



PLANT A NATIVE FLOWER GARDEN

Did you know that one out of every three bites of food you eat comes from pollinators? Without them, we wouldn't have blueberries, chocolate, coffee, apples and almonds, among others.

Common pollinators are facing significant population declines. The UN estimates that nearly 40 percent of invertebrate pollinator species (bees, butterflies and more) face extinction worldwide. Luckily, there's a lot you can do to help! Planting a native garden is easy, fun and rewarding.

In addition to providing a perfect home for pollinators, native gardens help combat climate change at home by absorbing carbon dioxide emissions from the air around you, alleviating stress on our ocean, the planet's biggest carbon sponge. Native gardens also save water, since they are able to thrive in your region's typical environmental conditions.

Make your backyard (or your balcony, community garden or local park) pollinator- and ocean-friendly with these tips:

— KEEP AWAY FROM PESTICIDES

Pesticides spell trouble for most everything, but they can be especially harmful to bees. And, runoff from chemical pesticides can make it to groundwater and local waterways faster than you can say "BUZZ!" If you need to use a pesticide, spray minimally at night when bees and other pollinators are not active, or [explore natural pesticide alternatives](#).

— SPARE A LIMB (OR TWO)

Dead tree limbs are the perfect nesting site for bees! If you don't have a spare tree limb hanging around, you can drill 3-5 inch holes into a piece of lumber for your bee neighbors to utilize. Mosses, lichens and fungi that grow on dead trees also return nutrients to the soil through the nitrogen cycle, so win-win.

— FAVOR NATIVE FLOWERS

Native plants are best adapted to the climate and soil conditions in your area. Planting flowers in clusters will help pollinators find the plants they need with ease. Butterflies are particularly attracted to flat-topped blossoms with short flower tubes.



– **PROVIDE PLENTY OF ENERGY SUPPLIES**

Adding nectar feeders to your garden is a great way to attract hummingbirds. Fill your nectar feeders with a homemade solution (four parts water to one part sugar) instead of artificial sweeteners.

– **CREATE A SAFE SPACE FOR ALL WILDLIFE**

By providing shelter, food and water for the native species in your backyard, you can help create a balance of developed and natural use green space in your neighborhood.

– **SOAK IN THE RAYS**

Lots of pollinator species actually get energy from sunlight, so plant your pollinator-friendly plants in areas that get plenty of UV rays.

– **MULCH IT UP**

Planting with mulch will help your garden retain moisture, save water and improve its soil quality.

Additional Resources

Find out which plants are native to your area and where you can buy them by [using your zip code](#) or by [exploring native plants state-by-state](#).

Is your garden certifiably wild? [Complete your habitat certification](#) application through the National Aquarium website. You'll receive a certificate for your wildlife habitat, a window cling and a free one-year membership to the National Wildlife Federation!