

# *The Bumble Bee Project*

## *Creating Habitat for Native Pollinators*

### Public Display Pollination Preservation Gardens

The goal is for our Ambassadors to work towards the installation of a large Public Display Gardens in each of the 36 communities in the MetroWest Conservation Alliance (MCA) region. Showcasing these gardens is a great way to connect with and educate the public about at-risk pollinators. They can also serve as citizen science field sites.

Gardens of all sizes are encouraged by the Bumble Bee Project! Even small plantings can help our at-risk native pollinators.

The MCA Native Pollinator Task Force's Bumble Bee Project has set the following standards for Public Display Native **Pollination Preservation Gardens**. The first step is to find a public space to host the garden. Schools, libraries, and parks could be a great place to look. Before choosing your plants, read the introduction to Dr. Gegear's plant list for at-risk pollinators: <https://gegearlab.weebly.com/plant-list.html>

## Public Display Garden Criteria

1. Research and be aware of prior land use in the garden space.
2. If there has been recent agriculture or turf use on the land, we suggest a soil test to confirm it is neonicotinoid and other systemic pesticide free. Cost per sample is about \$80 at Cornell and should be <10ppb.
3. Survey surrounding landscape. Trees and shrubs from the plant list within 1,900 feet can count towards your garden requirements.
4. Plants should be straight species native (not cultivars which are sometimes called nativars).
5. Only purchase plants not treated with neonicotinoids or other systemic pesticides.
6. Using Dr. Gegear's plant list, ensure there are both nectar and pollen plants in bloom from March to October for a minimum total of 24 species described below.
  - a. Nectar: 2 nectar plants in bloom/month from March-October =16 species. Check that at least one species is in bloom all the time – bees cannot survive long without nectar.
  - b. Pollen: 1 pollen plant in bloom per month from March-October = 8 species.
  - c. Plants should be massed at a minimum of a square meter ~ 10 sq ft for each species (1 meter = ~ 3 sq ft).
7. If you have more space add Host Plants for Butterflies at risk from the Gegear list.
8. And finally, as space allows add plants from the Nectar/Pollen for Butterflies and Other Bees section at the bottom of the list.

### General Tips

- Bare soil should be available between plants for ground nesting bees and other insects.
- Use salt marsh hay or sterilized hay as mulch around the plants after planting to help get them get established but do not mulch the entire garden with typical mulch. No need to mulch once the plants are established.

- Use plants from Dr. Gegear's plant list as a ground cover/living mulch in between your plantings. Prunella is great for this.
- Leave the perennial plant stems; only cut some of them so they can serve as nesting and overwintering habitat for various insects and bees.
- Leave the leaves.

**Have Fun and Enjoy the Journey!**