How to Weed Your Pollinator Garden

Does it stay or does it go?
Purpose of this Guide

Many new gardeners have trouble weeding their native pollinator habitat. Why? Because it can be difficult to know which plants should stay and which ones should be removed. This picture-based guide was created to help you weed! This task is important because weeds left to grow will quickly crowd out the plants you want to thrive.

When weeding be sure to remove the plant stems AND the roots. Use a hand tool to loosen the soil under the plant before pulling on the weed. Weed often, as least once a week, to ensure unwanted plants are removed before they begin the drop seeds.

The weeding guide identifies 21 desired pollinator plants and 15 common weeds native to Southeast Nebraska. Most likely, you will have other flowering plants and grasses in your garden not included in this booklet. We are just providing a starting point. The guide shows you what the plants look like when young and sprouting, when they are in bloom, and when they have grown to maturity.

This guide was developed for gardeners of all ages however, we are most interested in helping students care for schoolyard pollinator habitat. This is not meant to be a complete gardening guide as there are many resources available to help select and prepare a site, and design and plant an effective and beautiful pollinator garden. Additional assistance can be found online and with local native plant experts. For more information about this guide contact Carolyn Butler at the Nebraska Wildlife Federation at carolyn@nebraskawildlife.org or at 402-477-1008.

Happy Gardening!

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Made Possible With Funding From:
Hugo A. and Thelma Aspegren Charitable Trust
The Groundwater Guardian Program
How to Weed
Your Native Pollinator Garden

We created this guide to help you care for your pollinator-friendly garden by identifying the weeds that need to be removed. It’s divided into two parts:

Plants that Stay
(native, pollinator-friendly species)

You can see the different growth stages for each plant.

Plants that Go
(weeds, generally not used by pollinators, may be causing problems in the garden)
Plants that Stay
Pollinator Plants

SPROUTING

BLACK-EYED SUSAN  *Rudbeckia fulgida*

BLOOMING

BUTTERFLY MILKWEED  *Asclepias tuberosa*

ENTIRE PLANT

Blooms yellow June-October

COMMON MILKWEED  *Asclepias syriaca*

Blooms orange-yellow June-July

Blooms pink June-July
Plants that Stay
Pollinator Plants

SPROUTING  BLOOMING  ENTIRE PLANT

DWARF BLUE INDIGO *Baptisia minor*  Blooms blue-purple May-June

DWARF SPIDERWORT *Tradescantia tharprii*  Blooms pink-purple May-July

GRAY-HEADED CONEFLOWER *Ratibida pinnata*  Blooms yellow June-August

[www.grownative.org](http://www.grownative.org)
Plants that Stay
Pollinator Plants

**SPROUTING**

**LANCELEAF COREOPSIS** Coreopsis lanceolata

**BLOOMING**

Blooms yellow May-July

**ENTIRE PLANT**

**LEADPLANT** Amorpha canescens

Blooms blue-purple July-September

**MEADOW GAYFEATHER** Liatris ligulistylis

Blooms purple July-September
Plants that Stay
Pollinator Plants

SPROUTING | BLOOMING | ENTIRE PLANT
---|---|---
NARROWLEAF CONEFLOWER *Echinacea angustifolia*  
Blooms pink-lilac June-July

PALE PURPLE CONEFLOWER *Echinacea pallida*  
Blooms pale purple June-July

PASQUE FLOWER *Pulsatilla patens*  
Blooms blue-violet March-April

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center  
www.wildflower.org
Plants that Stay
Pollinator Plants

SPROUTING

BLOOMING

ENTIRE PLANT

PITCHER SAGE *Salvia azurea*

Blooms blue August-September

PRAIRIE ALUMROOT *Heuchera richardsonii*

Blooms green June-July

PRAIRIE PHLOX *Phlox pilosa*

Blooms pink-purple May-July

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvia_azurea

Krzysztof Ziarnek, Kenraiz
Creative Commons
Plants that Stay
Pollinator Plants

SPROUTING

BLOOMING

ENTIRE PLANT

PURPLE POPPY MALLOW Callirhoe involucrata

Blooms magenta May-June

SHELL-LEAF PENSTEMON Penstemon grandiflorus

Blooms white-pink May-July

SPIKED GAYFEATHER Liatris spicata

Blooms purple July-August

National Park Service
www.nationalparkservice.org
Plants that Stay
Pollinator Plants

**STIFF-LEAVED GOLDENROD** *Solidago rigida*
- Blooms yellow August-October

**SWAMP MILKWEED** *Asclepias incarnata*
- Blooms pink June-July

**WILD GERANIUM** *Geranium maculatum*
- Blooms pink-lilac April-May

[Images and credits provided for each plant]
Plants that Go
Weeds

**ASIATIC DAYFLOWER** *Commelina communis*

**BUFFALO BUR** *Solanum rostratum*

**COMMON CHICKWEED** *Stellaria media*
Plants that Go
Weeds

SPROUTING  BLOOMING  ENTIRE PLANT

COMMON PURSLANE *Portulaca oleracea*

DANDELION *Taraxacum officinale*

FIELD BINDWEED *Convolvulus arvensis*
Plants that Go
Weeds

SPROUTING

BLOOMING

ENTIRE PLANT

FOXTAIL *Setaria* spp.

HOP CLOVER *Trifolium campestre*

LAMBSQUARTERS *Chenopodium album*
Plants that Go
Weeds

**SPROUTING**

**MUSK THISTLE** *Carduus nutans*
- Be careful, it has spines!

**BLOOMING**

**PIGWEED** *Amaranthus spp.*
- Mark Schonbeck

**ENTIRE PLANT**

**PRICKLY SOWTHISTLE** *Sonchus asper*
- Be careful, it has stinging spines!
Plants that Go
Weeds

**SPROUTING**

**BLOOMING**

**ENTIRE PLANT**

**PUNCTUREVINE** *Tribulus terrestris*
Handle with caution! Its seeds can be spiky!

**SMOOTH BROME** *Bromus inermis*

**STINGING NETTLE** *Urtica dioica*
Be careful, it has stinging hairs!
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## Resources

### POLLINATOR GARDENING
Pollinator Partnership, www.pollinator.org

### TEACHING IN THE GARDEN
Nebraska Forest Service Conservation Education Program, www.nfs.unl.edu
Project Learning Tree, www.plt.org
University of Minnesota Monarch Lab, www.monarchlab.org/education-and-gardening

### MORE ON WEEDS
Backyard Farmer, www.byf.unl.edu
University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension, www.extension.unl.edu