

This tip/worksheet is not intended to be your application. It:

1. Is an overview of the steps needed to certify your garden;
2. Contains a worksheet to assist you in gathering the necessary information;
3. Contains a subset of the links to an extended trove of related information about all things pollinator and eco-friendly gardening.

After obtaining the pertinent background information the application is comprised of 4 steps and sketch/photo requirement. Prior to those steps please review the following:

Planning Recommendations

- Choose plants that provide pollen and nectar sources from early spring through late fall
- Provide a variety of flower shapes and sizes
- For annuals, choose old fashioned heirloom varieties; limit the use of modern hybrids
- Place herbaceous plants in groups of 3 or more
- Include native shrubs and trees where possible for the significant role they play with local ecosystems in addition to being great sources of food for insects
- Seek out wild seed grown native plants

Step 1: Identify Your Plants and Food Sources

In order to certify the following is required of your garden:

- At least 70% of species planted are native to your ecoregion
- At least 6 different types of plants that provide sufficient pollen and nectar sources for each season. For gardens less than 1/8 acre a minimum of 3 different types of plants for each season is required.

Note: plants that provide nectar and pollen sources over multiple seasons can count for any of those periods. e.g. Black Eyed Coneflower, *Rudbeckia hirta v. pulcherrima*, blooms in summer and fall.

- At least 5 plants that are host plants for butterflies and moths. For gardens less than 1/8 acre, a minimum of 3 host plants are required.

Nectar and Pollen Food Sources

Pollinators need a diversity of nectar and pollen sources throughout the season. Research shows that native plants are 4 times more attractive to pollinators than non-natives, so planting natives in your yard will supply pollinators with the nutrition they need to thrive. Natives are also well adapted to survive in a particular geographic area according to the climate, soils, rainfall and availability of pollinators and seed dispersers.

Caterpillar Food Sources

Pollinators need to be supported at the larval stage of their life cycle, therefore providing food sources for caterpillars is essential. Without host plants for butterfly or moth larvae (caterpillars) there will be no butterflies or moths! Many butterfly and moth larvae can only feed on one or two specific host plants, particularly native trees, shrubs and perennials, that are vital to their survival.

Native Plant Lists?

- [Bulletin #2500, Gardening to Conserve Maine's Native Landscape](#)
- [Comprehensive Plant List, Wild Seed Project](#)
- [Native Pollinator Plants by Season of Bloom \(PDF\), Wild Seed Project](#)
- [Other Resources for Selecting Pollinator Plants](#) – also the Certification Program Home Page

Plants List with Information on Caterpillars

- [Native Plant Finder](#), National Wildlife Federation

Help Identifying Plants on Your Property?

- Submit a few photos and descriptions using our [Garden Questions Submissions Form](#)
- Use GoBotany's [Simple Key ID](#), Native Plant Trust

Step 2: Provide Water Sources

In order to certify the following is required of your garden:

- Birdbath or shallow water source
- Butterfly puddling area
- Water garden or pond
- Local spring
- Natural body of water, such as a lake or river

Like all living things, pollinators need a clean source of water. All water sources should be within 200-ft. of the certification area and should provide a continuous supply while pollinators are active.

Vernal pools and intermittent streams are not considered reliable water sources for pollinators because they tend to dry up during the summer months.

Step 3: Provide Shelter

In order to certify your garden needs at least two of the following:

- Dead wood
- Rockpile or wall
- Spaces of bare ground
- Man-made bee houses
- Garden cleanup left until late spring

Like all living things, shelter is essential for pollinator survival. The best way to provide proper nesting sites is by getting to know your pollinators! Bumble bees typically nest at the base of bunch grasses, in old mouse holes or the cavities of trees. Dead wood provides nesting habitat for a variety of pollinators such as bees, wasps, beetles and ants. Many solitary bees will nest in the pith of stems and twigs.

Pollinators also need protection for overwintering so instead of cleaning up your gardens in the fall, wait until late spring. Perennials and grasses left standing will provide shelter and will give winter interest to your garden.

Looking for ways to provide shelter for pollinators?

- Bulletin #7153, Understanding Native Bees, the Great Pollinators
- Ground Nesting Bees in your Backyard, Cornell University
- Native Pollinators, NRCS (PDF)

Step 4: Safeguarding Pollinator Habitat

Action 1: Eliminate Pesticide Use

In order to certify the following is required of your garden:

- Ensure pesticides are not being used in area being certified

Pesticide is the umbrella term given to a product (conventional or organic) that is being used to manage a pest (insect, weed, disease, mollusk and rodent). Even home made products used to control pest are considered pesticides and can pose significant risks.

The University of Maine and University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension is supportive of proper and prudent use of registered pesticides. However, this certification is aimed at celebrating top-tier gardens that are designed as pollinator habitats. Therefore eliminating pesticide use in the area being certified is required.

Looking for more information about pollinators and pesticides?

- Pollinator Protection, Maine Board of Pesticide Control

Action 2: Remove invasive plants and Protect Native Plant Communities

In order to certify you must avoid acquiring invasive ornamental plants and at least one of the following is required:

- Do not acquire invasive ornamental plants
- Develop a plan to actively remove invasive plants

Invasive plants threaten pollinator habitat by endangering the native plants that pollinators require for survival.

Invasive plants that move from our yards to woodlands and natural areas threaten diversity that is vital to pollinator survival. We can all help by not planting invasive species and removing existing invasive plants on our properties.

Looking for more information about invasive plants?

- Advisory List of Invasive Plants, Maine Natural Areas Program
- Maine Invasive Species Network, University of Maine Cooperative Extension
- Invasive Plants, UNH

Step 4: Safeguarding Pollinator Habitat (continued)

Action 3: Implement additional conservation practices

In order to certify, at least three of the following conservation practices are (check all that apply):

- Test soil before applying fertilizers
- Leave lawn clippings and/or fallen leaves behind
- Set mower blade at 3”
- Tolerate “weeds” in lawn
- Compost kitchen scraps and/or yard ‘waste’
- Maintain a *light* layer of mulch at the base of trees, shrubs and perennial beds
- Use drip or soaker hoses, instead of overhead sprinklers
- Use a rain barrel or other means of capturing/utilizing rainwater to irrigate plants
- Direct downspouts and gutters to drain onto the lawn, plant beds or containment areas
- Water plants only when necessary
- Other

Conservation practices help preserve habitat for pollinators and other wildlife. Our Pollinator-Friendly Garden Certification Program challenges you to implement conservation practices in your certification or surrounding area.

More information about gardening ecologically to preserve the beauty of Maine:

- [Maine Yardscaping](#)

Garden Sketch (Map)

In order to certify a sketch map of your garden or area to be certified is required. It should include:

- The approximate overall dimensions of the area you are certifying though the sketch need not be to scale
- The location and identity of the plants you have listed as well as the water and shelter sources. Also show any other plants that are not listed and any landmarks that will help us understand your garden.
- Mark location and direction your photographs are taken from – see sample in photo section
- Be sure your sketch is legible by drawing with a dark pen or marker. You may take a photo of your sketch (see Photo section) or scan it. If you experience any difficulty uploading your photos you may email them to: extension.pollinators@maine.edu

Photo Requirements

In order to certify, photographs of your garden are required as follows.:

- Photographs can be uploaded in the appropriate section per the application
- If you experience any difficulty uploading your photos you may email them to: extension.pollinators@maine.edu
- Please name each photo file with your last name, photo number and photo name. For example: ‘Smith-1-Overview’, ‘Smith-2-SummerGroup’, Smith-3-Water.
- Photographs must be your own and should give us an understanding of your garden: Recommended compositions are:
 - 1 overview showing overall area of your garden
 - 1 closer view showing 3 or 4 species in your plant list
 - 1 water source viewor
another closer view showing 3 or 4 species in your plant list and the water source
- Do not include images of people in your photographs
- Maximum file size is 1 MB
- Minimum image width of photograph should be between 800 and 12 pixels
- If using a smartphone camera please follow these guidelines:
 - iPhone: select the ‘Large-size’ option
 - Android: select the option closest to the ‘6.0 MP’ range
- ^a If taking a photograph of your sketch map with a camera or phone, try to fill up the screen/frame/viewfinder as much as possible; try to orient the camera/phone with the position of the drawing, i.e., horizontal to horizontal or vertical to vertical.

Congratulations! You are ready to submit your application online!

Do you have additional questions?

Contact our team at extension.pollinators@maine.edu or 207 942.7396

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