

Pollinator Gardens

Why Care About Pollinators?

From bees to bats and butterflies to beetles, pollinators play a crucial role in agriculture. Bees are needed in the growth of a third of our food supply! Pollinators are the base of the natural food web. Wild birds rely on caterpillars to raise their young. Sadly, bee and other pollinator populations have been on a serious decline worldwide due to intensive agriculture, pesticides and fertilizers, habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, climate change, and more.

Here's What We Can Do

The Town's Planning & Community Development Department would like to encourage our residents to act now and prepare for **Pollinator Garden Month** in June 2022! Start now to preserve these incredible species and help them to thrive. Read about the [Bel Air Five Campaign](#) to check out these pollinator-friendly practices. We would love to see pictures of your pollinator gardens, new or established, as they progress. Send pictures to planning@belairmd.org

Pollinator Friendly Practices

- Use native plants since they are adapted to the local climate and soils, and local pollinators are adapted to them.
- Provide a variety of flower shapes and colors since different pollinators are attracted to different types of flowers.
- Avoid modern hybrids, especially those with "doubled" flowers, since pollen, nectar, and scent can be lost in the cultivation process.
- Plant a variety of flowers to bloom continually from early spring to early fall.
- Build a bee condo or leave dead trees or limbs to create nesting habitat for bees.
- Provide bare ground or a shallow bird bath filled with soil, sprinkled with sea salt and kept moist, to create a source of water and minerals for pollinators.
- Include plants for caterpillars. They are surprisingly fussy eaters and require particular "host" plants. Caterpillars eat the foliage of their host plants, but the average gardener won't notice the damage until at least 10% of the leaves are affected.
- Help pollinators find the plants they need by planting them in clumps rather than singly. Clustering plants also shortens the distances that pollinators need to travel.
- Avoid using pesticides if at all possible. If you want butterflies, you need caterpillars (and the nibbled leaves that go with them)!

