

Butterflyway Information from Pat Kolterman

Manicured lawns are a desert for pollinators (and most wildlife). But you can make your yard or garden a pollinator paradise!

In spring, leave twig piles and bare ground. Come summer, let veggies bolt. Provide a source of water and don't rake all the fall leaves. Build homes where pollinators can lay eggs or overwinter. Chances are you're already taking steps to help pollinators — bees (wild and honeybees), butterflies and birds. That's great! Not sure? Check your actions against these tips.

Here's a list of some of the best native plants for gardens in the Lower Mainland and Victoria and throughout Western Canada.

Pollinator-friendly plants native to Western Canada:

Nectar plants:

Canada goldenrod - *Solidago lepida*
Douglas aster - *Symphyotrichum subspicatum*
Woodland strawberry - *Fragaria vesca*
Kinnikinnick - *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*
Pearly everlasting - *Anaphalis margaritacea*
Western yarrow - *Achillea millefolium*
Wooly sunflower - *Eriophyllum lanatum*
Low Oregon grape - *Mahonia nervosa*
Common camas - *Camassia quamash*
Spring gold - *Lomatium utriculatum*
Sea blush - *Plectritis congesta*
Red columbine - *Aquilegia formosa*
Gumweed - *Grindelia stricta*
Broadleaf stonecrop - *Sedum spathulifolium*
Mock orange- *Philadelphus lewisii*

Host plants:

Pacific bleeding heart - *Dicentra Formosa*
Oceanspray - *Holodiscus discolor*
Pacific willow - *Salix lucida* (Pacifica)
Chokecherry - *Prunus virginiana*
Pacific ninebark - *Physocarpus capitatus*
Cottonwood - *Populus trichocarpa*
Stinging nettle (native) - *Urtica dioica* ssp *gracilis*
Saskatoon serviceberry - *Amelanchier alnifolia*

Hardhack (rose spirea) - *Spiraea douglasii*
Showy milkweed - *Asclepias speciosa*

Plant bee food:

Bees eat two things: nectar (loaded with sugar and a bee's main source of energy) and pollen (which provides proteins and fats).

Choose a variety of plants that flower at different times so there's always a snack available. As a rule, native plants attract native bees and exotic plants attract honey bees.

Flowers bred to please the human eye (for things like size and complexity) are sometimes sterile and of little use to pollinators. Native plants or heirloom varieties are best!

Bees have good colour vision. They especially like blue, purple, violet, white and yellow. Create floral bull's eyes: Plant flowers of a single species in clumps about four feet in diameter instead of in scatterings so bees are more likely to find them.

Bee species all have different tongue lengths — adaptations to different flowers, so a variety of flower shapes will benefit a diversity of bees.

Sow sunflowers:

Sunflowers' height makes them beacons for pollinators. They're also rich sources of nectar and pollen for honeybees, bumblebees and other wild bee species, butterflies and other beneficial insects. Leave the flower in the garden as a natural fall and winter bird feeder — much loved by chickadees.

Get kids involved! The seeds are big — easy for tiny hands. Push each seed two centimetres (one inch) into the soil. Space big varieties three to five feet apart.

For smaller spaces, plant tiny sunflowers to grow one foot apart (or one plant per three-gallon container). Choose dwarf varieties, like Music box (grows a few feet) for raised beds or in large containers, like half-barrels.

Butterfly species native to Western Canada:

Western tiger swallowtail
Mourning cloak
Red admiral
Painted lady
Monarch
Cabbage white
Milbert's tortoiseshell
Lorquin's admiral

Sara orangetip
Woodland skipper
Cedar hairstreak