

# pollinator garden calendar



## spring

### EMERGE

Wait until mid-April to tidy up the garden so as to not disturb overwintering insects. Many pollinators awaken from hibernation in spring from dead wood, hollow stems, unmown grass or bare ground, depending on the species. They look for mates and forage on spring flowers.

## summer

### NEST

Leave a wild spot to host nesting insects. By mid-summer, many pollinators lay eggs on plant leaves or in dead wood, hollow stems, unmown grass or in the ground, depending on the species. Adults and newly-hatched larvae forage on nectar and pollen from summer flowers.

## autumn

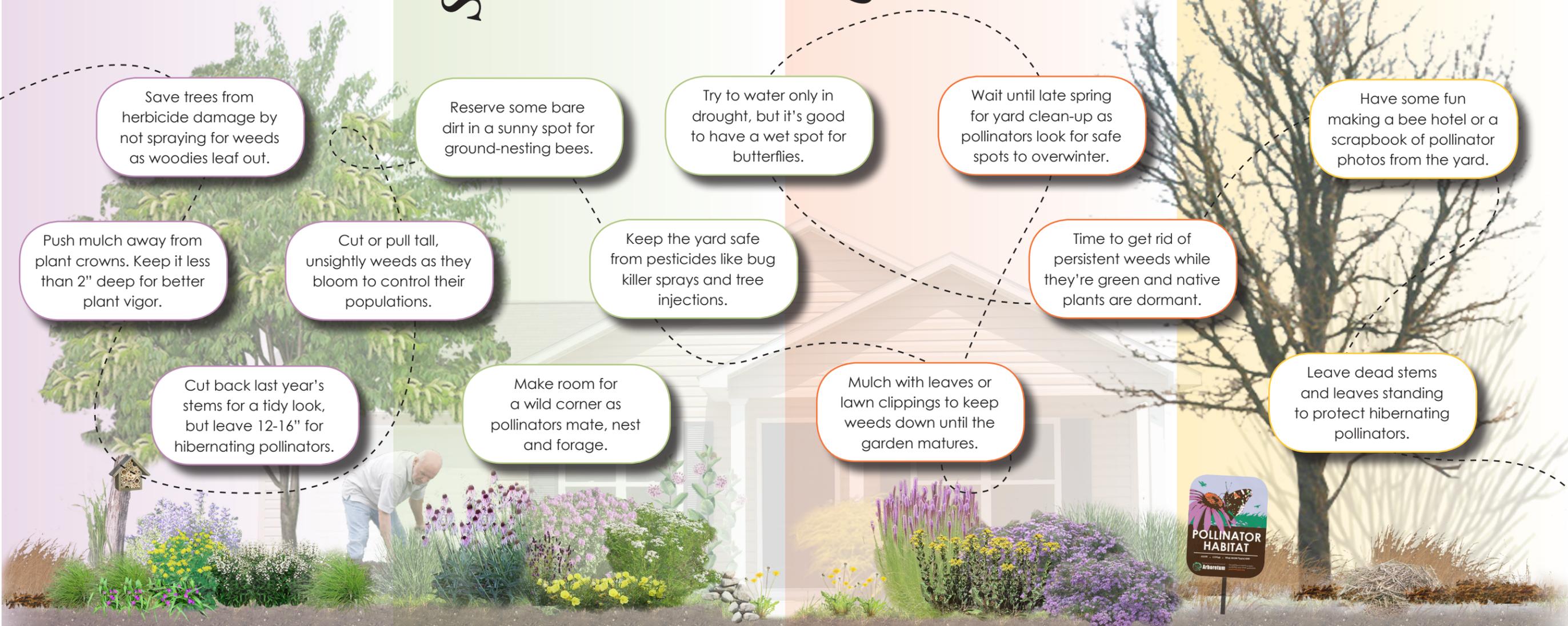
### FORAGE

Grow plants like aster, sedum and goldenrod to provide forage when it might otherwise be scarce. Most pollinator larvae and adults are active during autumn and spend their time foraging on late-blooming flowers. Some species have morphed into adults by this time.

## winter

### OVERWINTER

Try to leave the garden undisturbed until spring so pollinators have safe places to hibernate. Most spend the winter in an inactive state, often tucked away in hidden wild spots like tall grass, shrubs, trees or fence posts, or in piles of leaves or sticks, dead wood or in the ground.



Save trees from herbicide damage by not spraying for weeds as woodies leaf out.

Reserve some bare dirt in a sunny spot for ground-nesting bees.

Try to water only in drought, but it's good to have a wet spot for butterflies.

Wait until late spring for yard clean-up as pollinators look for safe spots to overwinter.

Have some fun making a bee hotel or a scrapbook of pollinator photos from the yard.

Push mulch away from plant crowns. Keep it less than 2" deep for better plant vigor.

Cut or pull tall, unsightly weeds as they bloom to control their populations.

Keep the yard safe from pesticides like bug killer sprays and tree injections.

Time to get rid of persistent weeds while they're green and native plants are dormant.

Cut back last year's stems for a tidy look, but leave 12-16" for hibernating pollinators.

Make room for a wild corner as pollinators mate, nest and forage.

Mulch with leaves or lawn clippings to keep weeds down until the garden matures.

Leave dead stems and leaves standing to protect hibernating pollinators.



Emerging mason bee.



Mating eastern tailed blues.



Tachnid fly eggs on a caterpillar.



Ground bee nests in a lawn.



Hawk moth caterpillar larva.



Soldier beetle feeding on pollen.



Foraging paper wasp.



Pearl crescent pupa in a chrysalis.



Bumblebee queen burrow.



NEBRASKA STATEWIDE  
**Arboretum**

# Nebraska plants for pollinators

## spring

TOP GARDEN PICKS



**Dwarf Spiderwort**  
*Tradescantia tharpaii*



**Large Beardtongue**  
*Penstemon grandiflorus*



**Golden Alexanders**  
*Zizia aurea*



**Prairie Smoke**  
*Geum triflorum*



**Blue Phlox**  
*Phlox divaricata*



**Cream Wild Indigo**  
*Baptisia bracteata*

TREES AND SHRUBS



**Serviceberry**  
*Amelanchier spp.*



**American Plum**  
*Prunus americana*

## summer

TOP GARDEN PICKS



**Leadplant**  
*Amorpha canescens*



**Butterfly Milkweed**  
*Asclepias tuberosa*



**Beebalm**  
*Monarda fistulosa*



**Narrowleaf Coneflower**  
*Echinacea angustifolia*



**Dotted Blazing Star**  
*Liatris punctata*



**New Jersey Tea**  
*Ceanothus americanus*

TREES AND SHRUBS



**American Linden**  
*Tilia americana*



**Buttonbush**  
*Cephalanthus occidentalis*

## autumn

TOP GARDEN PICKS



**Stonecrop**  
*Sedum spp.*



**Aromatic Aster**  
*Aster oblongifolius*



**Wichita Mtns. Goldenrod**  
*Solidago 'Wichita Mtns.'*



**Hoary Vervain**  
*Verbena stricta*



**Blue Pitcher Sage**  
*Salvia azurea*



**Wild Senna**  
*Senna hebecarpa*

TREES AND SHRUBS



**Witchhazel**  
*Hamamelis virginiana*

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[plantnebraska.org](http://plantnebraska.org)



## pesticides & pollinators

We can do a lot to support pollinators by minimizing pesticide use around our yards. Pesticides like bug and weed killers can have a disastrous effect on pollinator populations. Most bug killers (called insecticides) are poisonous to pollinators and kill them directly, sometimes years after application. Weed killers (called herbicides) cause indirect harm by eliminating flowering plants critical to their food supply. Instead of using pesticides, try these alternatives.

### KEEP YOUR PLANTS HEALTHY

A healthy plant can fend off pests and diseases by itself. This means picking the right plant for the right place. If a plant is struggling, make sure the mulch around it isn't too deep.

### STRIVE FOR BIODIVERSITY

A landscape with many different kinds of plants can encourage native predators of garden pests, which in turn reduce pest populations. Try to grow at least a few different bloomers for each season.

### TRY SOFTER METHODS

Handpicking larger pests and spraying soapy water on smaller ones are some chemical-free options. You can manage aggressive or unsightly weeds by cutting them back as they bloom.

