

CREATE A POLLINATOR GARDEN

City of St. Louis Sustainable Neighborhood Initiative



DESCRIPTION

Pollinators play an essential role in the production of fruit and seeds of about 90% of flowering plants. One out of every three bites of food we eat depends on pollinators. For this reason and many others, President Obama released the [Presidential Memorandum: Creating a Federal Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and Other Pollinators](#). There is a wide variety of pollinators, including bees, butterflies, birds, bats, and lizards. Planting a pollinator garden can increase habitat, beautify the area, enhance a community's sense of place and build relationships between neighbors. Using native plants in your garden requires little maintenance and no fertilizers or pesticides. There are many resources available for different kinds of pollinator gardens. For example, [Milkweeds for Monarchs: The St. Louis Butterfly Project](#) has numerous resources available to create and care for a monarch butterfly garden. The specific layout and types of plants you use will depend on your particular site, as well as which types of pollinators you wish to attract.

NEIGHBORHOOD BENEFITS

Environmental

- Improved air, water, and soil quality
- Increased micro habitat for small animals and insects
- Improved biodiversity, local habitat, and neighborhood greening

Social

- Improved sense of place and ownership in community
- Improved aesthetic appearance of the site
- Access to nature, which can lower stress and anxiety and create learning opportunities
- Improved sense of place and ownership in the community

Economic

- Support for local garden shops
- Less time and money spent on caring for plants
- Added beauty and value to the neighborhood



RELATED TOOLS

When paired with other tools, planting a pollinator garden can support local wildlife and make a greener, healthier, and more beautiful neighborhood. Try combining this strategy with:

- **Use Native Plants for Habitat or Biodiversity**
- **Establish a Community Garden or Local Food Installation**
- **Clean the Streets and Beautify the Streetscape**

EXAMPLES

Milkweeds for Monarchs: The St. Louis Butterfly Project, St. Louis, MO

Initiative launched in 2014 by Mayor Slay to create 250 urban monarch gardens.

Brightside Demo Garden, St. Louis, MO

Demonstration garden featuring four native habitats to Missouri, showcasing with appropriate native plants for those areas.

Hybrid Urban Bioscapes, St. Louis, MO

Project in Old North St. Louis consisting of both paved surfaces for recreation purposes and garden spaces with nectaring plants.



GET STARTED

1. Plan and Obtain Approvals

- Find a location that is easily accessible to residents and a nearby water source. If working in a public space, such as a park, be sure to coordinate with [Brightside St. Louis](#) and the [Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department](#). If you wish to work on an LRA-owned lot, contact the [Land Reutilization Authority \(LRA\)](#). If the use is approved, LRA properties can be leased for a nominal fee.
 - Educate yourself on different kinds of pollinators and their benefits, and determine the primary purpose(s) of your garden. For example, is it a priority for it to be aesthetically pleasing for the neighborhood, to attract honey bees, or help collect and store stormwater and manage excess runoff? For design ideas, visit the [Missouri Department of Conservation's Native Plants for your Landscape guide](#) and the [Bring Conservation Home community partnership page](#) of the St. Louis Audubon Society. Know your space, and have an idea of which types of pollinators you wish to attract, so that you can plan your garden layout. To learn more about pollinators, see the resources below.
 - **Birds:** See the [Feeding Backyard Birds pamphlet](#) created by Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) to learn how to attract birds to your property.
 - **Bats and Ants:** Find information about both pollinators through the [USDA Be a Friend to Pollinators guide](#).
 - **Bees:** To learn about bees and gardening for bees, check out the [Inviting Bees to Your Property brochure](#) and the [Missouri Bee Identification Guide](#) offered by the St. Louis Zoo.
 - **Butterflies:** For design ideas for butterfly gardens, visit [MDC's Butterfly Gardening & Conservation guide](#).
 - Make it manageable. If you start small, you can always grow your garden size later. A good size to start out with for a pollinator garden is nine square feet is generally considered the minimum site for an effective pollinator habitat.
- 2. Prepare** First, define your space by using edging, such as metal, brick, or a simple v-cut. Not only will this help control weeds, but it will also define your work area. Next, turn the soil by using a shovel and remove weeds, brush, roots and competing vegetation. Consider covering the area with newspapers (so that weeds are not exposed to light) and then pulling up the dead weeds. Consider adding compost or organic matter to add nutrients and aerate the soil, which will help with drainage and growth.
 - 3. Select Plants** Select appropriate species of plants for your soil and light conditions. If your site receives six to eight hours of sun a day, find plants that thrive in the sun. Otherwise, find plants that prefer the correct amount of shade. Consider the plants appropriate for the pollinators you wish to attract. Remember that pollinators might require different kinds of plants depending on whether they are in the larval or adult stage. Native plants for your garden can be found at several nurseries listed in the [Grow Native! resource guide for plants](#).
 - 4. Plant** Planting a garden is easier and more enjoyable if several members of the community are involved. Engage and involve your neighbors, a business, or a community group. Recruit several volunteers, and host a planting day. Be sure to water immediately after planting. To control weeds, apply a few inches of mulch, as well.
 - 5. Maintain** Native plants will require less maintenance than many ornamentals, but they do require some ongoing care and attention. You will need to weed, cut back plants that have grown too large, and water your garden in times of drought. Avoid the use of chemical applications. If you are planting [STL Monarch Mix native plants](#) to attract Monarch butterflies, take a look at these [Plant Care tips](#) prepared by the Office of Sustainability.



RELATED SUSTAINABILITY PLAN CATEGORIES

This tool supports the urban character, vitality and ecology for the entire neighborhood. It supports the following objectives and strategies:

Urban Character, Vitality & Ecology

Strategies: B7-Encourage communities to improve their own neighborhood; C5-Maintain Public spaces and neighborhood streets; D9-Utilize existing park and green space improvements to drive economic and community development; E5-Promote inclusion of native plants and habitats on public and private land; H3-Provide special lot-purchasing programs and encourage creative temporary and permanent land uses; H8-Enhance community cleaning and beautification efforts

Health, Well-Being, & Safety

Strategies: B4-Educate residents about alternatives to use of toxic materials and hazardous chemicals



www.stlouis-mo.gov/monarchs

For the most current examples, updated tools, and information, visit the City's Sustainable Neighborhood Initiative website:

www.stlouis-mo.gov/sustainability