

Getting Started

SITE PREPARATION

When selecting a location for your plants, consider their sunlight and water needs. Avoid planting in areas treated with pesticides. Herbicides used on turf grass may harm your plants and pollinators.

Before you dig, call 811 to locate and identify utility lines to avoid.

If planting in an existing garden bed, remove any weeds. If creating a new garden by replacing turf grass, you can do so without pesticides (specifically herbicides) by:

- Digging out the turf grass (which can be composted or used to fill bare spots in your yard)
- Using cardboard to smother the turf grass (takes 6-8 weeks)

Before you begin planting, amend the soil with 1-2 inches of a mix of equal parts of compost and topsoil. Avoid tilling as it can bring weed seeds to the surface.

You can mulch to help control weeds. A layer of 1 inch or less is best. Too much mulch can smother plants or cause root rot.

Finally, measure the space and mark plant locations before digging.

Be careful! Many wood mulches are pre-treated with harmful chemicals that contain pesticides (including herbicides).

Planting & Watering

PLANTING

Check our website for free garden designs or plan to space plants at least 12" apart. Dig a hole for each plant slightly bigger than the width of the pot and ¼ inch deeper (auger bits on drills can help). Remove plants from pots by gently squeezing the bottom while tilting the pot slightly downward. Avoid pulling plants from the top. Gently massage the roots and place in the hole. Backfill loose soil from the hole by feathering it around the base of the plant and using it to cover the entire root system. Firm the loose soil by lightly pressing down around the plant to ensure good root contact with the soil underneath.

WATERING

Observe plants and weather conditions to determine water needs. In the absence of a good rain, water each plant with 1 quart (4 cups) in the early morning or at sunset. If watering with a hose, count to 5 for each plant. If using a sprinkler, 30 minutes is sufficient. Avoid watering in the heat of the day to prevent leaf burn. Follow this recommended watering schedule:

- Week 1-2:** Water every other day
- Week 3-4:** Water twice per week
- Week 5-10:** Water once a week

Important: Plants need more water during drought/extreme heat. Dry soil and curled or wilted leaves mean more watering is needed.

Clean-up

YEAR-ROUND

Pull or dig out unwanted grasses and weeds to allow plants to thrive. Tip: mark plants with a flag for the first year after planting as some can look like weeds.

FALL

Leave as much of your garden as possible intact for winter pollinator hibernating habitats. If you notice that certain plants are propagating in unwanted ways, cut the flowers off at the top of the stem to prevent more seed spread, or better yet, collect the seeds to share with others or to plant in other parts of your property!

SPRING

Garden debris can provide essential habitat for pollinators and are food sources for birds and other wildlife. Wait to do spring clean-up until temperatures are consistently above 50 degrees Fahrenheit for ten days and the threat of frost has passed. Cut back any dead flower stalks with varying heights between 8-24 inches to give pollinators nesting cavities.

Did you know? Milkweed is the host plant of the monarch butterfly so be sure to look for eggs and caterpillars!

THE IMPACT OF NATIVE POLLINATOR GARDENS

Native pollinator gardens greatly boost the abundance and diversity of pollinators and wildlife in an area while enhancing soil health, reducing erosion, conserving water, and mitigating climate change. These gardens are a powerful tool for promoting biodiversity and sustainability and connecting humans to the natural world.

TIPS AND NOTES: NATIVE PERENNIAL PLANTS

To really help pollinators, be sure most of the plants you use are native to your area.

Perennials come back every year and require minimum maintenance once established, which can take up to a year.

Many native plants do not flower the first year as they are establishing a strong root system, so be patient.

If critters are eating the plants, you can buy chicken wire and create small enclosures surrounding plants until they are established.

If you notice a taller plant needs extra support, you can secure the plant to a stake using plant ties or large wire twist ties.



NEBRASKA MONARCHS

BRINGING BACK BUTTERFLIES

Nebraska Monarchs empowers land managers and private citizens with the knowledge and resources to create safe native pollinator habitat.

Nebraska Monarchs is a 501(c)(3) non-profit. Support us by donating so we can offer more programs to our community!

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NEBRASKA MONARCHS

BRINGING BACK BUTTERFLIES

CREATING A NATIVE POLLINATOR HABITAT

Thank you for your interest in creating a native pollinator habitat. Using native plants in your yard is a simple and effective way to support biodiversity and create a more resilient planet for future generations!

For more information and garden design ideas visit:

www.NeMonarchs.com

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