

## Pollinator-Friendly Garden Certification

*Guide for applicants seeking certification*

This is not meant to be used as an application, but as a worksheet to help you prepare for certification.

### **STEP 1: Provide Food**

#### 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.

#### **Looking for a native plant list specific to Maine?**

- [Bulletin #2500, Gardening to Conserve Maine's Landscape](#)
- [Comprehensive Plant List, Wild Seed Project](#)

#### **Looking for plants to support caterpillar larvae?**

- [Native Plant Finder, National Wildlife Federation](#)
- [Native Pollinator Plants by Season of Bloom \(PDF\)](#) from the Wild Seed Project
- [Native Plant Finder, Maine Audubon](#)

#### 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.

#### **Need help identifying plants on your property?**

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

#### **In order to certify, all of the following are required of your garden: (check all)**

- ☐ Choose plants that provide pollen and nectar sources from early spring through late fall
- ☐ Provide a variety of flower shapes and sizes
- ☐ When using annuals, choose old fashioned heirloom varieties and limit the use of modern hybrids
- ☐ Incorporate pollinator friendly native plants into the garden
- ☐ Place herbaceous plants in groups of 3 or more
- ☐ At least 70% of species planted are native to our 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.
- ☐ At least 5 larval host plants for butterflies and moths. For gardens less than 1/8 acre, a minimum of 3 host plants are required.

In the chart below, please list the plants in your landscape that are sources of pollen and nectar during each season as well as the caterpillar that is supported. **Note: You may list the same plants across seasons if applicable.**

EARLY SEASON BLOOM (April - June)			
Botanical Name <i>(genus and species)</i>	Common Name	Native or non-native? <i>(at least 70% of those listed across the seasons)</i>	<u>Caterpillar Supported</u> <i>(if applicable)</i>

MID SEASON BLOOM (July - August)			
Botanical Name <i>(genus and species)</i>	Common Name	Native or non-native? <i>(at least 70% of those listed across the seasons)</i>	<a href="#">Caterpillar Supported</a> <i>(if applicable)</i>

LATE SEASON BLOOM (September- October)			
Botanical Name <i>(genus and species)</i>	Common Name	Native or non-native? <i>(at least 70% of those listed across the seasons)</i>	<a href="#">Caterpillar Supported</a> <i>(if applicable)</i>

## **STEP 2: Provide Water Sources**

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.

### **Looking for ways to provide shelter for pollinators?**

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

**In order to certify, at least one of the following water sources is required:** *(check all that apply)*

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

## **STEP 3: Provide Shelter**

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 some 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 creative ways to provide water?**

- [Water for Wildlife, PennState Extension](#)
- [How to Attract Butterflies to Your Garden, NC Cooperative Extension](#)
- [Bees Need Water, UC Davis](#)

**In order to certify, at least three of the following shelters are required:** *(check all that apply)*

- ☐ Spaces of bare ground
- ☐ Rock pile/wall
- ☐ Dead wood
- ☐ Man-made boxes
- ☐ Leave garden cleanup until spring

## **STEP 4: Safeguarding Pollinator Habitat**

### **Action 1: Eliminate Pesticide Use:**

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 pests are considered pesticides and can pose significant risks.

#### **Looking for a complete list of invasive plants in Maine?**

- [Invasive Plant Fact Sheets, Maine Natural Areas Program](#)

The University of Maine 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 insect habitats. Therefore, eliminating pesticide use in the area being certified is required.

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

- ☐ I will ensure pesticides are not used in the area being certified.

### **Action 2: Managing Invasive Plants:**

Invasive plants threaten pollinator habitat by endangering the native plants that pollinators require for survival. The legal definition of an invasive species, and the official position of the U.S. government, is “An alien species – not native to the ecosystem – whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.” (“Alien” refers to species not native to the ecosystem).

#### **Looking for more information about pollinators and pesticides?**

- [Pollinator Protection, Maine Board of Pesticides Control](#)

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.

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

- ☐ I have removed or am removing invasive plants currently on my property
- ☐ I am unable to remove invasive plants because I do not have permission, but I have made an effort to make the property manager aware of the importance of managing invasives.

Please list any invasive plants below that you are removing or controlling (if applicable).

INVASIVE PLANTS ON-SITE	
Botanical Name	Common Name

Action 3: Additional Conversation Practices:

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 area or the surrounding area.

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

- ☐ Test soil before applying fertilizers.
- ☐ Leave lawn clippings and/or fall leaves behind.
- ☐ Set mower blade at 3".
- ☐ Tolerate "weeds" in lawn.
- ☐ Compost kitchen scraps and/or yard waste.
- ☐ Maintain a light layer of organic mulch at the base of trees, shrubs and perennial beds.
- ☐ Use drip or soaker hoses, instead of overhead sprinkler
- ☐ 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

## **Required Photos/Sketch:**

Please share photos and a sketch of your garden. Be sure to follow the photo requirements listed below.

### **In order to certify, the following are required:**

- ☐ A sketch/overview of your garden
- ☐ Two photos showing a few of the required plants noted in the requirements
- ☐ One photo showing the water source

### **Sketch Requirements:**

- Does not need to be drawn to scale.
- Must be clear and legible
- Should be a simple bubble diagram that labels the location of the plants listed above.

### **Tips for submitting your garden sketch:**

- Draw your sketch with a dark colored pen or marker
- Take a photo of your sketch or scan your sketch, then upload with your application

### **Photo Requirements:**

- Please name each file with your last name and a number, for example: Smith1, Smith2, Smith3. Do not upload more than four photos.
- Photos must be your own.
- Do not include images of people in your photos.
- If you are completing an online application, resize images so that they are 1MB or smaller.

**Congratulations! You are ready to submit your application [online!](#)**

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**Do you have additional questions?**

**Contact our team at [extension.pollinators@maine.edu](mailto:extension.pollinators@maine.edu) or 207.942.7396.**

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