

Planting a Pollinator Sanctuary

A Climate Justice Project of the Sisters of the Divine Savior <https://www.sistersofthedivinesavior.org/>

You will need:

1. A plot of land of any size. Each packet of seeds in this kit is enough for about 10 square feet. You can also create Pollinator Sanctuaries in pots, in containers, and in raised beds of various sizes. If you're growing vegetables, plant pollinators nearby to encourage fertilization.
2. Pollinator-friendly seeds for plants native to your area (from this kit). If you are adding seedlings for native pollinator plants from garden centers, be sure they have not been grown using systemic pesticides or neonicotinoids, water soluble chemicals that kill pollinators. They stay in the leaves and pollen of treated plants for up to seven years. Seek chemical-free, native plants.)
3. Water source (such as a rain barrel) and soaker hose (or drip irrigation).



Preparing the Land

1. Clear an area of weeds, sod, and all invasive species. Remove any other plants you don't want in the Sanctuary. Do not use chemical herbicides.
2. Leave dead logs and some branches, which provide homes for nesting insects. Decaying vegetation helps support the entire lifecycle of pollinators.
3. The ideal spot has both shade and direct sunlight. The sunnier the site, the greater the diversity of plants it will support. Consider providing some protection from the winds.
4. Till the soil to make it easier to work with. Add top soil if necessary.



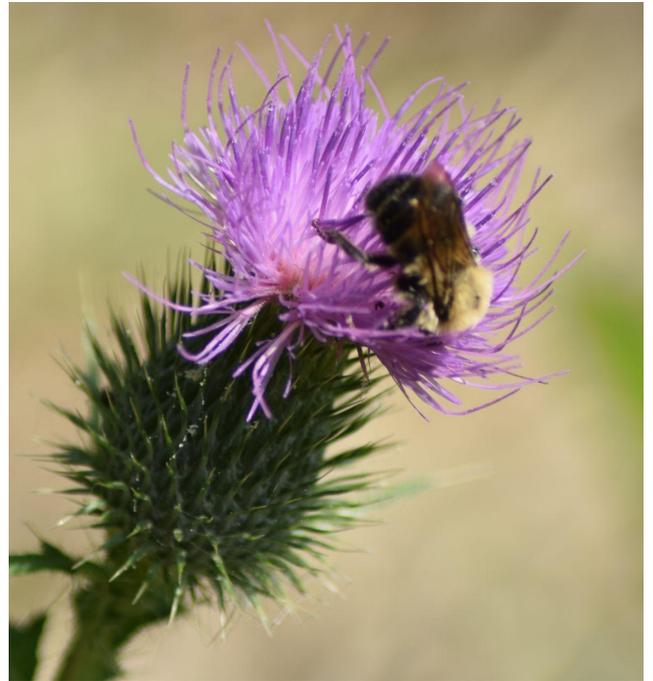
5. Add topsoil if needed, and work in organic compost. Fresh, local compost plus shredded leaves can help reduce unwanted weeds and protect insects. Do not add commercially purchased mulch as it often contains harmful chemicals and dyes. Do not add chemical fertilizers.

6. Leave some areas bare, for ground-nesting insects.

7. Include muddy spots where insects will be able to access water and soil minerals, as well as well-drained places.

Planting Tips

- a. Plant in spring after danger of frost, in summer up to two months before frost, or in late fall. Seeds can over-winter and will sprout and root in spring.
- b. Seeds can be planted directly. Sprinkle them on top of the prepared soil and press gently. Do not cover them.
- c. The seeds in your kit are native to your region. Each packet provides a variety of annual and perennial native flower seeds that will bloom throughout the spring, summer, and fall, as well as plants that support larvae. Some perennials will grow this year, but bloom each year after that.
- d. Milkweed plants are popular with pollinators but of dozens of milkweed species, only 30 are helpful to pollinators such as monarch butterflies. The three species most common in pollinator gardens are common milkweed, butterfly weed, and swamp milkweed.
- e. Be aware of which plants will spread rapidly and plan for that. For example, milkweed grows quickly and aggressively. Plant it in a contained space (such as a raised bed). Cut any immature seed pods off before they mature and drift all over the garden.
- f. Denser plantings will help lock in moisture and reduce weeds. Clustering plants close together also makes it easier for pollinators to forage.



Care for Your Pollinator Sanctuary

- a. Water the entire garden with a gentle and thorough sprinkling. New plants are delicate and seeds can be easily washed away. Water often during the first year. Generally, an inch of water per week is needed. Keep soil moist until seedlings are about 8 inches tall.
- b. Weed by hand. Consider whether weeds are actually wildflowers native to your area!



- c. In the fall, leave the seed heads and stalks to provide food and habitat for birds and overwintering insects. You can also add a little leaf mulch in the fall.
- d. In the spring, cut back foliage and add organic compost. Add new native annuals each year. Leave dead plants or till them under to decompose naturally. Allow natural reseeding.
- e. Plan for native perennials to spread. Some will spread with shoots and rhizomes, others will propagate with seeds.
- f. Never use weed killers, chemical fertilizers, or pesticides. Wildflowers are adaptable and don't need chemical help.
- g. Consider registering your Pollinator Sanctuary with

the Million Pollinator Challenge (<https://www.pollinator.org/mpgcmmap>)

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