

Table Notes from Conversations – Conversation #6

Note: These notes have been reviewed for accuracy by master gardeners

What can we do in Stratford to support pollinators?

- Share plants with your neighbours
- Conversations with others will do more to inspire change than anything else
- Stop planting invasive plants and remove them from our properties and public land - Consult Pg 14 and 17 of Stratford's new Invasive Plant Management Plan to find the worst offenders and how to manage them

https://www.stratford.ca/en/inside-city-hall/resources/CORPORATE-SERVICES/CLERKS/Stratford-Invasive-Plant-Management-Plan_April-9-2024.pdf

- Encourage neighbours to plant non-invasive plants
- Consult inaturalist app for plant identification
- Visit haltonmastergardeners.com for a list of nurseries specializing in native plants
- Look for native plants in local nurseries – Canadian Tire, Cozyn's, Sebringville Garden Centre all carry them
- Plant milkweed, asters, goldenrod, bee balm
- Plant for continuous bloom throughout the season
- Plant at least three of the same species
- Make a butterfly garden of plants that attract different butterflies
- Learn about keystone plants and plant them
- Use native plants as ground cover to replace some lawn – e.g, wild strawberry, native geranium
- Native ground cover under trees for a “soft landing”
- Plant your boulevard with salt resistant native plants – keep plantings below .6m in height (24 inches) to comply with Bylaws.
- Put a sign on the boulevard planting to indicate that it is for pollinators
- Do lots of reading, especially about indigenous ways
- Leave lawn medium length, mow less frequently
- Use a push mower or electric mower – get rid of the gas when mowing lawns
- Mulch leaves with lawn mower in fall to put nutrients back into lawn, or add them to compost pile, rake into flower beds
- Use lawn care companies that follow these ecological principles
- Be pesticide free
- No mow May – no benefit to pollinators if lawn is mainly turf grass
- White clover mixed with lawn seed helps lawn to tolerate drought and fixes nitrogen in the soil but it is not native
- Dandelions are not a good pollen source for native pollinators – manual removal is best

- Plant sunflowers for the birds
 - Set up a bird feeder
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- Leave flower beds until later in the season to allow the bugs and toads to wake up
 - Till less or not at all
 - Leave the leaves on beds in the fall- will rot and compress over the winter, allow pupae to survive
 - Leave late fall habitat over the winter – variety of height, shape, colour
 - Leave stumps and dead trees, branches wherever possible to decompose and provide habitat – dedicate a corner of the garden
 - Leave some bare soil for bees to tunnel
 - Use well rotted compost/manure on your garden in spring
 - Use Carex/sedges as groundcovers, in gardens and under trees
 - Soil, wood chips, bark mulch piled up against the base of tree trunks can lead to rot and fungal issues. Keep trunks of trees bare down to the root flare.
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- Provide a water source for both birds and insects
 - Make a pond for aquatic plants and animals
 - Add houses for bugs, bats, birds, bees
 - Turn off lights at night
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- Approach owners of empty lots with a view to plant gardens (grant application for plants)