



SASKATCHEWAN
WILDLIFE
FEDERATION

JUNIOR

Backyard Biodiversity

C H A L L E N G E





SASKATCHEWAN **WILDLIFE** FEDERATION

Welcome to the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation's Backyard Biodiversity program! Thank you so much for participating. If you are reading this you must now be the proud owner of a packet of native Saskatchewan Wildflower seeds. You are just steps away from helping pollinators all over the province! The following is a supplemental educational package that you and your children can follow along with to get the most out of your wildflowers.

Introduction: Why pollinators are important

Why are pollinators important anyway? There are lots of initiatives to save the bees but why is that? Where are the bees going? What is their role in nature? Are there other insects that act as pollinators or is it just bees? Here are some cool facts about pollinators to get you started!

Pollinators are insects or animals that move pollen from one plant to another

If a flower does not get pollinated it cannot produce fruit or seeds

Bees prefer bright blue and purple flowers. Hummingbirds like red, pink, or fuchsia flowers and butterflies love yellow and orange flowers!

There are over 350 different types of bees in Saskatchewan alone!

The world's largest pollinator is a black and white ruffed lemur and they live in Madagascar

1 in 3 bites of food we eat every day needs pollinators for us to produce

Bees are the only insects that produce commonly eaten food for humans (honey)

Many pollinators evolve to pollinate specific flowers. For example some bats have super long tongues to reach inside flowers for nectar

Some bees communicate by doing a "waggle" dance

Stage 1: Planting your flowers

The first thing you will want to do is plant your seeds. Take a look at them in your hand. Are some larger than others? Are they different colours? Shapes? Why do you think these seeds look so different?

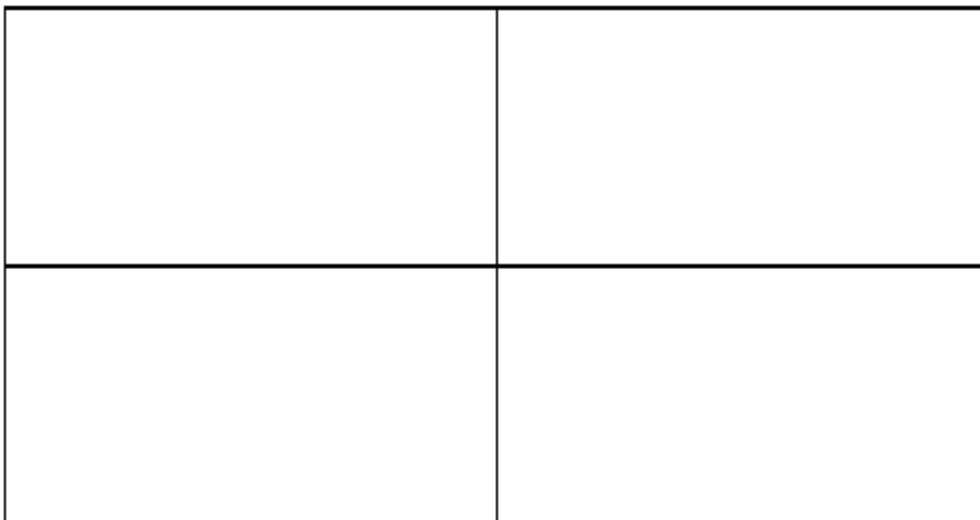
Start a wildflower journal that you can fill out over the summer. This journal will help you track the progress of your flowers and will be something to look back on in the fall. Try drawing the seeds in your journal with your best guess as to what they will look like when they grow.

To plant the seeds spread them out in a weed free area and lightly cover the seeds in soil. Make sure they have some water and now you are ready to see them grow!

Stage 2: Setting up your flower monitoring station

An easy way to track progress of your flowers is to set up something called a quadrat. It is easy to make and scientists use them all the time when they are studying plants, insects, or assessing habitat lands. Using string make a box around your plot of flowers. With more string make a "T" in the middle of your box. Now you have 4 boxes!

Draw your quadrat in your journal. Count how many plants are starting to grow in each of the four boxes and write it in your journal. Now you can track and see if any of the boxes have more flowers than others, or if one boxes' flowers grow faster than others



Example Quadrate

Stage 3: What flowers do you have?

How are your flowers doing? Do you see any growing yet? Do some of them look alike? Are there more of one type than others? Sketch out what they look like now in your notebook. Do you have any idea what different types they might turn out to be? Are there any hints yet?

Take some time to make a bee puddle. Bees and butterflies need water to drink just like we do. Bird baths are usually too deep for them to get a drink. Using a shallow dish or tray fill the bottom with pebbles, rocks, or gems and then just cover them in water. Place your bee puddle in your garden, now your pollinators have something to eat and drink!



Stage 4: Measuring your flowers

Take a look at your flowers. Do some of them look the same? Do some of them look different? Sketch out the different flowers you see in your notebook.

Using a ruler measure some of your flowers and write that down beside your sketch. You can set up a simple table to keep track of how they are growing in your notebook. Are some boxes in your quadrat growing better than others?

Type of flower	Week 1	Week 2
Yellow flower	3cm	5cm
Red flower	1cm	2cm
Blue flower	5cm	10cm

Stage 5: Identifying your flowers

Do you see any petals yet? Are there any flowers emerging? Make a new sketch of your plants this week. Has there been a big difference from last week? Do you recognize any of them? If you have access to a computer or a flower identification book take a look around and see if you can name any of the flowers in your garden.

Having many different types of plants in your garden contributes to something called biodiversity. Biodiversity just means many different types of plants or animals or insects or fish! Everything in nature is connected and the more biodiversity there is the more connections that can be made! Biodiversity is very important for wildlife habitat everywhere. By planting your garden, you are contributing to biodiversity right in your back yard!

Feel free to measure them again to see if they are getting any taller and add it to your table.

Stage 6: Observe for pollinators

With their flowers out your flowers' most important job is just about to begin! They will provide food for pollinators who will in turn spread their pollen and allow fruits to develop. See if any pollinators are visiting your flowers. Sit quietly next to one of your plots being careful not to move too quickly. See if there are any bees, or butterflies, or hummingbirds enjoying your flowers. This might take some time

because they get scared very easily. If you do see a bee or a wasp don't panic! Remember these little insects are much more scared of you than you are of them and will only sting if you scare them a lot, in most cases if they sting they also die so they really don't want to!

If you see any visiting your flowers very quietly and slowly take a photo. Are there different types of insects visiting or are they all the same? What are they doing? Do they stay long?



Stage 7: Finding wildflowers in the wild

With your garden well underway and providing much needed help to our pollinators, if it is possible to do so safely, take a walk or hike in an area where there is open grass. This could be a ditch by your house, on a piece of SWF habitat land, or a good hiking spot. Do you see any of the flowers that you planted? Take some photos! Try out this bingo, and see how many you can find.

We know that pollinators love these flowers but what about other animals? Do you see any small animals like gophers having a snack? What about larger animals? Are you able to spot any large herbivores (plant eaters)? Keep your eyes peeled you never know!

Wildflower Bingo



Prairie Cone Flower



Purple Prairie Clover



Black Eyed Susan



Prairie Lily



FREE SPACE (Smooth Aster)



Giant Hyssop



Western Bergamot



Yellow Evening Primrose



Stiff Goldenrod

Stage 8: Finishing up

Over the summer continue to take photos, make sketches, and let us know at SWF how your pollinator garden turned out. Monitor the changes that your garden undergoes as it grows, flourishes and then quiets down. Did many pollinators stop by? Did you see any butterflies? How about bees? If you want to help the bees out even more, leave the leaves in your yard or leave them on a section of your yard all winter. This might look messy but this provides a nice warm place for bees to sleep during the cold winter months.

Thank you for planting your flowers, helping pollinators of all shapes and sizes and contributing to better biodiversity right in your back yard!



TAKE PHOTOS, MAKE SKETCHES, AND LET US KNOW AT SWF HOW YOUR NATIVE WILDFLOWER POLLINATOR GARDEN TURNED OUT. PHOTOS OF YOUR PROJECT, SKETCHES, AND NOTES CAN BE MAILED TO US AT SASK.WILDIFE@SWF.SK.CA.

ALL PHOTOS WE RECEIVE WILL HAVE YOU ENTERED IN A DRAW TO WIN AN SWF PRIZE PACK!

*Thanks for helping
our pollinators!*



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