

Promoting Habitat For Pollinators

Schoolyards: Monarchs (*Danaus plexippus*) are iconic pollinators; bees tend to be avoided by the general public. All pollinators will be served by promoting Monarch Butterfly Gardens in schoolyards and other public properties.

One way to promote Monarch Butterfly Gardens is to provide grants and/or lists of available grants. To be most effective the grants would require specific criteria. For example:

- A minimum of 100 square feet of native non-cultivar milkweeds (*Asclepias ssp.*), the Monarch host plants. These also provide a nectar source for the summer blooming period.
- A minimum of two additional native non-cultivar nectar plants in a minimum of 24 square foot clumps. One for the spring and one for the summer blooming periods.

Extension Master Gardeners are generally available to provide technical guidance for parent groups, community groups, and others to construct these gardens.

Whimsical Meadows: Many non-agricultural three-acre plus fields in Vermont are kept meticulously mowed (e.g. open spaces maintained by municipalities). Mowed fields provide little if any habitat for pollinators. If one-third of a given field were mowed annually (each contiguous area mowed once every three years), there would be increased habitat for pollinators (and nesting birds) by maintaining perennial plants and grasses and retarding trees and shrubs. Six-foot wide corridors could be periodically mowed 4 to 6 inches through these fields for recreational purposes. The corridors could follow existing paths, provide access to natural features (specimen trees, frog ponds, ledge outcrops), and/or just wander whimsically through the meadow.