



National Pollinator Garden Network Closing in on Million Pollinator Garden Challenge Goal

National, regional, conservation, trade industries, and gardening groups fight the decline of pollinator species by calling on all Americans to do their part

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ALEXANDRIA, VA. (October 16, 2017) – Today, the National Pollinator Garden Network, an unprecedented nonpartisan collaboration of national, regional, conservation, and gardening groups, convened at the American Horticultural Society's River Farm headquarters outside Washington, DC to announce progress on the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge. This campaign, started in 2015, is designed to accelerate growing efforts across the nation to reverse the decline of pollinating insects, such as honey bees, native bees and monarch butterflies by calling on all Americans to get involved.

The Million Pollinator Garden Challenge calls on gardeners, horticultural professionals, schools, and volunteers to help create and register one million pollinator gardens by the end of 2017. Two years of work has led to the creation of over 600,000 pollinator gardens. People are encouraged to help reach the million garden goal and [register their pollinator garden](#) online to “bee counted” on the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge map.

Pollinators-- including honeybees, native bees, butterflies, moths, beetles and other insects, as well as certain birds and bats-- fertilize plants, allowing them to reproduce and produce seeds and fruits, and are vital for the health of natural ecosystems and agriculture. One third of all the food we eat is the direct result of pollinators, contributing \$29 billion to America's food production, according to a Cornell University study. But pollinator declines in recent decades have been steep and severe due to habitat loss, parasites, pesticides, and other threats. Monarch populations, for example, have plummeted by 90% in the last 20 years.

Significantly increasing the number of pollinator-friendly gardens and landscapes will help revive the health of bees, butterflies, birds, bats and other pollinators across the U.S. Any individual can contribute by planting for pollinators and joining this effort to provide a million pollinator gardens across the United States. Every habitat of every size counts, from window boxes and garden plots to farm borders, golf courses, school gardens and more.

The National Pollinator Garden Network was launched in partnership with the garden trade, other conservation organizations, and volunteer civic groups to inspire people and organizations

to create more pollinator habitats. The network provides [resources](#) for individuals, community groups, government agencies and the garden industry to create more pollinator habitat through sustainable gardening practices and conservation efforts.

Over 50 national partners, including seven participating federal agencies have gotten involved and the challenge has seen great success over the last two years. This success is due to the passion and dedication of not just conservation groups, but of concerned citizens across America who have made their feelings clear: Americans love pollinators and want to see them protected for the future health of wildlife and humans, alike.

One of these concerned citizens is Kedar Narayan of Lower Nazareth Township, PA. Narayan got into gardening because he was simply looking for something fun to do and reached out to Penn State master gardeners and county agricultural extension agents to learn more. He quickly discovered how wasteful lawns can be with so much empty space that could otherwise be home to native plants and wildlife habitat. After learning what he could do in his own yard, Narayan decided to take it a step further. He developed an app that helps you create your very own pollinator garden! The app includes information on native plants and where to buy them and landed him as a finalist in the Paradigm Challenge, a competition to solve some of the world's biggest problems through out of the box thinking. What's more, Kedar Narayan is only 9 years old.

Narayan is emblematic of many people his age who care about our natural world and are innovative in their ways to address pollinator losses. He embodies best qualities of the current and future visionaries who make up the National Pollinator Garden Network's challenge participants. Narayan has proven that taking action to help pollinators can be fun and simple. Below are a few inspirational tales of others who discovered how rewarding planting for pollinators can be.

After registering his garden on the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge map, one Albuquerque resident shared his experiences. "My garden is a certified urban wildlife sanctuary devoted to pollinators and other wildlife, as well as teaching others how to plant such a garden in an urban setting, whether it be in the ground or in containers no matter where they live."

Staff at Chandler Preparatory Academy explained, "Our garden is named 'Communio, Scientia, Sperum,' meaning Community, Knowledge, Hope. It is a certified Monarch waystation through Monarch Watch, and we have expanded nectar and host plants to welcome and support pollinators of all kinds!"

One homeowner in California knows her environment well and has focused on planting drought resistant natives. "In a suburb of Los Angeles, on a residential cul-de-sac, I created a haven for mature and native drought-tolerant trees and plants, animals, birds and insects. It's a National Wildlife Federation Certified Wildlife and Advanced Bird-Friendly Habitat, a Surfrider Foundation Certified Ocean-Friendly Garden, and a Certified Xerces Society Pollinator Habitat."

The work of these individuals, garden centers, and community groups demonstrates a nationwide commitment to pollinator protection. People love birds, bees, and butterflies and want to see species, like monarchs, around for generations to come. A movement has begun to adopt more environmentally friendly practices into homes and businesses, but the National Pollinator Garden Network would like to see this type of work taken a step further to encourage citizens to leverage their community connections to expand how they think about the pollinator

crisis and what solutions lie in front of us. Coming together as a community to work toward a shared goal not only increases opportunities for collaboration and innovation, but has the ability to create strong, lasting effects for wildlife like pollinators. The National Pollinator Garden Network continues to call on all Americans to do their part to accomplish the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge.

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The Million Pollinator Garden Challenge has been launched by [The National Pollinator Garden Network](#). A partnership between conservation organizations, gardening groups, volunteer civic associations and participating federal agencies to inspire people and organizations to create more pollinator habitats.

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Pollinator Planting in Action

Stories from the field

Critters Corner – MD

This sun to shade suburban yard is increasingly more garden than lawn. Cottage garden style mixed perennials with herbs, veggies, and annual flowers. Gardens are a-buzz with pollinators from early spring crocus through late fall asters. Plentiful white clover rounds out a summer smorgasboard of blooms. Brush piles and a row of mature wild cherry, sassafras, and mulberry provide wind breaks and habitat for ground-dwelling pollinators. Water garden containers and lotus pots provide plentiful and accessible still water. IPM takes an almost-never and tightly targeted approach to pesticide use, with beneficial insects and birds generally providing good control. Our yard is also an NWF Certified Wildlife Habitat, frequented by local wildlife from groundhogs to neighborhood kids!

Bees Knees and Hummers Hangout garden - NM

We have a certified urban wildlife sanctuary devoted to pollinator and small wildlife and teaching others how to plant such a garden in an urban setting whether it be in the ground or containers and whether they live in apartments homes, etc.

Joyce R. - MD

Our yard flourishes with both native and non-native plants. Our blooming season begins in February with flowers from bulbs and continues into October and sometimes November with several hundred varieties of bushes, plants, bulbs and trees. Most of the gardens are not pruned until April/May to provide food and shelter for the critters during the winter months. The gardens are pesticide-free. In addition to the yard being published twice, it is a certified Backyard Wildlife Habitat, awarded from the National Wildlife Federation, where wildlife may find quality habitat - food, water, cover, and places to raise their young.

Chandler Preparatory Academy - AZ

Our garden is named "Communio, Scientia, Sperum" meaning Community, Knowledge, Hope. It is a certified Monarch waystation through Monarch Watch, and we have expanded nectar and host plants to welcome and support pollinators of all kinds!

Children's Fairyland – CA

We are a storybook themed kids park on the shores of Lake Merritt in downtown Oakland. Our whimsical gardens aim to foster curiosity and a sense of nature for our young visitors. We are part of Oakland's Pollinator Posse and home to many urban pollinators!

Chalfant trees farm and feed - CA

We are a retail nursery that carries all types of plants including many pollinating types. We also have a planted area with Native and pollinating plants. We have been Certified as a Pollinating Garden By the Eastern Sierra Land Trust of California. We have 12 hives on the back of our property.

Ballantyne Gardens - NY

We have a display garden at our garden center with many pollinator friendly flowering plants, a big beautiful pond with koi and a wooded backdrop with lots of canopy and cover for bird and wildlife species.