Help Us Plant One Million Gardens

Million Pollinator Garden Challenge

Toolkit
THANKS FOR JOINING THE MILLION POLLINATOR GARDEN CHALLENGE
WE ARE GLAD TO HAVE YOU INVOLVED.

The Million Pollinator Garden Challenge (MPGC) is a nationwide call to action to preserve and create gardens and landscapes that help revive the health of bees, butterflies, birds, bats and other pollinators across America. We are encouraging millions of individuals, kids and families outdoors and make a connection between pollinators and the healthy food people eat.

The Million Pollinator Garden Challenge was launched by The National Pollinator Garden Network, a collaboration of stakeholders from horticulture business, garden, pollinator, and conservation communities working together to support the health of pollinating animals.

You are the most important part of making this movement a reality. You are a critical part of encouraging your community to get involved. Using the materials we’ve provided in this toolkit as a guide to get started.

TOP LEVEL MESSAGES

Use these top level messages when talking to press, your staff, community leaders, donors, or volunteers, and become a spokesperson for the wider Million Pollinator Garden Challenge movement:

Primary message points:
• The Million Pollinator Garden Challenge is a campaign to register a million public and private gardens and landscapes to support pollinators.

• Help us plant one million gardens. Plant something for pollinators and register your garden at MillionPollinatorGardens.org.

Additional message points include:
• Plant a pollinator garden. Any size is great! From window and patio planters, to home gardens, to pathways and roadsides, to acres of prairies and meadows – all can help!

• Register your Garden to BEE Counted. Add a photo of your garden or landscape to the online map at MillionPollinatorGardens.org. Anyone and any size garden can join in our campaign to reach one million sites for pollinators!

• Support pollinator friendly businesses. Purchase plants or seeds from nurseries, garden centers, and seed suppliers who offer pollinator-friendly plants and seeds suited to your local area.

• Find tips and lists to help you create gardens that help pollinators in your region online at MillionPollinatorGardens.org.

• Spread the word. Let everyone know you’ve taken on the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge! Use our logo on your website, social media, or posters using #polliNATION!

• You can make a difference. The Million Pollinator Garden Challenges is about individuals and organizations coming together as communities to make an extraordinary difference for pollinator health.
GET INVOLVED

Educate
• Host Pollinator Education sessions (“Pollinator Gardens: Use Your Backyard to Provide for Pollinators”) and teach customers what and how to plant a pollinator garden.
• Create a video teaching how to plant a pollinator garden. Post it to YouTube, publish it to all your social media pages, and share with local media.
• Visit a university or a school and educate students about pollinators and the role horticulture plays in supporting pollinator health.

Volunteer
• Personally volunteer at a local school, church, or community center to organize a larger team volunteer event with your friends, staff, and neighbors.
• Donate your company’s pro bono hours to help build pollinator habitats in collaboration with a local hospital or botanical garden.

Collaborate
• Ask other organizations and businesses in your area to work together to build a local Million Pollinator Garden Challenge day or event.
• Create a Million Pollinator Garden Challenge sale in your store during Pollinator Week donate a portion of proceeds to a pollinator research.
• Get your local government officials to proclaim a Million Pollinator Garden Challenge day in your city or town.

Get Social
• Engage your social media followers (or open a new social media account) to talk about the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge.
• Brand your personal and business social media accounts with the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge graphics and be an ambassador for the movement. Pre-made graphics are available at www.growwise.org/challengetoolkit.
• Celebrate and highlight community gardens on social media and with your local press.
• Email your customers to educate them about the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge and invite them to participate.
• Share photos of your events, pollinators, and gardens using the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge hashtag #polliNATION!
• Incorporate the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge with other planet and sustainability days and events.
  • Arbor Day—highlight flowering trees (Arbor Days vary from state to state. Find yours here: www.arborday.org/celebrate/dates.cfm.)
  • Earth Day—highlight the impact pollinators have on ecosystem health (Earth Day is April 22, 2016)
  • Pollinator Week—an entire week devoted to pollinators (June 20-26, 2016)
  • Bat Week—use this opportunity to educate customers on bats and the 700 flowers they pollinate (October 31 - November 5, 2016)

Raise Funds
• Donate to or organize a pollinator garden planting event in your community.
• Donate to or organize a fundraiser for a nonprofit conducting important pollinator research. Horticultural Research Institute [hriresearch.org] is a 501c(3) non-profit organization currently funding critical research on pollinator health.
SAMPLE COMMUNICATIONS TIMELINE
Use this timeline to build your marketing plan and track your progress.

March
• Order Million Pollinator Garden Challenge point-of-purchase materials from www.gardencentermarketing.com/page/Pollinator-Garden-Challenge-Signage
• Determine what types of outreach you’ll conduct (plant a garden, organize a gardening day, engage in a community service project).
• Identify partners, if any (schools, parks, churches).
• Plan any educational events and/or instructional videos.
• Plan social media posts and gather pertinent images.

April
• Finalize educational events and curriculum, film and edit any instructional videos.
• Press release with initial plans, partner highlights, and important dates (if any).
• Send emails to customers.
• Add Million Pollinator Garden Challenge to any garden-related speaking engagement presentations.
• Make a plan to incorporate point-of-purchase materials in store displays, farmers’ market booths, and home and garden engagements.
• Celebrate Arbor Day and Earth Day!
• Finalize planting event/day details.

May-June
• Focus on pitching stories to local press.
• Press release with final plans and partner highlights.
• Invite media to your events.
• Deploy education videos and social media posts.
• Host educational programs.
• Plant gardens and register them.
• Celebrate Pollinator Week!

July
• Wrap-up press release announcing successes, report in meaningful stories.
• Thank partners.
• Send reminders to customers to register the gardens they planted.
• Post reminders to social media on registering gardens.

September-October
• Repurpose Million Pollinator Garden Challenge materials in your “Fall is for Planting” events and activities.
• Incorporate Million Pollinator Garden Challenge messaging in fall/Halloween plans (“Bats are Pollinators!”) and celebrate Bat Week.

November-December
• Review 2016 activities
• Make plans for 2017
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Million Pollinator Garden Challenge was created by the National Pollinator Garden Network. The Challenge mobilizes America’s extensive gardening community, and supports them in making more native and non-invasive pollen and nectar producing plants available in their gardens. The Challenge increases the understanding of the critical role that such actions can play in reversing declining pollinator populations.

What is the National Pollinator Garden Network (NPGN)?
The National Pollinator Garden Network is a collaboration of stakeholders from the garden, pollinator and conservation communities working together to support the health of pollinating animals. View our Partners page.

Who funds the efforts of the NPGN?
Each member organization of the NPGN contributes in-kind efforts to support this work.

What is the goal of the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge?
The Million Pollinator Garden Challenge is an initiative of the NPGN that invites participation from organizations and individuals both inside and outside the NPGN. The objective is to increase nectar and pollen providing landscapes of every size in order to address one of the significant threats to pollinator health – the dearth of forage and degradation of habitat for pollinators. The goal is to promote and count 1 million such forage locations across the United States.

How long will the challenge run?
The Million Pollinator Garden Challenge will run for at least two years, and the support of the National Pollinator Garden Network will continue through the conclusion of the Challenge encompassing other initiatives that will be determined by the collective body and by circumstances for pollinators.

How is the number of gardens measured?
The gardens will be registered on the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge “SHARE Map” (www.millionpollinatorgardens.org) where visitors will be able to visually track the progress of the campaign. Registrants can upload photos and videos of their sites, and the map can be sorted by garden type. In addition, a metric to assess pollinator garden actions across multiple organizations will be in effect as the campaign progresses.

Are there criteria to qualify as a garden on the map?
The one criterion common to all gardens on the map is that the plants used in the garden (no matter what the size) provide nectar and pollen. We encourage gardens to also provide a water source, be planted in sunny areas with wind breaks, create large “pollinator targets” of native or non-invasive plants, establish continuous bloom throughout the growing season, and eliminate or minimize the impact of pesticides.

May I use the Challenge logo on my promotion of it?
There are downloadable materials that may be used to promote the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge. The logo may not be used for any commercial purpose without written permission from the National Pollinator Garden Network. Specific uses by commercial entities will be evaluated based on the NPGN application for commercial use. Requests may be addressed to jenniferg@americanhort.org.

Are native plants encouraged by the NPGN?
Blooming native plants are a great choice to support the pollinator habitat of any ecosystem. These can be found at many nurseries. In addition, a list of other common, non-invasive trees, shrubs, flowers, and vines that will support pollinators is available at many of the NPGN Partners’ sites.

Are all nursery plants good for pollinators?
The best plants for pollinators provide pollen and nectar. Examples of these types of food sources can include flowering annuals and perennials, ground covers, shrubs, and trees.

Can anyone be part of the Challenge?
Yes! Anyone who is interested in providing healthy pollinator habitat can do so. Plant and share your garden with others using #polliNATION.

Are there any costs to register my garden in the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge?
No! The Challenge is a free and open movement to encourage the establishment of pollinator habitat.

QUESTIONS OR IDEAS?
Get in touch with the National Pollinator Garden Network team:
Jennifer Gray, 614-884-1155, jenniferg@americanhort.org
SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS & SAMPLES

Social media is a key component in making sure the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge grows. It’s also one of the best ways to share your story.

**Remember to use the hashtag #polliNATION on social media when talking about your campaign.** Your story is important and it allows your followers and networks to join the conversation.

Here are a few sample posts to get you started.

**Twitter**
- Bee part of pollinator health movement. #polliNATION millionpollinatorgardens.org
- Rise up, #polliNATION! Help us reach 1 million gardens! Plant something for pollinators! millionpollinatorgardens.org
- #Pollinators are responsible for 1 out of 3 bites of food we take each day. #polliNATION millionpollinatorgardens.org
- Join the movement. Plant something for pollinators and register your garden. #polliNATION millionpollinatorgardens.org
- Help bees, butterflies, birds, bats, and other pollinators. #polliNATION millionpollinatorgardens.org

**Facebook**
- The Million Pollinator Garden Challenge is a national movement to help pollinators. Everyone, everywhere, can participate! #polliNATION millionpollinatorgardens.org
- One million pollinator gardens? No problem. Plant something for pollinators and register your garden today. #polliNATION millionpollinatorgardens.org
- Join the movement! Plant something for pollinators and register your garden. Don’t know where to start? Ask us! We’ll help you get started. #polliNATION millionpollinatorgardens.org
- Did you know? Pollinators are responsible for 1 out of 3 bites of food we take each day. Pollinators need our help. #polliNATION millionpollinatorgardens.org
- More nectar and pollen sources provided by more flowering plants and trees will help improve pollinator health and their numbers. #polliNATION millionpollinatorgardens.org
- Increasing the number of pollinator-friendly gardens and landscapes will help revive the health of bees, butterflies, birds, bats, and other pollinators across the country. #polliNATION millionpollinatorgardens.org
- It’s never too early to get ready for spring. Make plans to plant something for pollinators! #polliNATION millionpollinatorgardens.org

**PRO TIP**

Use the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge hashtag #polliNATION along with other hashtags (like #ArborDay) to maximize reach.