



Pollinator Garden Plants & Tips



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Backyard Pollinator Project

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Image by Gary Barnes/Pexels



Photo by Master Gardener Lyn Chimera

Helpful info

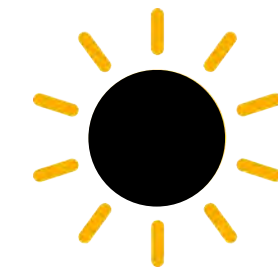
Key to this resource



Full sun



Part sun



Shade

Most pollinator-friendly plants prefer sites that receive **full sun**; a southern exposure can provide the warmest habitat. There are some part shade options, too!



Native plants

These are the plants that belong in a certain area. They "have formed symbiotic relationships with native wildlife over thousands of years, and therefore offer the most sustainable habitat," according to the [National Wildlife Federation](#). "A plant is considered native if it has occurred naturally in a particular region, ecosystem, or habitat without human introduction."

Perennials indicated as native in this guide have been so identified by the [WNY Native Plant Collaborative](#) and/or the [Monroe County Master Gardener Pollinator Friendly Garden Certification Program](#). For info on native annuals, [refer to this article](#).

Gardening for pollinators

What is a 'pollinator garden'?

A garden with specific nectar- and pollen-producing plants - including annuals, perennials, fruits, herbs, shrubs and trees - which attract bees, butterflies, birds, bats, moths and other pollinators to eat and nest.

Ideally plants are native to the region, with plants of the same kind planted in drifts in a sunny location. It should include plants that bloom successively from Spring through Fall as well as some type of water source.

Pollinator gardens require minimal maintenance since dead leaves and stems are left where they fall to provide shelter and nesting sites. The use of pesticides and other synthetic products should be avoided.



Gardening for pollinators

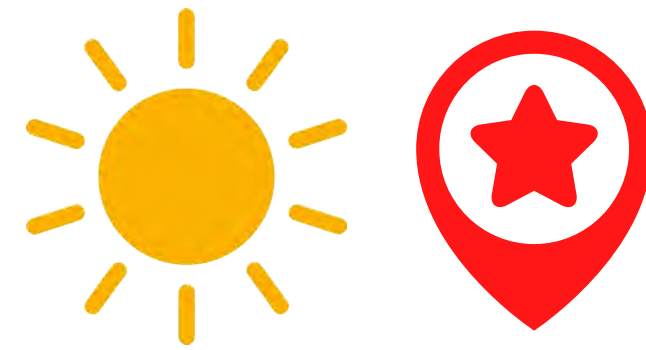
- Plant a variety of native plants that bloom in succession from spring through fall.
- Choose plants that are rich in pollen and nectar as well as host plants for butterflies and caterpillars.
- Plant in drifts of a minimum of three plants of each species. This helps pollinators find the plants easily.
- Use 'green mulch' to provide a soft place for caterpillars to land! A canopy of plants is much better than sharp mulch or hard, compacted ground.
- Avoid cultivars and invasive plants! Cultivars are bred for particular characteristics, e.g. a specific color. They usually have reduced nutritional benefits to pollinators, and some may actually harm pollinators.





Image by Albrecht Fietz/Pixabay

Perennials



Purple coneflower

Echinacea purpurea

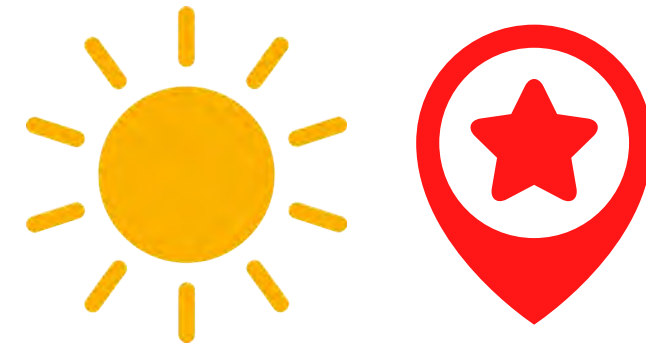


Black-eyed Susan

Rudbeckia hirta

Brown-eyed Susan

Rudbeckia tribola



Cardinal flower

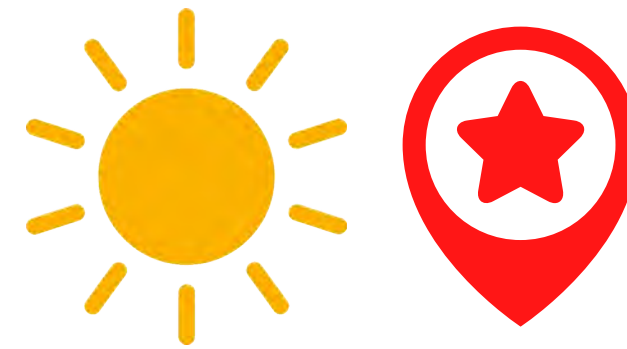
Lobelia cardinalis

Photo by Master Gardener Lyn Chimera



Lavender (English)

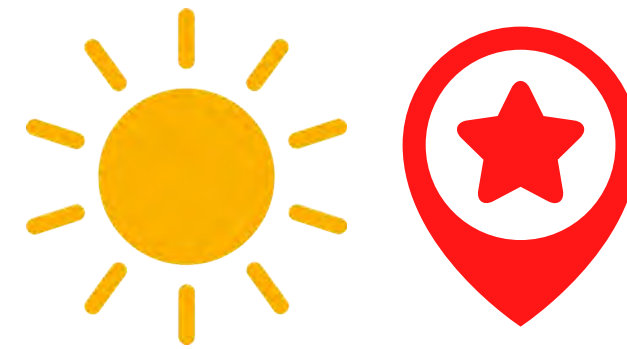
Lavandula angustifolia



Goldenrod

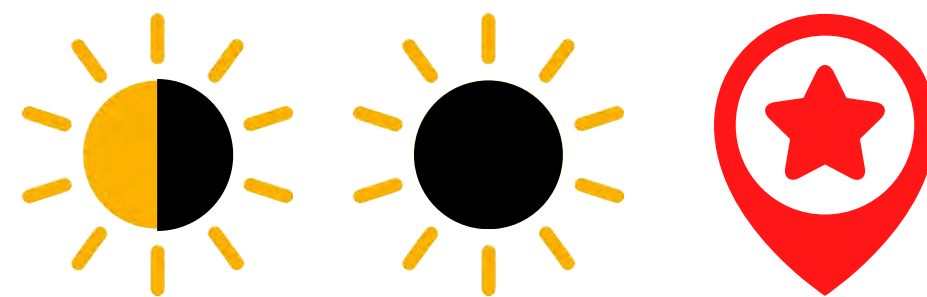
Solidago spp.

Does not make you sneeze! (That's ragweed!)



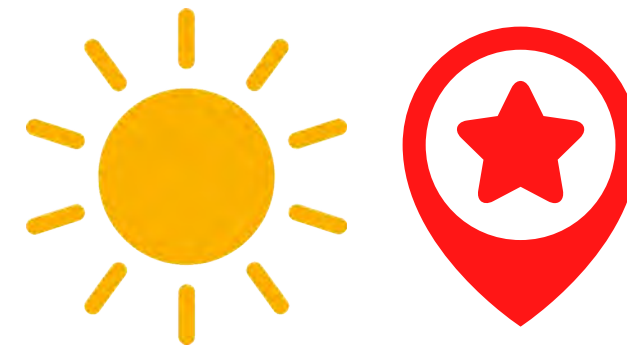
Blue False Indigo

Baptisia australis



Dutchman's breeches

Dicentra cucullaria



Blazing Star

Liatris spicata

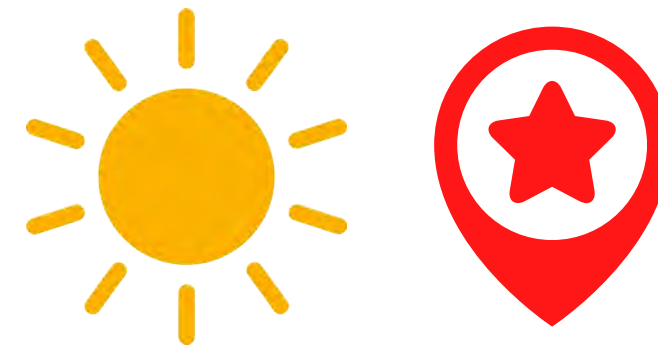
Liatris ligulisylis

Liatris microcephala



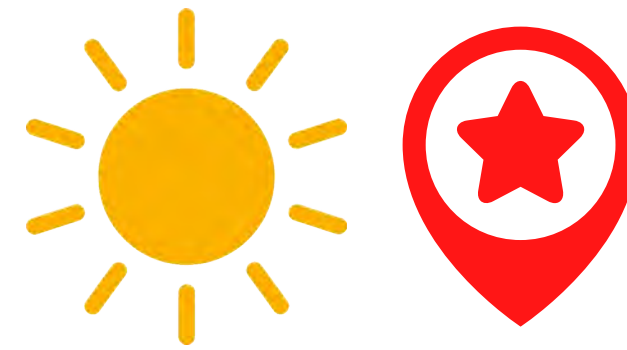
Joe-Pye Weed

Eutrochium spp.



Turtlehead (white)

Chelone glabra



Wild Bergamot a.k.a. Bee Balm

Monarda fistulosa



Wild/Red Columbine

Aquilegia canadensis



Image by congerdesign/Pixabay

Annuals



Image by Alexa/Pixabay

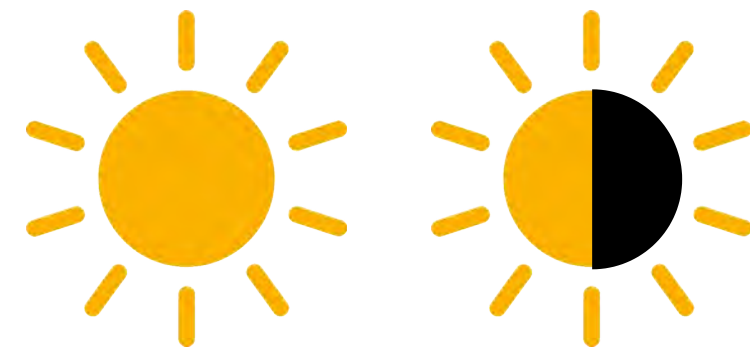


Common sunflower

Helianthus annuus



Image by PollyDot/Pixabay



Sweet alyssum a.k.a. Carpet of Snow

Lobularia maritima



Image by Valiphotos/Pexels

Trees & shrubs



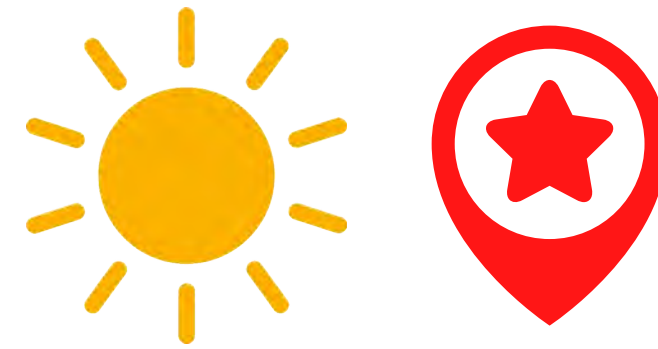
Serviceberry

Amelanchier spp.



Chokecherry

Prunus virginiana



Buttonbush

Cephalanthus occidentalis



Spicebush

Lindera benzoin



Image by Mahmudul Hasan Rifat/Pexels

Container gardens




Even if you only have room for a few pots and containers, you can still help pollinators!

- **Choose native plants.** Apart from a few species with deep taproots, many native plants will thrive in containers.
- **Combine plants** with complementary bloom times. Pick one that blooms in early summer, one in mid-summer, and one in fall.
- **Deep containers are your friends.** Choose containers at least 16” deep to allow plants to build strong root systems.
- **If you only have space** for shallow planters (<12” deep), annual or biennial native plants are a great option. These plants don’t invest in a deep root system and can survive in shallower soils.
- **Flowering herbs** are also a great option for small spaces. Dill, lavender, thyme, mint and cilantro all do well in containers.
- **Water often!** Soil in containers dries out faster than the ground.
- **Avoid fertilizer!** Native plants are adapted to soils that are low in nutrients, and adding fertilizer will result in many big leaves and not many flowers.

Source: "[Container gardening for pollinators](#)" Tufts Pollinator Initiative



Good perennial choices for containers

- Black-eyed susan 
(*Rudbeckia hirta*)
- Spotted horsemint
(*Monarda punctata*)
- Blanket flower
(*Gaillardia x grandiflora*)
- English Lavender
(*Lavandula angustifolia*)



Good annual choices for containers

- Petunia
- *Verbena bonariensis*
- Heliotrope
- Zinnia
- Lantana
- *Pentas*
- Tall salvia (Victoria blue or white)

Source: ["Gardening for Pollinators"](#)
Michigan State University Extension