

## Grow Your Own Pollinator Paradise

Are you an avid gardener eager to make a positive impact on the living world? Incorporating native plants in your landscaping creates habitat for local species of butterflies, moths and bees, and also supports abundant populations of our favourite songbirds. By taking a green path, we walk more gently on the Earth and create a space for future generations to enjoy all the native species that we appreciate today.

Did you know:

- Saskatchewan is home to more than 350 kinds of wild bees and over 1,000 species of plants? It's time to bring this beauty home to our own backyards.
- Native plants co-evolved with native insects. Some plant-insect relationships are synchronized so that blossoms are available at just the right time for their specialized pollinators.
- Plants are not just decorations. They are the basis of all food webs. The caterpillars munching on leaves are food for nestling songbirds. Even birds that eat seeds as adults feed insects to their young. Native plants feed the world.
- Because wildflowers are at home in our environment, they do not need fertilizers or other soil amendments and require much less watering than most "typical" garden plants. Native plants save you \$\$\$.
- Bumblebees literally buzz the pollen off tomato blossoms and other flowers, thereby increasing yields. Supporting native pollinators supports our own health.
- The prairie is one of the world's most endangered ecosystems. Around Saskatoon, less than 5% of the original grassland remains. Rewilding our gardens is a small but meaningful step toward ecological recovery.

### Sample Plan for a Small Pollinator Garden (full sun to part shade):

Prepare a space approximately one meter on a side. Plant front to back - 3 Blazingstar (planted close together and marked well), 2 Prairie Crocus, 2 Buffalo Bean, 2 Smooth Blue Beardtongue, 2 Dwarf Milkweed, 3 Harebell, 2 Wild Flax, 2 Smooth Aster, 2 Gaillardia, 1 Brown-Eyed Susan, 1 Wild Bergamot, 1 Giant Hyssop. Clump plants together 8 inches apart. Option: Add plugs of blue gramma, June grass, and little bluestem. (Plan by Elizabeth Bekolay, Lichen Nature Education and Design.)

## To create a Pollinator Paradise and qualify for a gorgeous Pollinator Paradise YXE sign, here's all you have to do:

- grow a minimum of 15 individual plants that are native to the Saskatoon area.
- include at least one wildflower species that provides pollen and nectar for pollinating insects, such as wild bergamot, giant hyssop or meadow blazingstar.
- choose at least one kind of native plant that is important as food for caterpillars, such as wild blue flax, goldenrod or wild strawberry.
- plan for a succession of blossoms through the growing season, including a species that blooms in late summer, like goldenrod or smooth aster.
- provide a shallow source of water for pollinating insects (puddle or plant saucer with a rock in it)
- leave nesting sites for wild bees (undisturbed ground; rock or log piles; hollow stems...) and retain a covering of leaves from fall to late spring, as overwintering sites for insects
- do your best to eliminate or control invasive plants
- avoid all pesticides.
- meet these requirements, apply for a Pollinator Paradise YXE sign, and display it with pride! **Register online:** <https://wildaboutsaskatoon.org/pollinator-paradise-yxe/>

Identifying your garden as a Pollinator Paradise helps to celebrate and promote the life-renewing practice of gardening with native plants. Spreading awareness will help build community and mend our relationships with nature in all its wonder and diversity.

### Stay in touch:

Contact us:

[pollinators@wildaboutsaskatoon.org](mailto:pollinators@wildaboutsaskatoon.org)

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<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/native-plant-society-of-saskatchewan-inc/>

Learn more:

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