

# How can you promote pollinators in your garden or outdoor space?

Pollinators, like any other animal, are drawn to areas that provide habitat for them. Habitat includes food, shelter, water, and space. Pollinator habitat can be a natural setting, such as a meadow or prairie, or it can be manmade. There are numerous things anyone with a bit of outdoor space can do to increase the habitability of that space for pollinators of different kinds.

Don't have a yard at home? That's okay! Pollinator habitat can be set up anywhere with some extra space - schoolyards, parks, or even unused parking lots (check out [Depave Paradise](#) for more on this). You'll have to find and talk to the appropriate person to get something going in one of these spaces.



## Add native pollinator plants to your space.

Native plants have evolved with our native pollinators so they are best at supporting them. Every region has an array of native flowers and trees that are rich in pollen and nectar - [perfect for our pollinator pals!](#) But how to choose what plants to plant?

### Planting Layout:

Groupings of a single flower type reduces the energy required because the pollinator can spot it quickly and move efficiently from flower to flower.

Plant flowers in groups or clusters at least 3 feet (1 meter) in diameter, especially in small urban habitats.

### Flight Range:

Having nesting and forage (food) resources in the same area increases pollinator success, as different pollinator species can travel different distances for their food.

Have flowers no more than a few hundred feet (or about 100 meters) from potential nesting areas.

### Plant Diversity:

Groupings of many plant species at a single site attract a greater abundance and diversity of pollinators, especially when they are highly-visited native species.

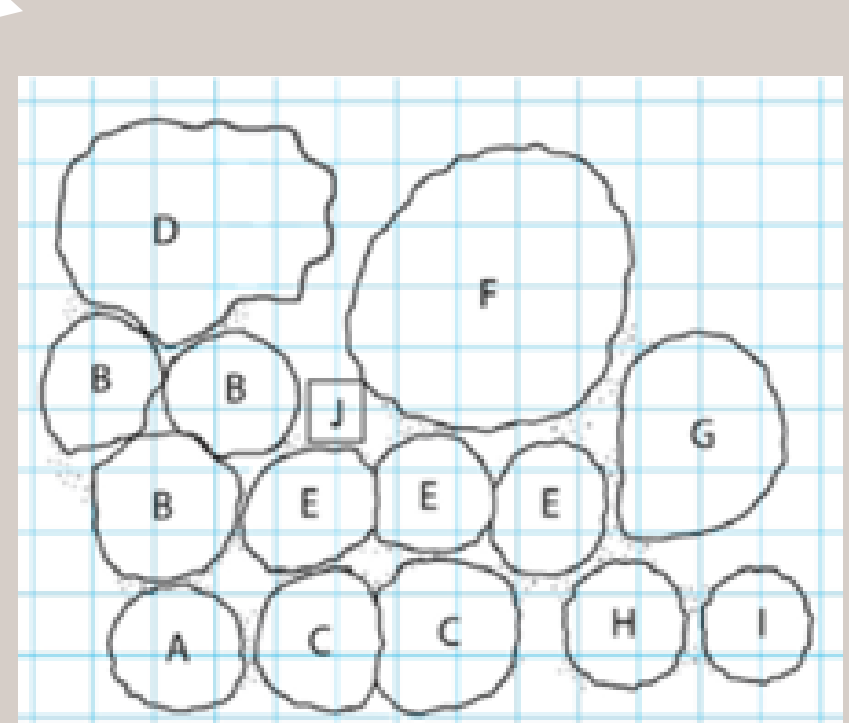
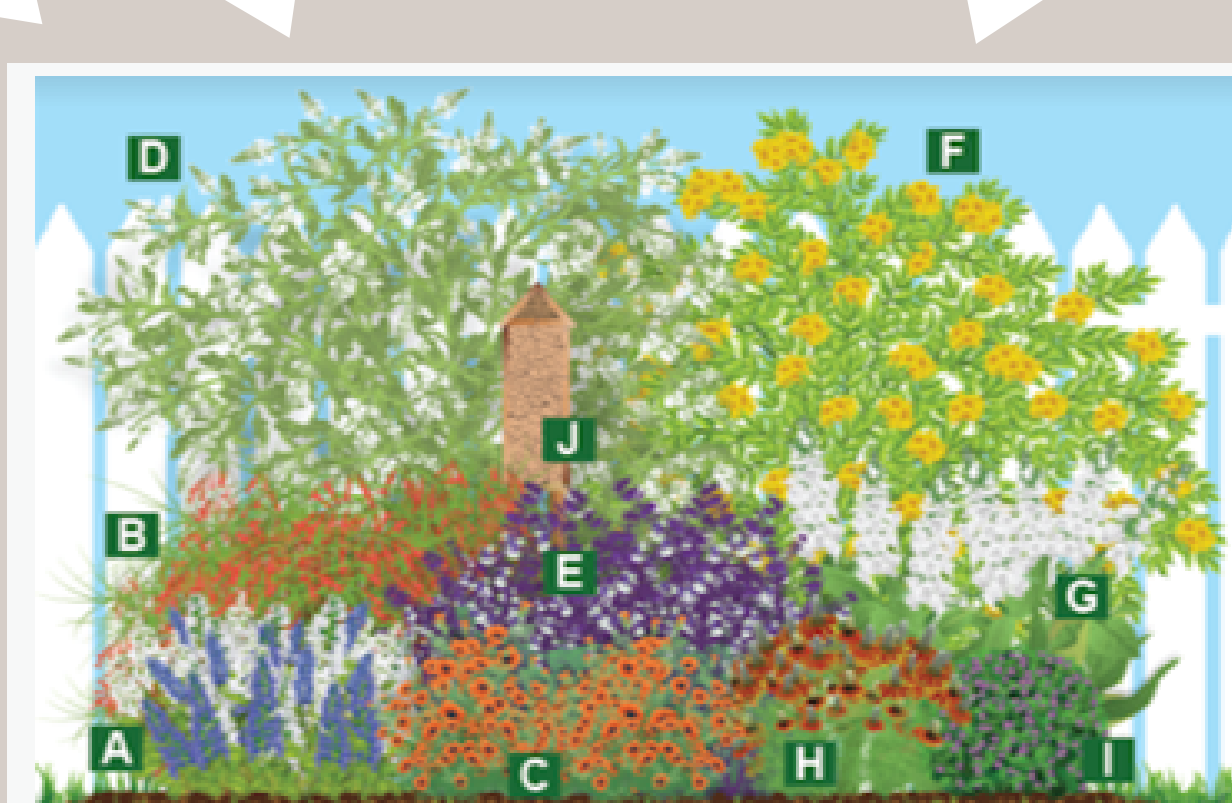
Plant at least 8-10 carefully chosen species by identifying key host plants in your area.

### Bloom Succession:

Different pollinator species are most active during different times of the year, making it important to have a steady and continuous food supply.

Plant at least 3 different flowers that bloom during each of the blooming periods: spring, summer and fall.

This example pollinator garden layout is provided by [HoustonNativeBees.org](#). In the grid to the right of the drawing, each square represents 1 square foot of space. The plants depicted in the drawing could be replaced with species native to your area.



## Provide nesting sites for a variety of pollinators.

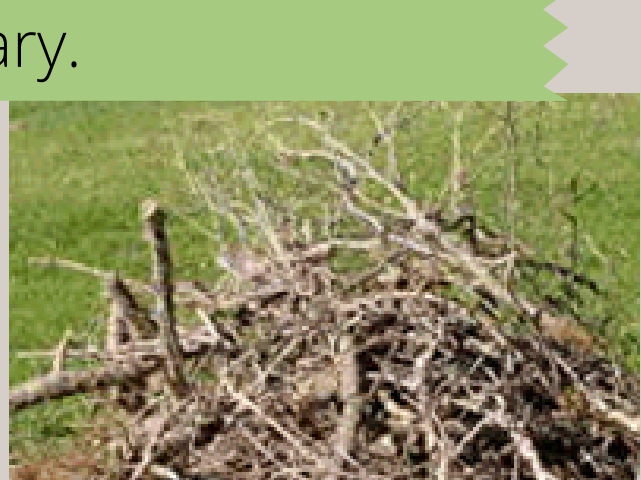
Like all animals, pollinators need appropriate space to live and sleep. The challenge here is providing materials and spaces that are ideal for the types of pollinators in your area. If you haven't already, [check out what native pollinators live near you](#). Got it figured out? Now what?



### BEES

About 30% of native bees in Canada are cavity nesting, while the other 70% are ground nesting. Very few species live in colonies, with the vast majority being solitary.

Cavity nesting bees make nests in dead wood, hollow stems, or brush piles. Leave these materials in your space instead of disposing of them.



Ground nesting bees create burrows in soil. Leave the soil and dirt in your space bare by reducing the use of landscape fabric and amount of mulch laid down.



These photo examples of bee nesting sites are from [Xerces Society](#).

Note: Some people choose to buy or create "bee hotels" for cavity dwelling species. While not necessarily a bad idea, be sure to [do your research](#).



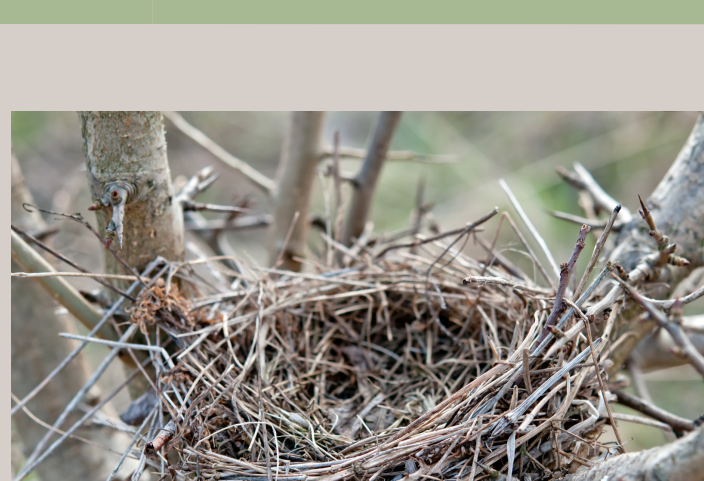
### BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

Butterflies and moths lay their eggs on specific plants that provide food and shelter for caterpillars when they emerge. For example, monarch caterpillars rely exclusively on milkweed.

Plant species that are known host plants for butterflies and moths in your area.

### BIRDS

Nesting birds build their nests out of a wide variety of materials - sticks, leaves, hair, yarn, string, and the list goes on. Most build their dwellings in trees and shrubs.



Hold off on trimming shrubs, leave twigs and leaves on the ground, and leave pieces of yarn and hair outside.

## 3

## Provide a source of water.

Water is a necessity for all animals, and having a direct source in your space adds another key part of their habitat. The less time they need to spend finding water, the more time they have for pollinating. But how can you best provide water for pollinators?



### Small dish

Fill with rocks as landing pads and an inch of water.

### Muddy area

Create in the corner of your space. Most suitable for butterflies.

### Drip bottle

Hang from a low branch or sturdy shrub.

Each option requires that the water be replenished and/or replaced frequently.



Photo: [Seeds of Diversity](#)  
Filling a small dish with rocks and a water is often regarded as the best option overall for pollinators. You can always choose more than one method!

## Avoid the use of pesticides.

Pesticides are widely known to be harmful to wildlife, [including our pollinators](#). If you must use something, consider a natural pest deterrent like garlic, chili pepper, or soap. You can apply these deterrents at night, when there is less activity and flowers are closed.



### SOURCES

- [Colorado State University Extension: Creating Pollinator Habitat](#)
- [Credit Valley Conservation: How to create a pollinator habitat in your backyard](#)
- [The National Wildlife Federation: Plant and Create Pollinator Habitat Gardens](#)
- [The Xerces Society: Designing a Pollinator Habitat - Four Things to Consider](#)
- [Seeds of Diversity: Pollinator Gardens](#)
- [Seeds of Diversity: Weather and Water](#)

