

How sustainable is your garden?

Want to support your local ecology? Here's a checklist to see how you can help:

Unsustainable Gardens

- Plant diversity is minimal, and nonnative and ornamental invasive plant species are used in the garden.
- All soil is heavily covered with mulch or planted.
- Pools or dishes of drinking water are not provided.
- Thickets or hedges are frequently maintained as uniform shapes, requiring maintenance during pollinator activities, such as shelter or nesting.
- Lawns are large expanses of single grass species that are highly maintained, irrigated and fertilized.
- Entire lawn area is fertilized and chemically treated to remove weeds and other unwanted pests, which can be toxic to pollinators.
- New plants introduced to the garden have been grown in the nursery using neonicotinoids or other harmful pesticides, which are absorbed into plant tissue and can be present in pollen and nectar, making them toxic to pollinators.



Sustainable Gardens

- Diverse flowering native plant species and communities make up the garden.
- Among planted areas, bare soil is unaltered and left as nesting habitats or mud sources for pollinator species.
- Many intentional water sources are provided, such as birdbaths, ephemeral pools, shallow dishes and puddling places, and water is replenished regularly.
- Native plants grown in thickets or hedges act as windbreaks and/or nesting habitats and provide protection from predators; they are not cut back during pollinator activity.
- Lawns are reduced in size and diverse in plant species, including some flowering ground cover or forbs that are beneficial to pollinator species.
- Unwanted weeds and pests are removed by hand or other non-chemical procedures. Chemical spot treatment may occur but is infrequent and rare.
- New plants are purchased from nurseries that use less detrimental practices to treat plants during production.