

Gardening for Pollinators

The Gosling Pollinator Gardens were created to provide habitat for pollinators. Our choice of plants was guided by the recognition that these insects have, over many generations, evolved adaptations to the plants that grow naturally in this area i.e. to native plants.

Native plants (trees, shrubs, grasses, flowering perennials and annuals) have adapted to the local climatic conditions, soil, and rainfall. If they are planted in locations in your garden that offer the required light and moisture levels, they will flourish without the need for extra fertilizer and water.

Native plant: a plant that occurs naturally in a particular region, ecosystem, or habitat without direct or indirect human intervention. Many experts consider the plants present at the time Europeans arrived in North America to be the species native to this continent.

This page, top: Bumble bee (*Bombus* sp.), by Sjanie Bethlehem; bottom: White Admiral (*Limenitis arthemis*), by Melissa Parrott.

Opposite page, top: Monarch caterpillar (*Danaus plexippus*) on Milkweed, by Peter Allen; bottom left to right: Ruby-Throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*), by Richard Houde; Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*), by Marlene Knezevich.



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Some pollinators have very specific adaptations to native plants. For example, the larvae (caterpillars) of Monarch butterflies will only feed on the leaves of Milkweed plants (*Asclepias* sp.). Other pollinators show preferences for certain shapes of flowers because they can more easily access their nectar and pollen. Short-tongued bees prefer more open blooms while long-tongued bees (and hummingbirds) can probe for nectar deep inside tubular flowers. Butterflies do not hover while they feed, and prefer a surface on which they can easily land to suck up nectar. As a result, they often gravitate to flat-topped flowers such as Butterfly Milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) or Stiff Goldenrod (*Solidago rigida*).

Use as many native plants as possible in your garden to support local pollinators.

