

POLLINATOR FRIENDLY PLANTS

Beneficial insects such as butterflies and bees are an essential and rewarding part of gardening. These helpful insects pollinate our flowers, fruits, and vegetables and keep the garden healthy and viable. In general, pollinators have three basic requirements: a food source, water, and shelter. A well-designed, diverse garden with a wide variety of plant and flower types will provide all of these things necessary for pollinators to make your garden a home.

In the case of butterflies, remember they have several stages of their life cycle including a larval stage as a caterpillar. These caterpillars need the right food sources to develop into adult butterflies. For example, the Monarch butterfly feeds specifically on native milkweed species (*Asclepias* spp.), first with the leaves as a food source for the caterpillars and then as butterflies, feeding on the flower nectar. In addition, butterflies need full sun at least part of the day, flat rocks or other surfaces to sun themselves, shelter from the elements (such as strong winds and rain), and a source of water, which can be accomplished by putting out water dishes or a clean bird bath.

Bees also need habitat and food and water to survive in the garden. We often think about the importance of honey bees, a non-native species, but gardeners should also remember there are native bees such as bumblebees, miner bees, and carpenter bees are just as important. The best way to support a healthy and diverse bee population is introduce masses of native plants with overlapping bloom times; maintain some unmowed, natural areas for nesting and shelter; and provide a reliable water source, which can be used by both butterflies and bees. Check out this list of pollinator friendly plants that should be incorporated into the garden.

Annuals: Wax Begonias, Cosmos, Dahlias, Lantana, Salvia, Verbena

Perennials: Aster, Black Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia* spp.), Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias* spp.), Catmint (*Nepeta* spp.) Cone Flower (*Echinacea purpurea*), Coreopsis, Geranium, Lilies, Sedum

Shrubs: Abelia, Butterfly Bush (*Buddleia davidii*), Clethra, Lilac (*Syringa* spp.), Rose, Viburnum

Trees: Crabapple (*Malus* spp.), Magnolia, Ornamental Cherry (*Prunus* spp.), Redbud (*Cercis* spp.), Serviceberry (*Amelanchier* spp.)