

# Planting for Pollinators

Pollinators are extremely important to agriculture, ecosystems and economies. In recent decades, pollinator populations have declined greatly, and this is due to increased use of pesticides, loss of habitat and loss of food supply. The primary driver of pollinator health is the presence and availability of pollinator-friendly flowers and trees. Here's how you can help restore pollinator populations:

1. **Plant pollinator-friendly plants in your yard.** Flowers provide the pollen and nectar resources that pollinators feed on. (1)
  - When planting for pollinators, include a wide range of flowering plants. Incorporate a variety of types of flowering plants, such as annuals, perennials, bulbs, trees and shrubs. Different sizes and shapes of flowering plants will also benefit pollinators. (2)
  - Select a range of native and regionally adapted plants with bloom times that overlap throughout the growing season to provide food for pollinators. Be sure to include plants that bloom early and late in the season. (3)
    - i. Native plants, including wildflowers, thrive in their natural habitat and require less watering, maintenance and pesticides.
    - ii. Designating a portion of your lawn as a wildflower meadow will also intrigue a variety of pollinators.
  - Select disease- and pest-resistant plant varieties. Healthy plants and native plants are less susceptible to pests like weeds and harmful organisms.
  - To help rebuild and support monarch populations, plant milkweeds in your yard such as common milkweed, butterfly weed, and swamp milkweed. Adult monarchs and other butterflies eat nectar from many flowering plants, so they will also benefit from native, pollinator-friendly plants. (4)



2. **Purchase plants that have not been treated with insecticides or other toxic pesticides** that can poison or kill pollinators, such as neonicotinoids and other systemic insecticides.
  - Before purchasing, ask your local nursery or retailer/grower if the plants or seeds were treated with these chemicals.
3. **Make sure plants are well suited for your yard.** Before selecting plants and seeds, consider your yard's soil type and the plant's light requirements and moisture requirements to ensure that the plant will thrive in your yard.
4. **Leave patches of untreated, undisturbed ground** or bare patches of soil without mulch for ground nesting pollinators.

### Resources Used in This Document:

1) It's Easy to Bring Back the Pollinators with These Four Simple Steps, Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation  
<https://www.xerces.org/bring-back-the-pollinators>

2) Smart Gardening for Pollinators (YouTube), Gardening in Michigan and MSU Extension  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwHfUk75rjE&feature=youtu.be>

3) Smarter Pest Management: Pollinator Protection for Cities and Campuses, Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation  
[https://xerces.org/sites/default/files/publications/19-054\\_Poll\\_Protection\\_Cities\\_Campuses\\_web.pdf](https://xerces.org/sites/default/files/publications/19-054_Poll_Protection_Cities_Campuses_web.pdf)

4) Saving Monarchs: What you can plant can make a difference, MSU College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and MSU Department of Entomology  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b8ul\\_wLRW-8&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b8ul_wLRW-8&feature=youtu.be)

