

Creating an insect & pollinator friendly garden

Plants (food)

- Provide pollen, nectar, and host plants (including trees & grasses) throughout the season & plan for a succession of bloom times using native plants
- Plant “clumps” of same flowering plants for maximum attraction that include a variety of colors & shapes
- Avoid modern hybrids, especially those with “doubled” flowers (these may not have pollen, nectar, or fragrance for pollinators)
- Include larval host plants in the landscape (be aware that insects will eat them!)
- Ensure that plants are insecticide free



Insect mouth parts determine match to flower shapes

- **Tubular** – butterflies & moths, some bees (and hummers!)
- **Ray/flat** – beetles, bees, flies (also serve as resting places for butterflies & moths)
- **Umbels** (flat topped clusters of tiny funnel shaped flowers) – bees, flies, wasps, small butterflies & moths, beetles
- **Others** (funnel, whorled, bilabiate, & shallow bell shapes) - bees, flies, wasps, some beetles

Host plants

- Essential for survival of certain butterfly and moth species
- Specific to individual species

Helpful resources are found at:

<https://agriflifeextension.tamu.edu/solutions/butterfly-gardening/>

www.wildflower.org/collections/

<http://xerces.org/milkweed-seed-finder/>

<https://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/documents/>

[AttractingPollinatorsEasternUS_V1.pdf](#)



Provide easy access to water for insects without the chance of drowning.

Water



- Water dishes
- Puddling dishes
- Drippers
- Mud baths

- Create a damp salt lick for bees & butterflies. Use a drip hose or irrigation line, or place a bird bath/dish on the ground. Add soil, a bit of sea salt or wood ashes, and water to make the area damp.
- Add a nectar source with a hummingbird feeder (four parts water to one part sugar). Clean feeder regularly to avoid mold.
- Insects need resources other than nectar. Some like foodstuffs such as moist animal droppings, urine, and rotting fruits. Add overripe bananas, citrus or other fruits to a suet feeder and hang in a tree.
- Place a sponge in a dish of lightly salted (sea salt) water to see which insects come to investigate.



Shelter



- Plant in layers by mature height – canopy (trees), lower canopy, shrubs, grasses, herbaceous plants (herbs, vegetables, flowers)
- Leave a little “mess” – logs, snags, twig bundles, and leaves can create nesting areas for native bees
- Rocks and bare (unmulched) soil
- Add handmade or “artificial” habitats (NOTE: these should be sheltered and east to southeast facing)

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This work is supported by Crops Protection and Pest Management Competitive Grants Program [grant no. 2017-70006-27188 /project accession no. 1013905] from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture.