Gardening for Biodiversity

The more variety, the better!

Biodiversity is the number of different species of life in a system. More variety means a stronger, healthier, and more adaptable web of life.

How many animals can you find?

Do you see any insects, birds, or frogs? Look for the Common Eastern Bumble Bee, then see how many other shapes, sizes, and species of bees and pollinators are using the flowers. Here are just a few of the species that have been spotted in this garden.

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Painted Lady Butterfly, Yellow Crab Spider, Pickerel Frog, Cuckoo Bee, Monarch Caterpillar, Sweat Bee, Praying Mantis

Common Eastern Bumble Bee

Native plants are essential for pollinators

A garden full of non-native plants can be a food desert for local pollinators whose precise mouth parts and digestive chemicals have evolved to match with the native plants in its ecosystem. Non-native plants have pieces from a different puzzle that just don't fit. Today, many native pollinators and plants are struggling to survive because they cannot find their matching counterpart.

How to Support Pollinators

PLANT NATIVES
Already adapted to local pollinators, planting natives in masses makes them easy to find. Use non-native plants as splashy accents.

PLANT VARIETY
Seek flowers that fit small and large mouthparts. Plant early and late flowering sources of pollen and nectar for native bees. Look for flowers in a variety of colors and shapes to suit different pollinator needs.

PROVIDE FOR THE WHOLE LIFECYCLE
Butterflies and bees need nectar and pollen sources to feed adults and their young. Butterflies need specific host plants for their caterpillars.

PLANT NATIVE TREES
By providing habitat and food sources for other plants, pollinators, and wildlife, native trees are critically important for biodiversity. New England examples are native oak, cherry, maple, pine, and willow species.

RESEARCH FIRST
Learn about a plant before buying it. Will it self-seed aggressively or spread by rhizomes, what kind of soil, light and moisture does it need?

AVOID PESTICIDES
Herbicides and insecticides are one of the main causes of biodiversity loss. Avoid pesticide use and buy pesticide-free seeds and plants.