Choosing Native Plants for Pollinators in Your Area

By Jim Kessler

WHICH NATIVE PLANTS SHOULD I INCLUDE IN A BUTTERFLY AND POLLINATOR GARDEN WHERE I LIVE?

As Sophie explained in her article, Shrinking or Transforming Your Lawn, it is important to use plants from your native area so that the ecosystem will flourish. The non-profit organization Pollinator Partnership promotes the health of pollinators through conservation, education, and research. You can use the tool on their website to find out which plants would be best in your local area. Here are the steps:

1. Go to http://pollinator.org/guides.htm
2. Scroll down to What is My Ecoregion?
3. Type your 5-digit zipcode in the blank and click search.
4. Next click on the link above the map where your region is highlighted. This will download a 24-page PFD document entitled Selecting Plants for Pollinators: A Regional Guide for Farmers, Land Managers, and Gardeners for your bioregion. Booklets for 32 ecoregions in the continental U.S., Hawaii, and part of Canada are available on this excellent website.

For urban pollinator gardens, you may want to select shorter native plants to create positive public
relations with your neighbors. I recommend that you contact a local native plant expert, your county
NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service), or your county Extension office to determine
whether plant species are native to your locality and for help in finding a local native plant supplier.