happy planting!

