



Creating Pollinator Friendly Gardens

Now is the time many of us are out scouting for plants to enhance our gardens. As you are selecting plants, you have an opportunity to go a step beyond. You can select beautiful plants that you will enjoy but will also be preferred by our pollinators. Bees and butterflies are busy visiting flowers as they utilize the nectar and pollen from the flower as a source of food. In this process pollen may be moved from the male part of the flower to the female part, resulting in pollination. Pollination allows the plant to reproduce. Nearly 85% of all flowering plants reproduce due to pollination from insects.

Since pollinators play a really important role in the success of your garden, how do we go about creating pollinator friendly gardens?

- We can help pollinators find and use plants by planting them in clumps rather than as single plants.
- We can also include native plants such as red flowering currant and goat's beard. Our pollinators have coevolved with native plants for thousands of years.
- Bumble bees are active from spring into fall. They need to find foods that are available in March as the Queens emerge and throughout the summer months as the colony sizes grow. For example, Oregon Grape blooms in March and borage is a favorite food during the summer. Try to plant a wide variety of plants that bloom from early spring into fall to serve as a food source.
- Bees see colors differently than we do. They choose flowers with blue and yellow petals. They cannot see red.
- Flowers that are aromatic such as lavender will favor pollinators.
- Flowers such as coneflower are preferred by bumble bees as they provide big landing platforms.
- Tubular flowers such as penstemon have nectar at the base of the tube and are utilized by bees.

Our pollinators are in a state of decline. We can help them by selecting pollinator friendly flowers that will bring enjoyment to us and serve as a food source for our bees and butterflies.

Mary Dessel is a Mason County Master Gardener. She serves as Vice-President of the Master Gardener Foundation and chairs the Educational committee. Mary was recently awarded Master Gardener of the Year for Mason County in 2020. She is involved with programs related to education in the Master Gardener program.

Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Extension Office.



February
Skunk Cabbage



February
Willow



March-May
Trillium



March-May
Oregon Grape



March-May
Black-eyed Susan



June – July
Lavender



June – July
Zucchini



August-Sept
Borage



August-Sept
Sunflower



Sept-October
Purple Aster



Sept-October
Blue Gentian



October-Nov
Witch Hazel

🌈 Use a wide variety of plants that bloom from early spring into late fall .