

How to Create Your Own Community Pollinator Garden



Step One: Selecting the Location

Work with your neighborhood community group, other neighborhood partners, and/or your municipality to discuss the best location for your garden. Ideally it will be located in a place that has access to a nearby water source through a faucet, a business partner, or volunteers. Is there a former bed location that might be easier to upgrade? Container gardening is an alternative option for apartment dwellers and businesses.

Step Two: Cost Analysis

Once you have a location, it's a good idea to evaluate the costs needed for compost, mulch, and plants. Many of these items can be donated. If not, are there any local businesses who might be interested in sponsoring? Are there any community group or municipal funds available?

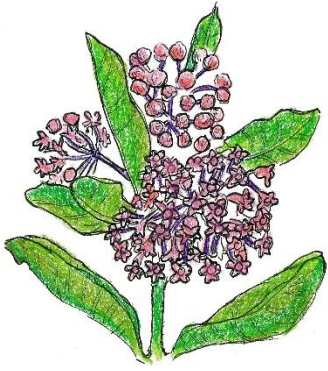
Step Two: Plan the Garden

Sunny, shady, or both, there are particular native perennials that will thrive in any environment. Northeast Pollinator Plants (northeastpollinator.com) offers excellent collections of 20 native plants delivered throughout New England throughout the growing season at a very reasonable price that amounts to about \$5 per plant. It is advantageous to plant a mix of plants that will bloom throughout the year, from spring through summer and into autumn.



Step Three: Prep the Garden

Does the space have grass that needs to be dug up? Plan a digging party and make sure to edge all the sides with a spade to reduce grass creep and/or consider adding a plastic edging border to keep the grass at bay. The less digging the better, as digging destroys essential nutrients, although old beds will require digging out any weeds and unwanted plants. Beds can also be prepped using the permaculture method of adding layers of wet newspapers or cardboard and then watering in additional layers of Lucerne (alfalfa hay) or straw, manure and compost, seaweed, kitchen scraps, etc.



Step Four: Acquire the Plants

Order or purchase your native organic perennial plants. Another low-cost method is to put a call out for donations of native organic perennials, asking for a list from donors ahead of time in order to effectively plan out the garden.

Step Five: Plant the Garden

Make holes in the soil or layers, arrange the plants where they should be planted and plant!

Add a scoop of compost in the bottom of each hole and use a trowel or knife to make a few cuts into the roots to encourage them to grow. Add organic mulch around the plants (leaving about an inch around the stems) and water abundantly.

Step Six: Water & Weed

Give the new plants a good soaking after planting and water once or twice a week until established – usually the first summer.* Native perennials are hardy and drought tolerant. Weed when necessary, though annual mulching reduces the need. The second year they should only need extra watering during drought. It is best not to cut the flowers back after they bloom so the plants can seed. Leave the stalks to provide winter habitat and wait until early spring to cut back.



Step Seven: ENJOY!

Enjoy seeing the plants grow and watching a wide variety of pollinators seek them out!



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*Container plants will need daily watering.

ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE ONE: BLACK-EYED SUSAN, PAINTED LADY

**PAGE TWO: ROSE MILKWEED, ROUGH BLAZING STAR,
NEW ENGLAND ASTER, HEART-LEAFED ALEXANDER,
BLUE VERVAIN**