POTS FOR POLLINATORS  
Alicia Whitaker

Use pots to provide nectar and pollen for pollinators – bees, wasps, butterflies, moths, bats and hummingbirds- even if you have little space for a garden. We know that pollinators are in decline because of habitat loss, use of pesticides, climate change and invasive species. Every bit helps! Think of your containers as “pit stops for pollinators.”

General Guidelines:

Not all natives are pollinator plants and not all pollinator plants are natives. Use a mix that will provide blooms and sources of food from late spring into the autumn. When using perennial plants, know that species are typically superior for serving as host plants and sources of food than are cultivars. Choose plants with single flowers, not doubles.

Bigger is better – more soil and more plants, including providing the critical mass of blooms that enable pollinators to find the plants. Think “drifts”, not “polka dots.” You can use a false bottom if the planter is very large to reduce weight.

Diversity is good: small trees, shrubs, bulbs, grasses, herbs, perennials, and superstar annuals are all candidates. Include a variety of colors, sizes, shapes and scents to attract a variety of pollinators.

Use an organic soil mix and add compost to the mix as well as to the bottom of the pot, unless you are using plants that prefer lean soil, such as lavenders. Keep blooms going with fertilizer – soil gets depleted quickly. Don’t potting soil with moisture control or fertilizer.

There’s lots of design flexibility --consider mixed plantings: thriller, filler, spiller, OR a group of pots with one variety in each pot. Also consider using climbing vines on a tripod or other support. Generally speaking, insects and bees are attracted to purple and blue flowers and hummingbirds are attracted to red flowers. You can also do a monochromatic design – same color in different plants, or a mix of colors.

Plan for continuous bloom throughout the growing season so that pollinators have food when they need it. If you use perennial plants, know that the bloom period is generally shorter than that of annuals, which are bred to bloom for several months.

Recommended Native Perennials (long bloom period, do well in a pot)

Columbine- Aquilegia

Purple Coneflower – Echinacea purpurea

Beardtongue—Penstemon digitalis

Coreopsis – Coreopsis lanceolata, coreopsis tinctora

Milkweeds – Asclepias tuberosa, Asclepias syriaca, Asclepias incarnate

Joe-Pye Weed – Eutrochium purpureum

Cardinal Flower – Lobelia cardinalis

Wild Bergamot – Monarda fistulosa

Mountain Mint – Pycnanthemum maticum
Anise Hyssop – *Agastache foeniculum*
Showy Goldenrod – *Solidago speciosa*
New England Aster – *Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*

**Superstar Annuals (very long bloom period, not necessarily natives)**
AGASTACHE – Agastache/Hyssop
Alyssum or *Lobularia*
Black Eyed Susan – *Rudbeckia hirta*
Calendula – *Calendula officinalis*
Cigar Plant – *Cuphea ignea*
Helenium – *Helenium*
Lantana – *Lantana camara*
Lavender – *Lavendula angustifolia*
Marigold – *Tagetes* – single forms
Nasturtium – *Tropaeolum majus*
Nicotiana / Flowering Tobacco – *Nicotiana alata*
Petunia – single forms
Salvia – *Salvia officinalis* (960 species)
Snapdragon - *Antirrhinum*
Sunflowers – *Helianthus*
Mexican Sunflower – *Tithonia rotundifolia* (very tall)
Verbena-especially *Verbena bonariensis*
Zinnia – *Zinnia elegans*

**Flowering Vines**
Black-eyed Susan Vine – *Thunbergia alata*
Cardinal Climber – *Ipomoea quamoclit*
Moonflower – *Ipomoea alba*
Morning Glory – *Ipomoea purpurea*
Cup and Saucer Vine – *Cobea scandens*
Hyacinth Bean – *Lalab purpureus*
Scarlet Runner Bean – *Phaseolus coccineus*
Spanish Flag – *Mina lobata*

**Any questions?**
Call Cornell Suffolk Horticulture Hotline
(631) 727-4126. M-F, 9am-noon

**Resources:**
Homegrown National Park- homegrownnationalpark.org  Doug Tallamy’s organization – lots of resources
Xerces Society - Xerces.org. – Has extensive information about pollinators and a very good plant list
Pollinator Partnership – pollinator.org. – Excellent general information, plant lists
Long Island Native Plant Initiative – linpi.com – Good advice, plant lists, sources
Perfect Earth Project – perfectearthproject.org – How to build a healthy ecosystem on your property
Two Thirds for the Birds – 234birds.org. – Helping birds by planting more natives
National Wildlife Organization Native Plant Finder – NWF.org/nativeplantfinder
Suffolk Alliance for Pollinators – https://ccesuffolk.org/gardening/suffolk-alliance-for-pollinators-sap
Where can native plants and pollinator plants be purchased?

**Local Nurseries:**
Marders 120 Snake Hollow Rd. Bridgehampton
Fowlers 175 North Sea Road, Southampton
    Pam, manager

**Riverhead Nurseries:**
Agway 1122 Osborne Avenue
    Sherry, Plant Manager
Felix Perennials, Wholesaler but will sell retail
    244 Horton Avenue

**Further Afield Nurseries:**
Beds and Borders, 550 Main Road, Laurel
Shade Tree Nursery, 1875 Main Rd., Jamesport
Long Island Native Plant Initiative (LINPI)
    Brentwood
Peconic River Herb Farm, Calverton
Fort Pond Natives, Montauk
Dropseed Native Landscapes, Grossman’s Farm,
    Malverne  Friday-Sunday  Anthony Marinello

**Organizations:** REWILD, CHANGEHAMPTON, SAP
**Catalogs:**

Prairie Moon Nursery
32115 Prairie Lane
Winona, Mn. 5598
(507) 452-1362
over 700+ natives

Select Seeds
180 Stickney Hill Rd.
Union, Conn. 06076
1(800) 684-0395
700+ seeds & plants

**Websites:**


www.LIhummingbirdplants.com  Appointments preferred, order on-line with curb pick up Medford, see Bill


**Wholesalers:**

Glover Perennials, North Fork: KMS, Lake Grove.

**Compiled by:** Joan DiMonda  Pots for Pollinators 7/18/23