

Abbey Gardens Pollinator Garden Project - Spring 2017

The Haliburton Land Trust and Abbey Gardens received a grant for the creation of a pollinator garden. The pollinator garden will be created in the spring of 2017 by volunteers under the guidance of AG staff.

Purpose:

- provide a habitat that attracts both native and honey bees
- enhance the beauty and enjoyment of the the AG property by expanding the flower gardens
- provide a demonstration of a pollinator garden to visitors to AG
- celebrate Canada's 150th birthday

Location:

- grassy south side of the former pony paddock (future orchard & apiary)
- 8-10 feet from the existing fences
- soil a mix of sand, loam and gravel
- full sun
- nearby mature pines provide some shelter from winds
- limited watering available

Size:

- rectangular with curved 'corners'
- approx. 12' x 40'

Design Features

- 'no dig' garden design using cardboard and mix of brown & green layers topped with mulch
- mix of native and non-native plants attractive to native bees and honey bees (flowering trees/shrubs, perennial wildflowers, grasses, herbs and ornamentals) providing the needed mix of colour, size and flower shape and continuous bloom (spring through fall)
- suitable to Zone 3 growing conditions
- gravel pathways and circular seating area
- 'home habitats' for pollinators - 'insect hotels'/nesting boxes; decomposing logs and bare ground nesting areas for ground nesting pollinators
- small water sources for pollinators
- educational signage

Design Layout - Please see accompanying diagram.

No Dig Garden Design - Please see accompanying No Dig Garden Information

Materials need include:

- cardboard or newspaper to cover 480 sq. ft
- green composting material (nitrogen layer) (3-5 cm thick)
- brown composting material (carbon layer) (3-5 cm thick)
- topsoil (approx. 8 cubic yards)
- mulch (approx 4 cubic yards)
- water for watering first season
- gravel for pathways/sitting area (approx. 2 cubic yards)

- couple of mid-sized old log for pollinator nesting, interest and nutrients through slow decomposition
- mid-sized rocks to mark entrances to pathways (ideally with a depression in them for providing water collecting spots for butterflies and bees)

Planting Materials

The planting materials will provide a pollinator habitat with a wide variety of plants sizes, flower shapes & scents and bloom periods. We aim to have a garden that offers continuous blooms available to pollinators from spring through fall to support pollinators throughout their feeding/ nesting seasons. All plants recommended are hardy to a minimum of zone 3-4.

The garden will be 'layered' to provide a variety of plants heights - from ground covers to low-mid height perennials and shrubs to larger flowering trees.

Planting of the pollinator perennials will be done in groupings of at least 3-5 plants of similar colours to form a small 'swath' of the plants. This allows pollinators to easily find the plants of their choice and conserve energy by feeding on numerous plants in one location.

Plant List

A plant list is attached with suggestions for native and non-native plants, description, bloom time and approximate cost.

Creating the Garden

1. Create the garden using the No Dig garden method is outlined below.
2. Create the seating area and pathways using gravel
3. Mulch*
4. Plant the trees and shrubs
5. Place logs and rocks
6. Plant the perennial plants
7. Seed in between some of the plants (lupins, cosmos, asters, batchelor buttons, asters, poppies)
8. Install seating bench

* Mulch will need to be pulled back for planting. It should not come in contact with the trunk/ stem of the trees, shrubs or perennials. If using seeds - pull back mulch and plant seeds directing into soil - cover lightly with soil but no mulch.

Maintenance

- Summer - water, weed and and deadhead as necessary (deadheading allows plant energy to be directed to the roots the first season; following season some seed heads may be left for seed collection)
- Fall - collect seed from seed heads
- yearly - prune shrubs as needed to maintain size, shape & health of the plant
- 3 - 4 years - thin out and/or divide perennials

Resources

<http://www.trca.on.ca/dotAsset/151799.pdf>

<http://www.bumblebeewatch.org>

<https://wildlifepreservation.ca/rusty-patched-bumble-bee/>

<https://www.facebook.com/bumblebeewatch.org/>

<https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/guest-blog/how-to-protect-our-disappearing-bumble-bees/>

<https://wildlifepreservation.ca/rusty-patched-bumble-bee/>

<https://wildlifepreservation.ca/what-we-do/>

<http://abbeygardens.ca>

<https://www.haliburtonlandtrust.ca>