

Pollinator Kits

Spring 2026 Native Plant Sale



Thank you for purchasing a pollinator kit at the Spring 2026 Native Plant Sale for the benefit of Wild Ones Middle Tennessee Chapter and Owl's Hill Nature Sanctuary.

Why This Matters

By planting native species, you can help support biodiversity and provide critical food and habitat for bees, butterflies, and other beneficial insects. This kit is designed to help you create a resilient, pollinator-friendly garden using plants native to Tennessee.

This pollinator kit will function best when the plants are in Full Sun (meaning six or more hours of direct sun per day when the plants are active). The following guidelines should help you get started with planting your pollinator kit.

Where to Begin

How Much Area?

A typical pollinator kit will fill an area of about **75–120 square feet**, depending on how closely you space the plants.

You can:

- **Space plants farther apart** to allow them to spread naturally (more weeding at first, but fuller over time), or

- **Plant more densely** for quicker coverage and fewer weeds early on.

Flower Constancy

Many pollinators show “flower constancy,” meaning they visit the same type of flower repeatedly during a foraging trip.

To support this behavior, **group plants of the same species together** rather than scattering them individually. This makes it easier for pollinators to find and use your plants efficiently.

Continuous Bloom

Ideally, a pollinator garden will offer blooms for pollinators continuously throughout the growing season. One way to check for this is to create a bloom chart that shows graphically when each different species blooms. See the chart below. Bloom data for this chart was mined from iNaturalist using observations in Tennessee in 2020-2022. So this range is species-wide. Likely, no one plant would bloom this long, but collectively the species should. Also, the dates vary year-to-year due to many factors. The bloom chart illustrates how plants can be selected that have overlapping bloom periods.

No single plant can fulfill the needs of all pollinators, so the plant selection process can be more complicated than simply ensuring a continuous bloom, but the bloom chart is a good start.

Pollinator Kit Bloom Chart

Common Name	Scientific Name	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Long-sepal Beardtongue	<i>Penstemon calycosus</i>		[]						
Purple Coneflower	<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>			[]					
Bee Balm	<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>			[]					
Clustered Mountainmint	<i>Pycnanthemum muticum</i>				[]				
Wrinkleleaf Goldenrod	<i>Solidago rugosa</i>						[]		
Smooth Blue Aster	<i>Symphyotrichum laeve</i>						[]		
Aromatic Aster	<i>Symphyotrichum oblongifolium</i>						[]		

Other Design Considerations

In addition to keeping like species together as mentioned above, another layout consideration concerns plant height. There isn't much variation in the height of the plants in the pollinator kit, but potentially taller plants are Smooth Blue Aster, Bee Balm, and Purple Coneflower. So, if the garden will be viewed primarily from one side, the taller plants would normally go in the back. If the garden is viewable from all sides, then place the taller ones in the middle. Pulling together these ideas, one possible design for an 8-foot by 14-foot garden located along a wall or fence is illustrated on the next page.

Gathering Information

Part of the design process for a garden is to gather basic information about the plants, like average height and width, to help decide how far apart the plants need to be. There are many references for this information: [Plant Finder](#) at the Missouri Botanical Garden, and the [Lady](#)

[Bird Johnson Wildflower Center](#). Or, entering the plant name in a search engine will often be enough to get to the information you are looking for.

Preparing a Pollinator Bed (About 100 sq. ft.)

1. Select the location and size of garden
2. Remove all vegetation (this step is important to remove competition with other plants). There are different methods for doing this
 - A. The Dig and Remove method (fastest) is to dig or till the soil 6-8 inches deep removing all vegetative material.
 - B. Other methods involve cardboard sheet mulching, plastic solarization, and herbicides. You can search on those methods individually and decide what is best for you.

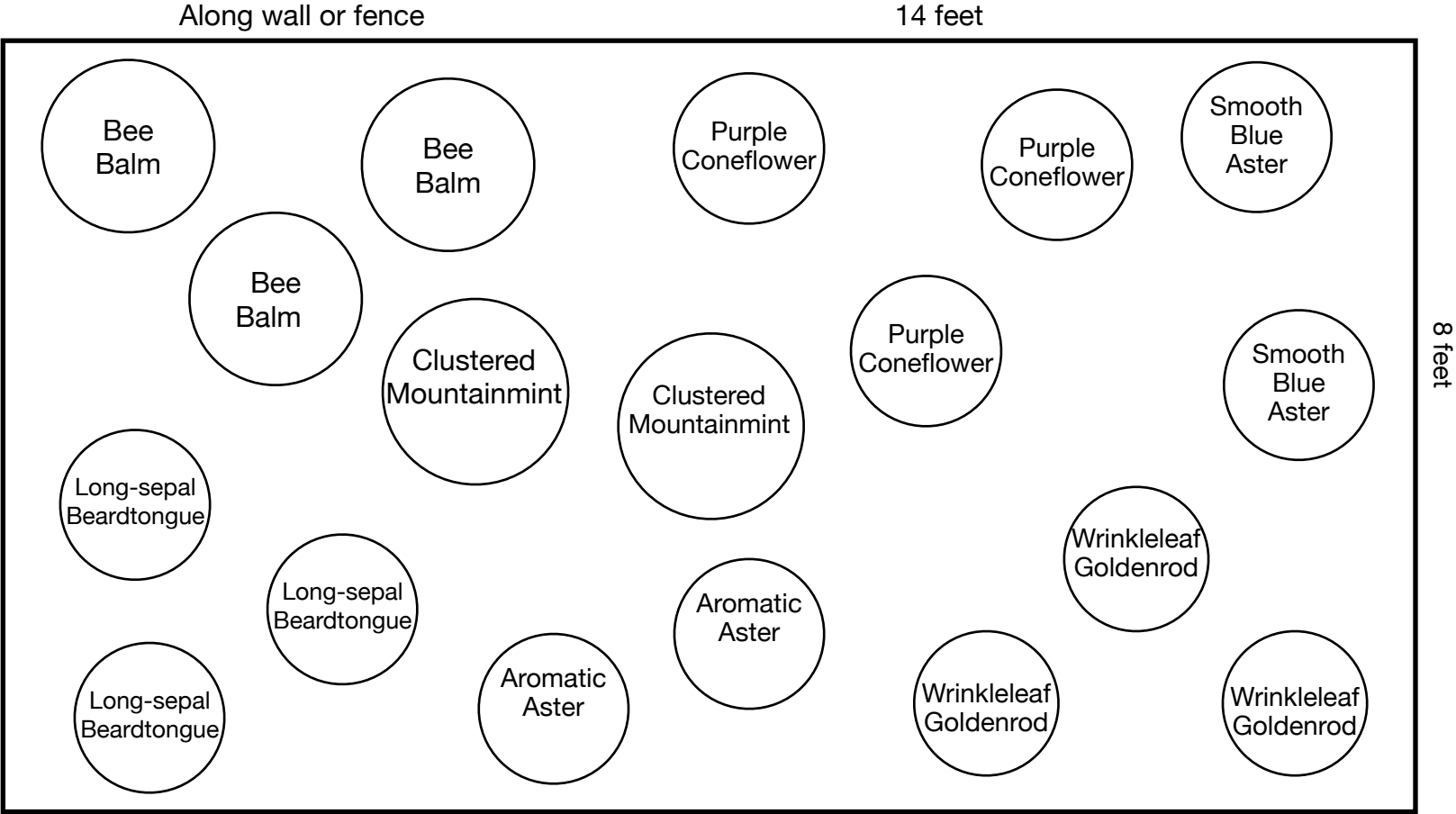
- C. Select where the plants go. Some people arrange the plant pots onsite until they have what they want.
- D. Install plants, being careful to not get them too low in the soil. If you leave them just a little higher than grade, then you can add mulch to have them blend in. The mulch will help minimize weeds.

- E. Water the plants often at first, as needed.
- F. Check periodically for weeds. It is important to remove competition. In future years, you can decide how much you want to let the plants fill-in from seeding and underground spreading.

Pollinator Kit Details

Common Name	Scientific Name	#	ht.	sprd.	Bloom (from iNat for TN)
Long-sepal Beardtongue	<i>Penstemon calycosus</i>	3	2-3	1.5-2	late Apr to mid Jun
Purple Coneflower	<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	3	2-5	3	late May through early Sep
Bee Balm	<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	3	3-4	1.5-3	early Jun through early Sep
Clustered Mountainmint	<i>Pycnanthemum muticum</i>	2	2-3	2-3	Jul to late Sep
Wrinkleleaf Goldenrod	<i>Solidago rugosa</i>	3	0.5-2	1-2	Aug through Sep
Smooth Blue Aster	<i>Symphotrichum laeve</i>	2	2-4	1-2	Sep through Nov
Aromatic Aster	<i>Symphotrichum oblongifolium</i>	2	1-3	1.5-2	Sep through Nov
Total		18			

Sample Plant Layout



Long-sepal Beardtongue

Penstemon calycosus



Richard Hitt

Family	Plantaginaceae (Plantain)
Height	3 to 4 feet
Spread	1.5 to 2 feet
Bloom Time	Late April to June
Flower	Lavender
Light	Full sun, tolerates light shade
Water	Dry to medium
Soil	Average
Notes	Genus name comes from Greek words that mean five stamen (four fertile, one sterile but hairy), hence 'beardtongue.'

Clustered Mountain Mint

Pycnanthemum muticum



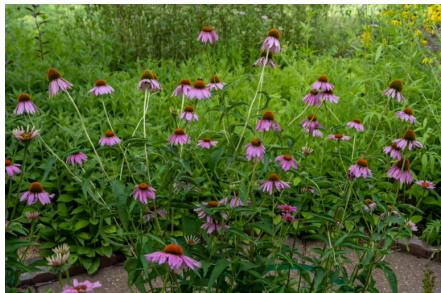
Stephanie Brundage

Richard Hitt

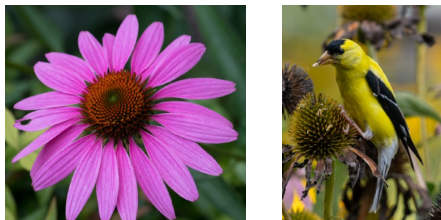
Family	Lamiaceae (Mint)
Height	2 to 3 feet
Spread	2 to 3 feet
Bloom Time	July to September
Flower	Pink, showy
Light	Full sun to part shade
Water	Dry to medium
Soil	Average
Notes	A top pollinator magnet that attracts butterflies, bees, wasps, flies, and more. Leaves have a pleasant mint aroma.

Purple Coneflower

Echinacea purpurea



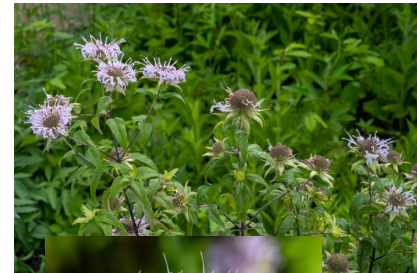
Richard Hitt



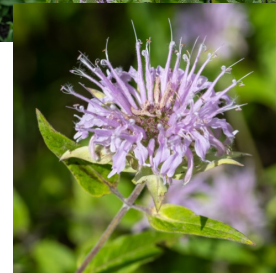
Family	Asteraceae (Aster)
Height	2 to 5 feet
Spread	1.5 to 2 feet
Bloom Time	Late May to early Sept.
Flower	Pink or purple, showy
Light	Full Sun to Part Shade
Water	Dry to medium
Soil	Average
Notes	Easily grown in average soil; best in full sun. Tolerates heat, draught and poor soil. Clumps should be divided when overcrowded (3-5 years). Host for Silvery Checkerspot butterfly.

Bee Balm, Wild Bergamot

Monarda fistulosa



Richard Hitt



Family	Lamiaceae (Mint)
Height	2 to 4 feet
Spread	2 feet
Bloom Time	May to August
Flower	Pink, lavender
Light	Full sun to part shade
Water	Dry to medium
Soil	Various
Notes	Tolerates poor soil and some drought. Subject to powdery mildew, so good air circulation is important. Leaves can be used in tea. Frequented by bees.

Wrinkleleaf Goldenrod

Solidago rugosa



Stephanie Brundage

Family	Asteracea (Aster)
Height	3 to 5 feet
Spread	1.5 to 2.5 feet
Bloom Time	August to October
Flower	Yellow
Light	Full sun
Water	Medium to wet
Soil	Average to rich
Notes	Will tolerate light shade. Plant will spread in the garden by seeds and rhizomes. Does not cause hay fever. Tolerates deer, clay soil, wet soil.

Smooth Blue Aster

Symphotrichum laeve



R.W. Smith

Great for Gardens

This Aster is a good performer in the garden setting. It has beautiful flowerheads and attractive smooth foliage with clasping leaves. The stems usually remain erect without support.

Family	Asteraceae (Aster)
Height	2 to 4 feet
Spread	1 to 2 feet
Bloom Time	September to Nov.
Flower	Purple (varies), showy, 1.5 inches, good cut
Light	Full Sun, likes some afternoon shade
Water	Dry to medium
Soil	Average
Notes	Easily self-seeds. Tolerates clay soil. Host to Pearl Crescent butterfly and others. Outstanding for pollinators.

Aromatic Aster

Symphotrichum oblongifolium



Stephanie Brundage

Great for Gardens

This Aster is drought tolerant and thrives in full sun. Blooms profusely in late fall, attracting bees and butterflies. Avoid overly rich soil and moist soil to maintain compact growth. Deer-resistant.

Family	Asteraceae (Aster)
Height	1 to 3 feet
Spread	1 to 3 feet
Bloom Time	September to Nov.
Flower	Blue, Purple
Light	Full Sun
Water	Dry to medium
Soil	Tolerates poor soil
Notes	Leaf fragrant. Creates a dazzling purple mound in fall. Can be cut back by half in June to prevent flopping and encourage bushiness.