



Overview

A butterfly garden is an easy way to create a positive environmental impact while naturally enhancing your neighborhood or school environment. Butterflies are critical to the pollination process as they transport pollen from one plant to another. This process is critical for food production and agriculture.

Suggested Age Group(s)

- Adults, teens, children

Suggested Skill Level

- Easy

Supplies

- Rocks
- Hand towels
- Water Dish
- Flowers

Project Instructions

1. Identify Partners and Leaders

- Call your friends, family, and coworkers and ask if they would be interested in helping plan and implement such a project. You can also ask schoolteachers and community leaders to lend their support and ideas. These partners may have materials and resources you can use for your project.

2. Set a Location

- Contact your local school, city or county representatives, faith-based communities, and nonprofit organizations and let them know about your idea and ask if they have any space they could donate to the project. Arrange a meeting with the staff lead (principal, clergy, or other staff) and conduct a site visit as well as review the day-of-project plan.

3. Establish Goals

- Setting goals can help you create a plan for implementing your project. Do you simply want to get some folks together and engage in a meaningful activity for a few hours? Do you want to teach kids about the importance of pollination and want it means to be good environmental stewards? Do you want to plant a certain number of plants and build on that goal every year? What do you want your end result to be?



4. Develop Your Plan

- As you continue to establish your project, ask yourself the following questions in order to create a coherent plan:
 1. Where can I get funding for the plants and tools needed for the project?
 2. What resources are available to use?
 3. Where can I find adults and kids who would be excited about such a project?
 4. How do I get the message out about the project?
 5. Do I want to attach learning to this activity?
 6. Do I need to have help from other adult or youth volunteer leaders?
 7. How will we maintain and sustain the garden?

5. Define a Timeline

- Set a timeline for your project. When will your project begin and end? Will it be recurring? Will there be projects that follow? Where will volunteers meet the day of the project? How will volunteers get to and from the project? How long will the project take?

6. Promote!

Recruit adult and youth volunteers. You may want to print fliers, publish in the school/library newsletter, send emails, and use social media to mobilize your networks. Use whatever medium you can to get the word out and engage people in your effort. You can do this yourself or with the help of partners and leaders you've found in the community.

7. Empower Youth Leaders

- If you are working with youth on this project, keep in mind that the youth voice is a key component in offering a high-quality youth project or program. Young people should have an influence on the project. Allow young people to suggest ideas for the current and future projects.

8. Reflect and Recognize

- After your project, take a few minutes to reflect on the project with the volunteers. Don't forget to thank your volunteers, partners, and supporters. They deserve it!



Additional Project Tips

- Try to plant yellow, purple, white and light pink flowers in the garden, because research demonstrates these are colors which attract butterflies.
- Volunteers should plant flowers in an area that receives high amounts of sunlight but only moderate winds.
- Never use pesticides in your garden! Always use organic products and natural practices.
- Volunteers should create water areas that will be placed in the garden, such as water dishes or small bird baths.
- The following plants are recommended for butterfly gardens: asters, beard tongue heliotrope, day lily, iris, lavender, milk weed, petunia, phlox red glover, thyme and zinnia.
- Caterpillars should be included in your plan to encourage butterflies throughout their life cycle.
- Leafy plants that provide shelter and can nourish a caterpillar are ideal.

Additional Learning Tips

- Ecosystems – Help youth distinguish between the characteristics that make up an individual, a population, a community, and an ecosystem.
- Plants, Soil, and Nutrients, Oh my! – Help students explore and apply the scientific method as they explore the manner in which plants feed, grow, and produce oxygen.
- The Importance of Tropisms – Help students complete a scientific experiment testing a single variable and understand how plants respond to different environmental conditions.
- Plant Pollination – Help students identify the different parts of a flower and understand their functions and importance of pollen for plant reproduction and diversity.



- Nature Journaling – Help students explore nature and write about their experiences.

Reflection

- After your volunteer project, it is important to reflect on the experience and think about the impact of the project on the community as well as what you learned about yourself and others. Here are some suggested activities:
 - Tell your family and friends about something you learned and how you will continue to help others.
 - Blog, draw a picture, write a poem, submit a letter to the editor
 - Write about your experience on your Facebook account or Twitter feed.
 - If you are working with a group of volunteers on this project, lead a group discussion with questions such as:
 - Why did you volunteer today?
 - What did you learn about social responsibility and environmental stewardship?
 - What is the one thing that you will remember most about this service activity?
 - How can you continue to make a difference in our community?

Additional Resources

- How to Make Butterfly Gardens
<http://www.ca.uky.edu/ENTOMOLOGY/entfacts/ef006.asp>
- Butterfly Gardening
<http://www.thebutterflysite.com/gardening.shtml>
- VolunteerSpot - A free resource to help schedule and organize volunteer activities
<http://www.volunteerspot.com/>