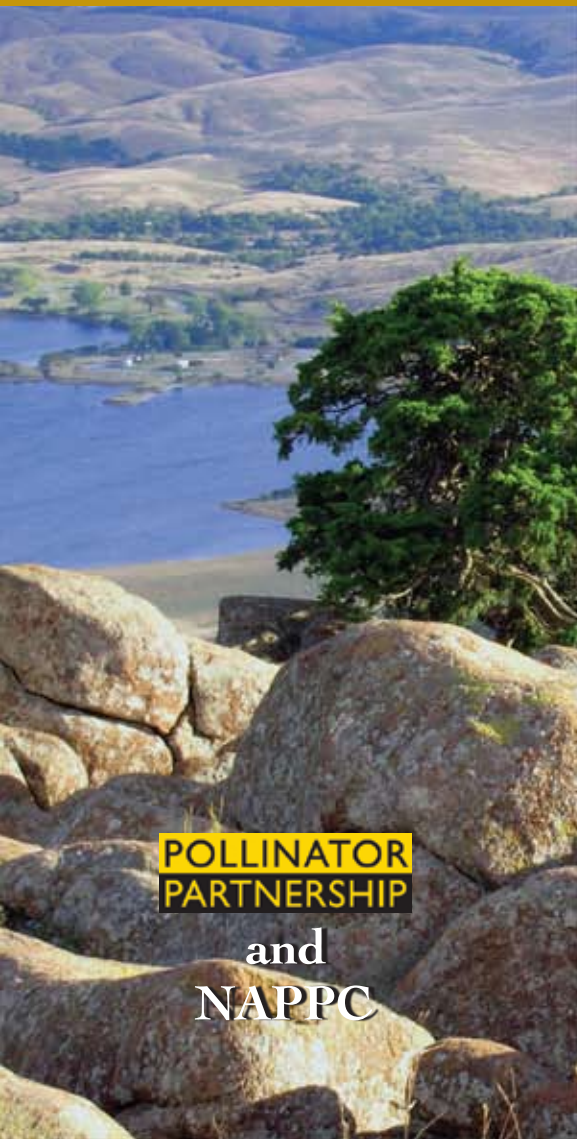




# SELECTING PLANTS FOR POLLINATORS



A REGIONAL GUIDE FOR FARMERS, LAND MANAGERS, AND GARDENERS IN THE



## GREAT PLAINS STEPPE AND SHRUB PROVINCE



**POLLINATOR  
PARTNERSHIP**

and  
**NAPPC**

INCLUDING PARTS OF  
OKLAHOMA AND TEXAS

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This is one of several guides for different regions in the United States. We welcome your feedback to assist us in making the future guides useful. Please contact us at [feedback@pollinator.org](mailto:feedback@pollinator.org)

Cover: Black Swallowtail butterfly,  
courtesy Kim Davis & Mike Stangeland

# SELECTING PLANTS FOR POLLINATORS

## **A REGIONAL GUIDE FOR FARMERS, LAND MANAGERS, AND GARDENERS**

IN THE  
ECOLOGICAL REGION OF THE

### **GREAT PLAINS STEPPE AND SHRUB PROVINCE**

INCLUDING PARTS OF  
OKLAHOMA AND TEXAS

A NAPPC AND POLLINATOR PARTNERSHIP™ PUBLICATION

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This guide was funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the C.S. Fund, the Plant Conservation Alliance, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management with oversight by the Pollinator Partnership™ ([www.pollinator.org](http://www.pollinator.org)), in support of the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign (NAPPC—[www.nappc.org](http://www.nappc.org)).





## WHY SUPPORT POLLINATORS?

IN THEIR 1996 BOOK, *THE FORGOTTEN POLLINATORS*, Buchmann and Nabhan estimated that animal pollinators are needed for the reproduction of 90% of flowering plants and one third of human food crops. Each of us depends on these industrious pollinators in a practical way to provide us with the wide range of foods we eat. In addition, pollinators are part of the intricate web that supports the biological diversity in natural ecosystems that helps sustain our quality of life.

Abundant and healthy populations of pollinators can improve fruit set and quality, and increase fruit size. In farming situations this increases production per acre. In the wild, biodiversity increases and wildlife food sources increase.

Alfalfa, apples, watermelon, and onions are some of the crops raised in the Great Plains Steppe and Shrub Province that rely on honey bees and native bees for pollination. Domestic honey bees pollinate approximately \$10 billion worth of crops in the U.S. each year.

Unfortunately, the numbers of both native pollinators and domesticated bee populations are declining. They are threatened by habitat loss, disease, and the excessive and inappropriate use of pesticides. The loss of commercial bees to Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) has highlighted how severe the issues of proper hive management are to reduce stresses caused by disease, pesticide use, insufficient nutrition, and transportation practices. Currently, the pollination services that the commercial beekeeping industry provides are receiving much needed research and conservation resources. The efforts to understand the threats to commercial bees should help us understand other pollinators and their roles in the environment as well.

It is imperative that we take immediate steps to help pollinator populations thrive. The beauty of the situation is that by supporting pollinators' need for habitat, we support our own needs for food and support diversity in the natural world.

Thank you for taking time to consult this guide. By adding plants to your landscape that provide food and shelter for pollinators throughout their active seasons and by adopting pollinator friendly landscape practices, you can make a difference to both the pollinators and the people that rely on them.



Val Dolcini  
President & CEO  
Pollinator Partnership

“ **FARMING FEEDS**

**THE WORLD, AND**

**WE MUST REMEMBER**

**THAT POLLINATORS**

**ARE A CRITICAL**

**LINK IN OUR FOOD**

**SYSTEMS. ”**

-- PAUL GROWALD,  
CO-FOUNDER,  
POLLINATOR PARTNERSHIP



## GETTING STARTED



THIS REGIONAL GUIDE IS JUST ONE in a series of plant selection tools designed to provide information on how individuals can influence pollinator populations through choices they make when they farm a plot of ground, manage large tracts of public land, or plant a garden. Each of us can have a positive impact by providing the essential habitat requirements for pollinators including food, water, shelter, and enough space to allow pollinators to raise their young.

Pollinators travel through the landscape without regard to property ownership or state boundaries. We've chosen to use R.G. Bailey's classification system to identify the geographic focus of this guide and to underscore the connections between climate and vegetation types that affect the diversity of pollinators in the environment.

Bailey's Ecoregions of the United States, developed by the United States Forest Service, is a system

created as a management tool and is used to predict responses to land management practices throughout large areas. This guide addresses pollinator-friendly land management practices in what is known as the Great Plains Steppe and Shrub Province.

Comprising 17,600 square miles largely located in South Western Oklahoma, this province is dominated by irregular plains broken up with scattered low mountains and tablelands. The plains slope upward from east to west and range in elevation from 1,600 to 3,000 feet with local relief of less than 300 feet. The climate is characterized as semiarid-subtropical with warm to hot summers and cold and dry winters. Average annual temperatures are 57° to 64°F. Average annual rainfall ranges from 19-29 inches.

This province is characterized by tall grassland with some tree cover. Grasses include little bluestem, sand saltbrush, and sand

bluestem. Prairies of bluestem-grama flourish on fine textured soils most common to the region, oak-savanna occurs along river valleys and on the province's eastern edge, and sandsage-bluestem prairies dominate the coarser soil along its western border.

Long before there were homes and farms in this area, the original, natural vegetation provided continuous cover and adjacent feeding opportunities for wildlife, including pollinators. In choosing plants, aim to create habitat for pollinators that allow adequate food shelter, and water sources. Most pollinators have very small home ranges. You can make a difference by understanding the vegetation patterns of the farm, forest, or neighbor's yard adjacent to you and by making planting choices that support the pollinators' need for food and shelter as they move through the landscape.

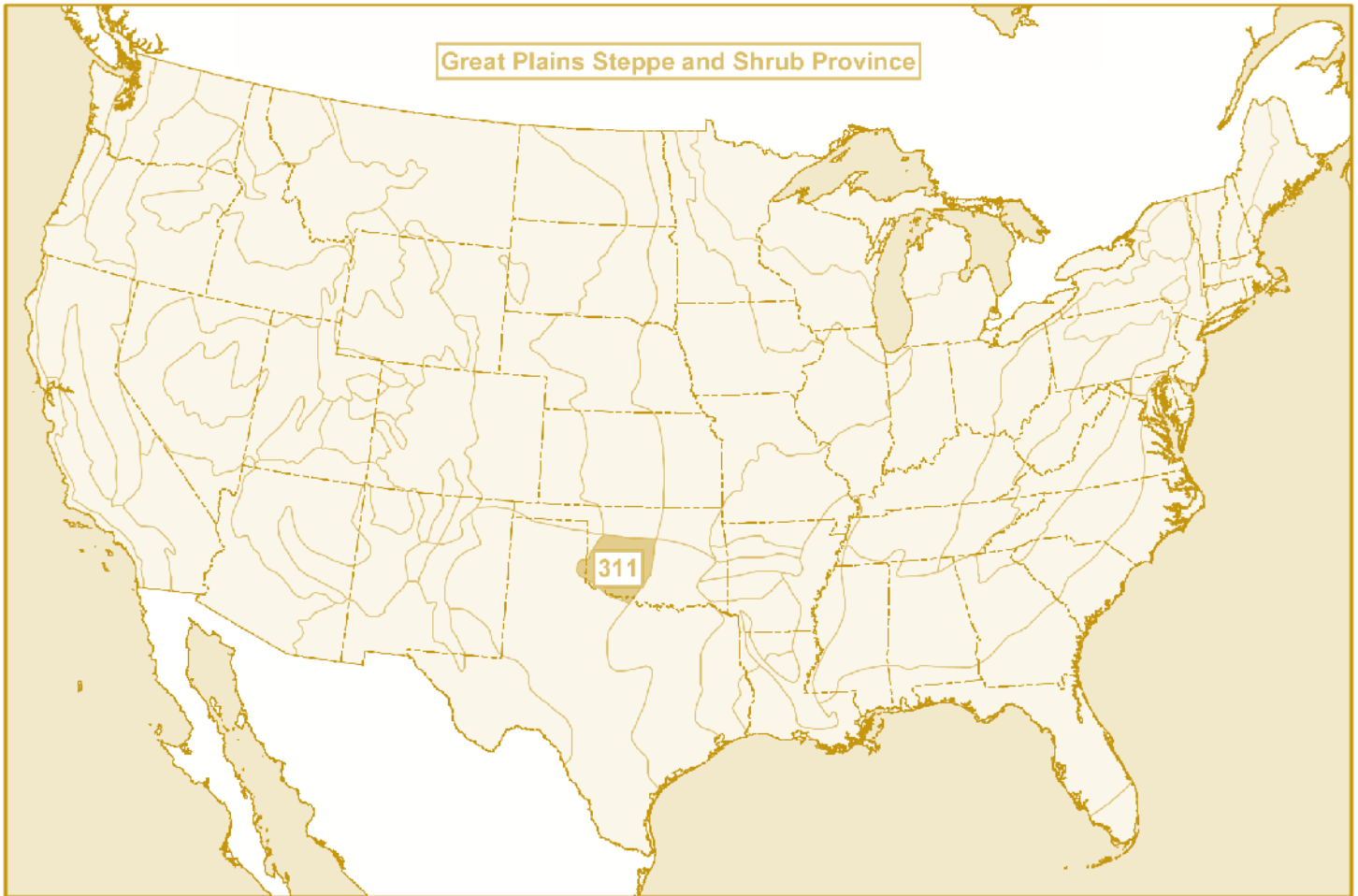
## UNDERSTANDING THE GREAT PLAINS STEPPE AND SHRUB



- ✿ This region is designated **number 311** in the Baileys' Ecosystem Provinces. To see a map of the provinces go to: [www.fs.fed.us/colorimagemap/ecoreg1\\_provinces.html](http://www.fs.fed.us/colorimagemap/ecoreg1_provinces.html)
- ✿ Not sure about which bioregion you live or work in? Go to [www.pollinator.org](http://www.pollinator.org) and click on **Ecoregion Locator** for help.
- ✿ 17,600 square miles largely within South Western Oklahoma.
- ✿ Irregular plains dissected by low mountains and tablelands.
- ✿ Elevations ranging from 1,600 to 3,000 feet.
- ✿ Average annual temperature range from 57°F to 64°F.
- ✿ Average year-round precipitation of between 19-29 inches.
- ✿ USDA Hardiness Zones 6b-7a.

### CHARACTERISTICS

- ✿ Dominated by level to gently sloping tall grassland prairies with minimal relief and some oak-savanna cover.
- ✿ Common grasses include little bluestem, indiangrass, sand saltbrush, switchgrass and sand bluestem.
- ✿ Natural habitat has been heavily altered for agricultural purposes.



The Great Plains Steppe  
and Shrub Province  
includes parts of:

Oklahoma and Texas

**“ADDING NATIVE PLANTINGS IN RIPARIAN AREAS  
TO IMPROVE POLLINATOR HABITAT MAKES  
SENSE IN ADVANCING OUR FAMILY FARM’S  
CONSERVATION AND ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES,  
ENHANCING BENEFICIAL WILDLIFE AND  
IMPROVING POLLINATION IN OUR ORCHARD AND  
GARDEN.”**

—LEE MCDANIEL, FARMER AND PRESIDENT,  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS



# MEET THE POLLINATORS

## WHO ARE THE POLLINATORS?

### BEES

Bees are well documented pollinators in the natural and agricultural systems of the Great Plains Steppe and Shrub. Crops such as alfalfa, apples, watermelon, and onions are just a few plants that benefit from bee pollinators.

Most of us are familiar with the colonies of honey bees that have been the workhorses of agricultural pollination for years in the United States. They were imported from Europe almost 400 years ago.

There are nearly 4000 species of native ground and twig nesting bees in the U.S. Some form colonies while others live and work a solitary life. Native bees currently pollinate many crops and can be encouraged to do more to support agricultural endeavors if their needs for nesting habitat are met and if suitable sources of nectar, pollen, and water are provided. Bees have tongues of varying lengths that help determine which flowers they can obtain nectar and pollen from.

The bumble bee (*Bombus* spp.) forms small colonies, usually underground. They are generalists, feeding on a wide range of plant material from February to November and are important pollinators of tomatoes. The sweat bee (family *Halictidae*) nests underground. Various species are solitary while others form loose colonies.

Solitary bees include carpenter bees (*Xylocopa* spp.), which nest in wood; digger, or polyester bees (*Colletes* spp.), which nest underground; leafcutter bees (*Megachile* spp.), which prefer dead trees or branches for their nest sites; and mason bees (*Osmia* spp.), which utilize cavities that they find in stems and dead wood. Cactus bees (*Diadasia* spp.) are also solitary ground nesters.

### BUTTERFLIES

Gardeners have been attracting butterflies to their gardens for some time. These insects tend to be eye-catching, as are the flowers that attract them. Position flowering plants where they have full sun and are protected from the wind. Also, you will need to provide open areas (e.g. bare earth, large stones) where butterflies may bask, and moist soil from which they may get needed minerals. By providing a safe place to eat and nest, gardeners can also support the pollination role that butterflies play in the landscape. It might mean accepting slight damage to the plants, known as host plants, that provide food for the larval stage of the butterfly.

A diverse group of butterflies are present in garden areas and woodland edges that provide bright flowers, water sources, and specific host plants. Numerous trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants support butterfly populations.

Butterflies are in the Order *Lepidoptera*. Some of the species in




Honey bee on flower.



Black-chinned hummingbird.





the Great Plains Steppe and Shrub are White Admiral, Bordered Patch, Graphic Crescent, Black Swallowtail, and Outis Skipper butterflies. They usually look for flowers that provide a good landing platform.

Wet mud areas provide butterflies with both the moisture and minerals they need to stay healthy. Butterflies eat rotten fruit and even dung, so don't clean up all the messes in your garden!

## MOTHS

Moths are most easily distinguished from butterflies by their antennae. Butterfly antennae are simple with a swelling at the end. Moth antennae differ from simple to featherlike, but never have a swelling at the tip. In addition, butterflies typically are active during the day; moths at night. Butterfly bodies are not very hairy, while moth bodies are quite hairy and more stout.

Moths, generally less colorful than butterflies, also play a role in pollination. They are attracted to flowers that are strongly sweet smelling, open in late afternoon or night, and are typically white or pale colored.

## BEETLES

Over 30,000 species of beetles are found in the United States and many of them can be found on flower heads. Gardeners have yet to intentionally draw beetles to their gardens, possibly because

beetle watching isn't as inspiring as butterfly or bird watching. Yet beetles do play a role in pollination. Some have a bad reputation because they can leave a mess behind, damaging plant parts that they eat. Beetles are not as efficient as some pollinators. They wander between different species, often dropping pollen as they go.

Beetle pollinated plants tend to be large, strong scented flowers with their sexual organs exposed. They are known to pollinate Magnolia, sweetshrub (*Calycanthus*), paw paws, and yellow pond lilies.

## FLIES

It may be hard to imagine why one would want to attract flies to the garden. However, like beetles, the number of fly species and the fact that flies are generalist pollinators (visit many species of plants), should encourage us all to leave those flies alone and let them do their job as pollinators.

Recent research indicates that flies primarily pollinate small flowers that bloom under shade and in seasonally moist habitats. The National Research Council's *Status of Pollinators in North America* study states that flies are economically important as pollinators for a range of annual and bulbous ornamental flowers.

Plants pollinated by the fly include the American pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*), dead horse arum (*Helicodiceros muscivorus*), skunk

cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*), goldenrod (*Solidago* spp.), and members of the carrot family like Queen Anne's lace (*Daucus carota*).

## BIRDS

Hummingbirds are the primary birds which play a role in pollination in North America. Their long beaks and tongues draw nectar from tubular flowers. Pollen is carried on both the beaks and feathers of different hummingbirds. The regions closer to the tropics, with warmer climates, boast the largest number of hummingbird species and the greatest number of native plants to support the bird's need for food. White-winged doves (*Zenaidura macroura*) are also pollinators of the saguaro cactus (*Carnegeia gigantea*) in the south central United States.

Bright colored tubular flowers attract hummingbirds to gardens throughout the United States. Hummingbirds can see the color red; bees cannot. American crossvine growing in the Great Plains Steppe and Shrub attracts Black-chinned hummingbirds.

## BATS

Though bats in the Great Plains Steppe and Shrub are not pollinators, bats play an important role in the pollination of agave, organ pipe and saguaro cacti. The long-nosed bats' head shape and long tongue allows it to delve into flower blossoms and extract both pollen and nectar.

## PLANT TRAITS

### WHICH FLOWERS DO THE POLLINATORS PREFER?

NOT ALL POLLINATORS ARE found in each North American province, and some are more important in different parts of the United States. Use this page as a resource to understand the plants and pollinators where you live.

Plants can be grouped together based on the similar characteristics of their flowers. These floral characteristics can be useful to predict the type of pollination method or animal that is most effective for that group of plants. This association between floral characteristics and pollination method is called a pollination syndrome.

The interactions of animal pollinators and plants have influenced the evolution of both groups of organisms. A mutualistic relationship between the pollinator and the plant species helps the pollinator find necessary pollen and nectar sources and helps the plant reproduce by ensuring that pollen is carried from one flower to another.

Plant Trait	Bats	Bees	Beetles
Color	Dull white, green or purple	Bright white, yellow, blue, or UV	Dull white or green
Nectar guides	Absent	Present	Absent
Odor	Strong musty; emitted at night	Fresh, mild, pleasant	None to strongly fruity or fetid
Nectar	Abundant; somewhat hidden	Usually present	Sometimes present; not hidden
Pollen	Ample	Limited; often sticky and scented	Ample
Flower Shape	Regular; bowl shaped – closed during day	Shallow; have landing platform; tubular	Large bowl-like, Magnolia

This chart and more information on pollinator syndromes can be found at:



## AND THE POLLINATORS THEY ATTRACT

### Pollinator

Birds	Butterflies	Flies	Moths	Wind
Scarlet, orange, red or white	Bright, including red and purple	Pale and dull to dark brown or purple; flecked with translucent patches	Pale and dull red, purple, pink or white	Dull green, brown, or colorless; petals absent or reduced
Absent	Present	Absent	Absent	Absent
None	Faint but fresh	Putrid	Strong sweet; emitted at night	None
Ample; deeply hidden	Ample; deeply hidden	Usually absent	Ample; deeply hidden	None
Modest	Limited	Modest in amount	Limited	Abundant; small, smooth, and not sticky
Large funnel like; cups, strong perch support	Narrow tube with spur; wide landing pad	Shallow; funnel like or complex and trap-like	Regular; tubular without a lip	Regular; small and stigmas exerted

<http://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/syndromes.shtml>





# DEVELOPING LANDSCAPE PLANTINGS THAT PROVIDE POLLINATOR HABITAT

WHETHER YOU ARE A FARMER of many acres, land manager of a large tract of land, or a gardener with a small lot, you can increase the number of pollinators in your area by making conscious choices to include plants that provide essential habitat for bees, butterflies, moths, beetles, hummingbirds and other pollinators.

## FOOD:

Flowers provide nectar (high in sugar and necessary amino acids) and pollen (high in protein) to pollinators.

Fermenting fallen fruits also provide food for bees, beetles and butterflies.

Specific plants, known as host plants, are eaten by the larvae of pollinators such as butterflies.

- Plant in groups to increase pollination efficiency. If a pollinator can visit the same type of flower over and over, it doesn't have to relearn how to enter the flower and can transfer pollen to the same species, instead of squandering the pollen on unreceptive flowers.
- Plant with bloom season in mind, providing food from early spring to late fall. (see Bloom Periods pp.16-17)
- Plant a diversity of plants to support a variety of pollinators. Flowers of different color, fragrance, and season of bloom on plants of different heights will attract different pollinator species and provide pollen and nectar throughout the seasons.
- Many herbs and annuals, although

not native, are very good for pollinators. Mint, oregano, garlic, chives, parsley and lavender are just a few herbs that can be planted. Old fashioned zinnias, cosmos, and single sunflowers support bees and butterflies.

- Recognize weeds that might be a good source of food. For example, dandelions provide nectar in the early spring before other flowers open. Plantain is alternate host for the Baltimore Checkerspot.
- Learn and utilize Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices to address pest concerns. Minimize or eliminate the use of pesticides.

## SHELTER:

Pollinators need protection from severe weather and from predators as well as sites for nesting and roosting.

- Incorporate different canopy layers in the landscape by planting trees, shrubs, and different-sized perennial plants.
- Leave dead snags for nesting sites of bees, and other dead plants and leaf litter for shelter.
- Build bee boxes to encourage solitary, non-aggressive bees to nest on your property.
- Leave some areas of soil uncovered to provide ground nesting insects easy access to underground tunnels.
- Group plantings so that pollinators can move safely through the landscape protected from predators.
- Include plants that are needed

by butterflies during their larval development.

## WATER:

A clean, reliable source of water is essential to pollinators.

- Natural and human-made water features such as running water, pools, ponds, and small containers of water provide drinking and bathing opportunities for pollinators.
- Ensure the water sources have a shallow or sloping side so the pollinators can easily approach the water without drowning.

Your current landscape probably includes many of these elements. Observe wildlife activity in your farm fields, woodlands, and gardens to determine what actions you can take to encourage other pollinators to feed and nest. Evaluate the placement of individual plants and water sources and use your knowledge of specific pollinator needs to guide your choice and placement of additional plants and other habitat elements. Minor changes by many individuals can positively impact the pollinator populations in your area. Watch for - and enjoy - the changes in your landscape!

- **CAUTION:** Remember that pesticides are largely toxic to pollinators. Extreme caution is warranted if you choose to use any pesticide. Strategically apply pesticides only for problematic target species.



## FARMS

Alfalfa, apples, watermelon, and onion are a few of the food crops in the Great Plains Steppe and Shrub Province that will benefit from strong native bee populations that boost pollination efficiency. Incorporate different plants throughout the farm that provide food for native populations when targeted crops are not in flower.

Farmers have many opportunities to incorporate pollinator-friendly land management practices on their land which will benefit the farmer in achieving his or her production goals:

- Manage the use of pesticides to reduce the impact on native pollinators. Spray when bees aren't active (just after dawn) and choose targeted ingredients.
- Carefully consider the use of herbicides. Perhaps the targeted

weeds can provide needed food for pollinators.

- Minimize tillage to protect ground nesting pollinators.
- Ensure water sources are scattered throughout the landscape.
- Choose a variety of native plants to act as windbreaks, riparian buffers, and field borders throughout the farm.
- Plant unused areas of the farm with temporary cover crops that can provide food or with a variety of trees, shrubs, and flowers that provide both food and shelter for pollinators.
- Check with your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office to see what technical and financial support might be available to assist you in your effort to provide nectar, pollen, and larval food sources for pollinators on your farm.

“**FOOD SUPPLIES FOR  
BEES ARE CRITICAL  
TO MAINTAINING  
STRONG HIVES  
FOR ALMOND  
POLLINATION  
THE FOLLOWING  
WINTER.**”

-- DAN CUMMINGS,  
CHICO, CALIFORNIA  
ALMOND GROWER.



Illustrations by Carolyn Vibbert

## PUBLIC LANDS

“FROM  
HUMMINGBIRDS  
TO BEETLES, TO  
BUTTERFLIES,  
NATURE’S  
POLLINATORS HELP  
KEEP MIDWIN’S  
TALLGRASS PRAIRIE  
RESTORATIONS  
FULL OF DIVERSE  
FLOWERING  
PLANTS. INSECT  
MONITORING  
PROVIDES A KEY  
MEASURE OF OUR  
SUCCESS.”

-- LOGAN LEE

PRAIRIE SUPERVISOR, MIDWIN  
NATIONAL TALLGRASS PRAIRIE



Public lands are maintained for specific reasons ranging from high impact recreation to conservation. In the Great Plains Steppe and Shrub, conversion of rich soils for agriculture (mainly corn and soybean crops) or pasture has eliminated a majority of native habitat. Less disturbed natural areas can be augmented with plantings of native plant species. Existing plantings around buildings and parking areas should be evaluated to determine if pollinator-friendly plants can be substituted or added to attract and support pollinators. Public land managers have a unique opportunity to use their plantings as an education tool to help others understand the importance of pollinators in the environment through signs, brochures, and public

programs.

In an effort to increase populations of pollinators the land manager can:

- Inventory and become knowledgeable of local pollinators.
- Provide connectivity between vegetation areas by creating corridors of perennials, shrubs, and trees that provide pollinators shelter and food as they move through the landscape.
- Maintain a minimum of lawn areas that support recreational needs.
- Restrict the use of pesticides and herbicides.
- Provide water sources in large open areas.
- Maintain natural meadows and openings that provide habitats for sun-loving wildflowers and grasses.
- Remove invasive species and encroaching shrubs and trees.





**“A GARDEN IS ONLY AS RICH AND BEAUTIFUL AS THE INTEGRAL HEALTH OF THE SYSTEM; POLLINATORS ARE ESSENTIAL TO THE SYSTEM - MAKE YOUR HOME THEIR HOME.”**

-- DERRY MACBRIDE  
NATIONAL AFFAIRS AND  
LEGISLATION CHAIRWOMAN,  
GARDEN CLUB OF AMERICA

Gardeners have a wide array of plants to use in their gardens. Native plants, plants introduced from around the world, and plants developed by professional and amateur breeders can be found in garden centers, in catalogs, and on web-sites. Use your knowledge of pollinator needs to guide your choices.

- Choose a variety of plants that will provide nectar and pollen throughout the growing season.
- Resist the urge to have a totally manicured lawn and garden. Leave bare ground for ground nesting bees. Leave areas of dead wood and leaf litter for other insects.
- Strive to eliminate the use of all pesticides.
- Find local resources to help you in your efforts. Contact your local county extension agent or native plant society. Visit your regional botanic gardens and arboreta.

The scale of your plantings will vary but it is important to remember that you are trying to provide connectivity to the landscape adjacent to your property. Don't just look within your property boundaries. If your neighbor's property provides an essential element, such as water, which can be utilized by pollinators visiting your land, you may be able to devote more space to habitat elements that are missing nearby. It is best to use native plants which have evolved to support the needs of specific native pollinators. Some pollinators, however, are generalists and visit many different plants, both native and non-native. Be sure that any non-native plants you choose to use are not invasive. Remember that specialized cultivars sometimes aren't used by pollinators. Flowers that have been drastically altered, such as those that are double or a completely different color than the wild species, often prevent pollinators from finding and feeding on the flowers. In addition, some altered plants don't contain the same nectar and pollen resources that attract pollinators to the wild types.

- **CAUTION:** Take time to evaluate the source of your plant material. You want to ensure you get plants that are healthy and correctly identified. Your local native plant society can help you make informed decisions when searching for plants.



# BLOOM PERIODS

## FOR THE GREAT PLAINS STEPPE AND SHRUB

The following chart lists plants and the time they are in bloom throughout the growing seasons. Choose a variety of flower colors and make sure something is blooming at all times! Note for all charts: When more than one species of the same genus is useful, the genus name is followed by “spp.”

Botanical Name	Common Name	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct
Trees & Shrubs										
<i>Acer saccharinum</i>	Silver Maple	red	red							
<i>Aesculus glabra</i>	Ohio Buckeye			greenish yellow	greenish yellow					
<i>Amorpha canescens</i>	Lead Plant					purple	purple	purple		
<i>Catalpa speciosa</i>	Northern Catalpa				white with purple	white with purple				
<i>Ceanothus americanus</i>	New Jersey Tea			white	white	white				
<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	Eastern Redbud		pink	pink						
<i>Diospyros virginiana</i>	Persimmon			yellow	yellow					
<i>Prunus angustifolia</i>	Chickasaw Plum			white						
<i>Prunus virginiana</i>	Choke Cherry			white						
<i>Rhus aromatica</i>	Aromatic Sumac		greenish yellow	greenish yellow						
<i>Rhus copalinum</i>	Winged Sumac		greenish yellow	greenish yellow						
<i>Salix nigra</i>	Black Willow		creamy white	creamy white						
<i>Viburnum rufidulum</i>	Rusky Nannyberry				white	white				
Perennial Flowers										
<i>Amsonia ciliata</i>	Fringed Bluestar				pale blue	pale blue				
<i>Apocynum cannabinum</i>	Indianhemp					white	white	white		
<i>Asclepias speciosa</i>	Showy Milkweed					pale purple	pale purple	pale purple		
<i>Asclepias sullivantii</i>	Prairie Milkweed					rose to rose purple	rose to rose purple	rose to rose purple		
<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	Butterfly Milkweed					orange, red, yellow	orange, red, yellow	orange, red, yellow		
<i>Astragalus crassicaulis</i>	Ground-plum Milkweed			lavender	lavender					
<i>Baptisia australis</i>	Blue wild Indigo				indigo blue, purple					
<i>Callirhoe involucrata</i>	Purple Poppy Mallow			rose purple	rose purple	rose purple	rose purple	rose purple		
<i>Coreopsis grandiflora</i>	Largeflower Tickseed				yellow	yellow	yellow			
<i>Coreopsis tinctoria</i>	Plains Coreopsis					yellow brownish-red base	yellow brownish-red base	yellow brownish-red base	yellow brownish-red base	
<i>Dalea candida</i>	White Prairie Clover					white	white	white		
<i>Dalea purpurea</i>	Purple Prairie Clover					purple	purple	purple		
<i>Delphinium carolinianum</i>	Prairie Larkspur				white to bluish-white	white to bluish-white				
<i>Dodecatheon meadia</i>	Prairie Shooting-star				magenta to white	magenta to white				

Botanical Name	Common Name	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct
<i>Echinacea angustifolia</i>	Blacksamson					purple with brown center	purple with brown center			
<i>Gaillardia pulchella</i>	Indian Blanket Flower				yellow, reddish-purple, brown	yellow, reddish-purple, brown	yellow, reddish-purple, brown	yellow, reddish-purple, brown	yellow, reddish-purple, brown	
<i>Gaura coccinea</i>	Scarlet Gaura				red	red	red	red		
<i>Helianthus maximiliani</i>	Maximilian Sunflower							yellow	yellow	
<i>Helianthus mollis</i>	Ashy sunflower							yellow	yellow	
<i>Lespedeza hirta</i>	Hairy Lespedeza							creamy white	creamy white	
<i>Lespedeza virginica</i>	Slender Lespedeza							violet	violet	
<i>Liatris aspera</i>	Tall Blazing Star							rose purple	rose purple	
<i>Liatris punctata</i>	Dotted Blazing Star							rose purple	rose purple	
<i>Linum berlandieri</i>	Berlandier's Flax			yellow	yellow	yellow				
<i>Lithospermum carolinense</i>	Carolina Pucoon				yellow	yellow				
<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	Cardinal Flower							red	red	
<i>Mentzelia nuda</i>	Bractless Blazingstar						white	white	white	
<i>Mirabilis nyctaginea</i>	Wild Four-o'clock				pink to reddish-purple	pink to reddish-purple	pink to reddish-purple	pink to reddish-purple		
<i>Oenothera macrocarpa</i>	Missouri Evening Primrose				pale yellow	pale yellow	pale yellow	pale yellow		
<i>Oenothera speciosa</i>	Showy Evening Primrose				white	white	white			
<i>Penstemon cobaea</i>	Cobaea Penstemon				white to pale purple	white to pale purple				
<i>Physalis hispida</i>	Prairie Groundcherry				yellow	yellow	yellow	yellow	yellow	
<i>Ratibida columnifera</i>	Prairie Coneflower				yellow, brown	yellow, brown	yellow, brown	yellow, brown		
<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	Black-eyed Susan				yellow, brown	yellow, brown	yellow, brown	yellow, brown	yellow, brown	
<i>Ruellia humilis</i>	Prairie Petunia					lavender to purple	lavender to purple	lavender to purple	lavender to purple	
<i>Salvia azurea</i>	Azure Blue Sage						blue	blue	blue	blue
<i>Silphium integrifolium</i>	Wholeleaf Rosinweed						yellow	yellow	yellow	
<i>Silphium laciniatum</i>	Compass Plant						yellow	yellow	yellow	yellow
<i>Solidago missouriensis</i>	Missouri Goldenrod						yellow	yellow	yellow	yellow
<i>Solidago speciosa</i>	Showy goldenrod							yellow	yellow	yellow
<i>Sphaeralcea coccinea</i>	Scarlet Globe Mallow				salmon-pink to brick red	salmon-pink to brick red	salmon-pink to brick red	salmon-pink to brick red		
<i>Symphyotrichum ericoides</i>	Heath Aster								white	white
<i>Symphyotrichum oblongifolium</i>	Aromatic Aster								bluish purple	bluish purple
<i>Verbena stricta</i>	Hoary Vervain					blue to purple	blue to purple	blue to purple	blue to purple	
<i>Verbena urticifolia</i>	White Vervain					white	white	white	white	



# PLANTS THAT ATTRACT POLLINATORS

## FOR THE GREAT PLAINS STEPPE AND SHRUB

The following chart lists plants that attract pollinators. It is not exhaustive, but provides guidance on where to start. Annuals, herbs, weeds, and cover crops provide food and shelter for pollinators, too.

Botanical Name	Common Name	Color	Height	Flower Season	Sun	Soil	Visitation by Pollinator
Trees & Shrubs							
<i>Acer saccharinum</i>	Silver Maple	red	50-100'	February-March	sun to partial sun	moist	bees
<i>Aesculus glabra</i>	Ohio Buckeye	greenish yellow	70-90'	April-May	sun to shade	moist	
<i>Amorpha canescens</i>	Lead Plant	purple	1-3'	June-August	sun	moist to dry	bees
<i>Catalpa speciosa</i>	Northern Catalpa	white with purple	40-60'	May-June	sun to partial sun	moist	bees
<i>Ceanothus americanus</i>	New Jersey Tea	white	2-3'	April-June	sun to partial sun	moist to dry	bees, flies, beetles, butterflies
<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	Eastern Redbud	pink	15-25'	March-April	sun to partial sun	moist to dry	bees
<i>Diospyros virginiana</i>	Persimmon	yellow	50'	April-May	sun to partial sun	moist to dry	bees, flies
<i>Prunus angustifolia</i>	Chickasaw Plum	white	4-6'	April	sun to partial sun	moist	bees
<i>Prunus virginiana</i>	Choke Cherry	white	6-9'	April	sun to partial sun	moist	bees
<i>Rhus aromatica</i>	Aromatic Sumac	greenish yellow	2-3'	March-April	sun to partial sun	moist	flies
<i>Rhus copalinum</i>	Winged Sumac	greenish yellow	2-5'	March-April	sun to partial sun	moist to dry	flies
<i>Salix nigra</i>	Black Willow	cream white	30-35'	March-April	sun to partial sun	wet	bees
<i>Viburnum rufidulum</i>	Russty Nannyberry	white	to 18'	May-June	partial sun to partial shade	moist	flies, beetles
Perennial Flowers							
<i>Amsonia ciliata</i>	Fringed Bluestar	pale blue		May-June	partial sun to partial shade	moist	bees
<i>Apocynum cannabinum</i>	Indianhemp	white	8-40"	June-August	sun to partial sun	moist to dry	bees, flies, beetles, butterflies
<i>Asclepias speciosa</i>	Showy Milkweed	pale purple	2-4'	June-August	sun	moist to dry	bees, beetles, butterflies
<i>Asclepias sullivantii</i>	Prairie Milkweed	rose to rose purple	2-4'	June-August	sun	moist	bees, beetles, butterflies
<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	Butterfly Milkweed	orange, red, yellow	1-3'	June-August	sun	moist to dry	bees, beetles, butterflies
<i>Astragalus crassicaupus</i>	Ground-plum Milkvetch	lavender	1-6"	April-May	sun to partial sun	moist to dry	bees
<i>Baptisia australis</i>	Blue wild Indigo	indigo blue, purple	1-4'	May-June	sun to partial sun	moist to dry	bees
<i>Callirhoe involucrata</i>	Purple Poppy Mallow	rose purple	12'	April-August	sun	dry	bees, flies, beetles, butterflies
<i>Coreopsis grandiflora</i>	Largeflower Tickseed	yellow	1-3'	May-July	sun	dry	bees, flies, beetles, butterflies
<i>Coreopsis tinctoria</i>	Plains Coreopsis	yellow brownish-red base	2-4'	June-September	sun	moist to dry	bees, flies, beetles, butterflies
<i>Dalea candida</i>	White Prairie Clover	white	1-3'	June-August	sun to partial sun	moist to dry	bees
<i>Dalea purpurea</i>	Purple Prairie Clover	purple	8-36"	June-August	sun to partial sun	moist to dry	bees
<i>Delphinium carolinianum</i>	Prairie Larkspur	white to bluish-white	1-4'	May-June	sun to partial sun	moist to dry	bees
<i>Dodecatheon meadia</i>	Prairie Shooting-star	magenta to white	10-12"	May-June	sun to partial sun	moist to dry	bees
<i>Echinacea angustifolia</i>	Blacksamson	purple with brown center	6-24"	June-July	sun	moist to dry	bees, flies, beetles, butterflies

Botanical Name	Common Name	Color	Height	Flower Season	Sun	Soil	Visitation by Pollinator
<i>Gaillardia pulchella</i>	Indian Blanket Flower	yellow, reddish-purple, brown	4-24"	May-September	sun	dry	bees, flies, beetles, butterflies
<i>Gaura coccinea</i>	Scarlet Gaura	red	8-24"	May-August	sun to partial sun	moist to dry	hummingbirds
<i>Helianthus maximiliani</i>	Maximilian Sunflower	yellow	2-9'	August-September	sun	moist to dry	bees, flies, beetles, butterflies
<i>Helianthus mollis</i>	Ashy sunflower	yellow	2-5'	August-September	sun	moist to dry	bees, flies, beetles, butterflies
<i>Lespedeza hirta</i>	Hairy Lespedeza	creamy white	2-5'	August-September	sun to partial sun	dry	bees, butterflies
<i>Lespedeza virginica</i>	Slender Lespedeza	violet	2-3'	August-September	sun to partial sun	moist to dry	bees
<i>Liatris aspera</i>	Tall Blazing Star	rose purple	16-48'	August-September	sun	dry	bees
<i>Liatris punctata</i>	Dotted Blazing Star	rose purple	6-30"	August-September	sun	dry	bees
<i>Linum berlandieri</i>	Berlandier's Flax	yellow	2-16"	April-June	sun	dry	bees, flies, beetles, butterflies
<i>Lithospermum carolinense</i>	Carolina Pucoon	yellow	8-18"	May-June	sun to partial sun	moist to dry	bees
<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	Cardinal Flower	red	1-5'	August-September	partial sun to partial shade	wet to moist	hummingbirds
<i>Mentzelia nuda</i>	Bractless Blazingstar	white	1-5'	July-September	sun	moist to dry	bees, flies, beetles, butterflies
<i>Mirabilis nyctaginea</i>	Wild Four-o'clock	pink to reddish-purple	1-4'	May-August	sun to partial sun	moist to dry	bees
<i>Oenothera macrocarpa</i>	Missouri Evening Primrose	pale yellow	6-18"	May-July	sun	moist to dry	moths
<i>Oenothera speciosa</i>	Showy Evening Primrose	white	4-20"	May-July	sun to partial sun	moist to dry	moths
<i>Penstemon cobaea</i>	Cobaea Penstemon	white to pale purple	6-40"	May-June	sun	moist to dry	bees
<i>Physalis hispida</i>	Prairie Groundcherry	yellow	2-20"	May-September	sun	moist to dry	bees
<i>Ratibida columnifera</i>	Prairie Coneflower	yellow, brown	1-3'	May-August	sun	moist to dry	bees
<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	Black-eyed Susan	yellow, brown	1-3'	May-September	sun	moist to dry	bees, flies, beetles, butterflies
<i>Ruellia humilis</i>	Prairie Petunia	lavender to purple	4-20"	June-September	sun to partial sun	dry	bees, beetles, butterflies
<i>Salvia azurea</i>	Azure Blue Sage	blue	2-5'	July-October	sun	dry	bees
<i>Silphium integrifolium</i>	Wholeleaf Rosinweed	yellow	2-5'	July-September	sun	moist	bees, flies, beetles, butterflies
<i>Silphium laciniatum</i>	Compass Plant	yellow	3-10'	July-September	sun	dry	bees, flies, beetles, butterflies
<i>Solidago missouriensis</i>	Missouri Goldenrod	yellow	1-3'	July-October	sun	dry	bees, flies, beetles, butterflies
<i>Solidago speciosa</i>	Showy goldenrod	yellow	1-5'	August-October	sun to partial sun	moist to dry	bees, flies, beetles, butterflies
<i>Sphaeralcea coccinea</i>	Scarlet Globe Mallow	salmon-pink to brick red	4-14"	May-August	sun	dry	hummingbirds, beetles
<i>Symphyotrichum ericoides</i>	Heath Aster	white	1-3'	September-October	sun	moist to dry	bees, flies, beetles, butterflies
<i>Symphyotrichum oblongifolium</i>	Aromatic Aster	bluish-purple	6-18"	September-October	sun	dry	bees, flies, beetles, butterflies
<i>Verbena stricta</i>	Hoary Vervain	blue to purple	1-5'	June-September	sun	dry	bees
<i>Verbena urticifolia</i>	White Vervain	white	2-5'	June-September	sun	dry	bees

# HABITAT HINTS

## FOR THE GREAT PLAINS STEPPE AND SHRUB

### HABITAT REQUIREMENTS FOR BEE-POLLINATED GARDEN FLOWERS AND CROPS

	Bumble	Digger	Lg Carpenter	Sm Carpenter	Squash/ Gourd	Leafcutter	Mason	Sweat	Plasterer	Yellow- faced	Andrenid
FLOWERS											
Catalpa			x								
Catnip	x	x					x				
Clover		x									x
Columbine	x										
Cow parsley										x	
Goldenrod	x	x				x		x			
Impatiens	x										
Irises	x		x								
Lavender	x	x	x			x					
Milkwort								x			
Morning glory				x							
Penstemon	x	x					x				
Passion flowers			x								
Phacelia	x	x		x		x	x	x	x		x
Potentilla										x	
Rose	x		x				x	x		x	
Salvia	x	x	x			x	x				
Saxifrages								x		x	
Sorrel				x							
Sunflowers	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x
Violet								x			x
Wild Mustard		x							x		
Willow catkins									x		x
CROPS											
Almond	x						x				x
Apple							x				
Blueberry	x	x									x
Cherry							x				x
Eggplant	x		x					x			
Gooseberry	x										x
Legumes	x	x				x		x			
Water melon	x							x			
Squash/ Pumpkins/ Gourds			x		x						
Tomatoes	x	x	x					x			
Thyme	x	x					x	x		x	





## HABITAT AND NESTING REQUIREMENTS:

### **Bumble Bees:**

Abandoned mouse nests, other rodent burrows, upside down flower pots, under boards, and other human-made cavities. Colonies are founded by a queen in the spring and don't die out in the fall. New queens mate then and overwinter in a sort of hibernation. Bumble bees are usually active during the morning hours and forage at colder temperatures than honey bees, even flying in light rain.

### **Large carpenter bees:**

Soft dead wood, poplar, cottonwood or willow trunks and limbs, structural timbers including redwood. Depending on the species, there may be one or two brood cycles per year. These bees can be active all day even in the hottest weather.

### **Digger bees:**

Sandy soil, compacted soils, bank sides. Anthophorid bees (now in the Apidae) are usually active in the morning hours, but can be seen at other times.

### **Small carpenter bees:**

Pithy stems including roses and blackberry canes. These bees are more active in the morning but can be found at other times.

### **Squash and Gourd bees:**

Sandy soil, may nest in gardens (where pumpkins, squash and gourds are grown) or pathways. These bees are early risers and can be found in pumpkin patches before dawn. Males often sleep in the wilted flowers.

### **Leafcutter bees:**

Pre-existing circular tunnels of various diameters in dead but sound wood created by emerging beetles, some nest in the ground. Leave dead limbs and trees to support not just pollinators but other wildlife. Leafcutter bees can be seen foraging throughout the day even in hot weather.

### **Mason bees:**

Pre-existing tunnels, various diameters in dead wood made by emerging beetles, or human-made nesting substrates, drilled wood boards, paper soda straws inserted into cans attached to buildings. Mason bees are generally more active in the morning hours.

### **Sweat bees:**

Bare ground, compacted soil, sunny areas not covered by vegetation. Like most bees, sweat bees forage for pollen earlier in the morning and then for nectar later.

### **Plasterer or cellophane bees:**

Bare ground, banks or cliffs. Colletid bees can be active in the morning or later in the day.

### **Yellow-faced bees:**

In dead stems. These bees are more active during morning hours.

### **Andrenid bees:**

Sunny, bare ground, sand soil, under leaf litter or in soil in banksides and cliffs. These generally spring-active bees are most commonly seen on flowers during the morning when pollen and nectar resources are abundant.



**“MONARCH  
BUTTERFLIES  
NEVER FAIL TO  
CATCH THE  
VISITOR’S EYE  
AND ALWAYS  
LEAD TO  
A TEACHABLE  
MOMENT.”**

**-- LOGAN LEE,  
PRAIRIE SUPERVISOR  
MIDEWIN NATIONAL TALLGRASS  
PRAIRIE**

### BECOME FAMILIAR WITH POLLINATORS IN YOUR LANDSCAPE.

- ✿ Watch for activity throughout the day and the seasons.
- ✿ Keep a simple notebook of when and what comes to your garden.  
NOTE: It is not necessary to identify each species when you first get started. Simply note if it is a bee that likes the yellow flower that blooms in the fall.
- ✿ Consult a local field guide or web site when you are ready to learn more details.

### ADD NATIVE PLANTS TO ATTRACT MORE NATIVE POLLINATORS.

- ✿ List the plants you currently have in your landscape.
- ✿ Determine when you need additional flowers to provide nectar and pollen throughout the growing season.
- ✿ Add plants that provide additional seasons of bloom, create variable heights for shelter, and attract the types of pollinators you want.
- ✿ Don't forget to include host plants that provide food and shelter for larval development.
- ✿ Contact your local native plant society or extension agent for more help.

### USE POLLINATOR FRIENDLY LANDSCAPE PRACTICES TO SUPPORT THE POLLINATORS YOU ATTRACT.

- ✿ Use Integrated Pest Management Practices to address pest concerns.
- ✿ Tolerate a little mess – leave dead snags and leaf litter, keep areas bare for ground nesting insects, and leave some weeds that provide food for pollinators.
- ✿ Provide safe access to clean water.

### NOTICE THE CHANGES THAT YOU HAVE HELPED TO CREATE!



## RESOURCES

Many books, websites, and people were consulted to gather information for this guide. Use this list as a starting point to learn more about pollinators and plants in your area.

### BAILEY'S ECOREGION MAPS

#### USDA Forest Service

[http://www.fs.fed.us/land/ecosysgmt/ecoreg1\\_home.html](http://www.fs.fed.us/land/ecosysgmt/ecoreg1_home.html)

### POLLINATION/POLLINATORS

#### Pollinator Partnership

[www.pollinator.org](http://www.pollinator.org)

#### Coevolution Institute

[www.coevolution.org](http://www.coevolution.org)

#### Natural Resources Conservation Service

[www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov)

#### North American Pollinator Protection Campaign

[www.nappc.org](http://www.nappc.org)

#### USDA Forest Service

[www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/](http://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/)

#### Wild Farm Alliance

[www.wildfarmalliance.org](http://www.wildfarmalliance.org)

#### Xerces Society Pollinator Program

[www.xerces.org](http://www.xerces.org)

Shepherd, MD, S. Buchmann, M. Vaughan, and S. Black. 2003. Pollinator Conservation Handbook. Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation. Portland, OR.

#### Illinois Natural History Survey

[www.inhs.uiuc.edu](http://www.inhs.uiuc.edu)

Buchmann, S.L. and G.P. Nabhan. 1997. *The Forgotten Pollinators*. Island Press: Washington, DC.

Committee on the Status of Pollinators in North America. 2007. *Status of Pollinators in North America*. The National Academies Press: Washington, DC.

### NATIVE PLANTS

#### Plant Conservation Alliance

[www.nps.gov/plants](http://www.nps.gov/plants)

#### Seeds of Success

[www.nps.gov/plants/sos](http://www.nps.gov/plants/sos)

#### Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

[www.wildflower.org/plants/](http://www.wildflower.org/plants/)

#### USDA Hardiness Zone Map

[www.usna.usda.gov/Hardzone/](http://www.usna.usda.gov/Hardzone/)

#### U.S. National Arboretum

[www.usna.usda.gov/Hardzone/ushzmap.html](http://www.usna.usda.gov/Hardzone/ushzmap.html)

USDA, NRCS. 2007. The PLANTS Database

[www.plants.usda.gov](http://www.plants.usda.gov), 19 July, 2007  
National Plant Data Center,  
Baton Rouge, LA 70874-4490 USA

### NATIVE BEES

#### National Sustainable Information Service

"Alternative Pollinators: Native Bees" by Lane Greer, NCAT Agriculture Specialist, Published 1999, ATTRA Publication #IP126  
[www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/nativebee.html](http://www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/nativebee.html)

#### Agriculture Research Service

*Plants Attractive to Native Bees* table  
[www.ars.usda.gov/Research/docs.htm?docid=12052](http://www.ars.usda.gov/Research/docs.htm?docid=12052)

Christopher O'Toole and Anthony Raw. 1999. *Bees of the World*. Blandford. London, UK.

### BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

Opler, Paul A., Harry Pavulaan, Ray E. Stanford, Michael Pogue, coordinators. 2006. *Butterflies and Moths of North America*. Bozeman, MT: NBII Mountain Prairie Information Node.  
[www.butterfliesandmoths.org/](http://www.butterfliesandmoths.org/)  
(Version 07192007)

Jim Brock and Kenn Kaufman. 2003. *Butterflies of North America*. Houghton Mifflin. New York, NY.

#### North American Butterfly Association

[www.naba.org](http://www.naba.org)

## FEEDBACK

We need your help to create better guides for other parts of North America. Please e-mail your input to [feedback@pollinator.org](mailto:feedback@pollinator.org) or fax to 415-362-3070.

✂ How will you use this guide?

✂ Do you find the directions clear? If not, please tell us what is unclear.

✂ Is there any information you feel is missing from the guide?

✂ Any other comments?

**THANK YOU  
FOR TAKING  
THE TIME TO HELP!**

## POLLINATOR PARTNERSHIP



**NAPPC**



Plant Conservation Alliance



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