

Preamble

For Season of Creation 2026, your Eastern Synod Climate Justice Committee has chosen to focus on an often overlooked issue in the fight against climate change: habitat loss and pollinator collapse. According to Pollinator Partnership Canada “Birds, bats, bees, butterflies, beetles, and other small mammals that pollinate plants are responsible for bringing us one out of every three bites of food.” According to Wildlife Preservation Canada, nearly one in five of North America’s 1600 pollinator species are at an elevated risk of extinction, with bees being the most at-risk insect pollinator.

While systemic change is needed to fully address this issue, on the individual level we are not totally helpless. One of the most important things we can do is to create and maintain environments and spaces for pollinators to take refuge and fulfill their role in the ecosystem. That is the exact reason why we have created this resource: to help you create pollinator gardens of your own and to help combat pollinator species collapse! Below you will find tips and best practices on starting a pollinator garden, a tool for identifying native plants in your area, funding and support opportunities, and a blessing for your new garden!

This Season of Creation, let’s take concrete steps to help support our pollinators and keep creation healthy!

Starting your Pollinator Garden/Tips and Best Practices

Pollinator gardens come in many shapes, sizes and containers adding colour to attract bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. If space is an issue, they can be planted in large pots, planters or even a balcony window box rather than inground. Just be sure that your container is sufficient for the expected height of the plants. Use native plants as they will be more sustainable and nutritious for birds, insects and butterflies and better suited to the local climate.

Be careful to examine the availability of sunlight and wind protection. 6 hours of sunlight is ideal since butterflies and bees like the sunshine. Pollinators find strong winds troublesome. For taller plants choose a location near a fence, hedge or wall.

Planting from seed is easy. Many gardeners mix seeds with a handful of sand and scatter them into the top of the soil. You may want to place a little soil over the seeds to protect them from the birds and squirrels.

Pollinator Gardens require little care other than watering during times of drought. Do not get obsessed with clean-up. Seed heads should be left for a variety of birds. Hollow stems and fallen leaves are used by bees. Leaves also provide a natural mulch. Messy is good for the pollinators during the winter. Clean up can wait until warmer temperatures in the spring.

Pots/ Planters or window boxes: You will need good quality potting soil containing organic material. Pots and planters will need proper drainage. Gravel or broken pottery pieces can be added to improve drainage if needed. Place pots close together to give a wildflower effect and attract pollinators. Water regularly. If using a planter, plant in groupings of 3-5 of the same flowers. Pollinators are attracted to arrangements of native plants.

In ground Garden: Identify your soil type; garden centres can help with this if you are uncertain. If your soil is clay, mix some compost or manure into the top 5-7.6 cm or 2-3 inches of soil to make it more nutritious for pollinators and improve drainage. Weed the area but do not disturb the soil more than necessary. Ground nesting bees need bare spots in the sunshine. Soil also provides shelter for bees and butterflies. Plants such as coneflowers and milkweed propagate themselves; you do not need to fill in the entire garden right away. Choose native flowers that bloom at different times of year. As in pot/planter gardening, plant flowers in groups of 3-5 and let nature take her course. Avoid the use of pesticides. Pick any bugs by hand or do some companion planting i.e. marigolds.

Many communities have changed their bylaws to allow pollinator gardens and even yards instead of lawns. Check with your town for any conditions that may exist.

Identifying Native Plants by Region

In order to provide appropriate conditions for pollinators, and to support the broader ecology of your region, it is important to select plants that are native to where you live. Luckily, the good people at *Pollinator Partnership Canada* have developed just the thing for you! *Find Your Roots* is an easy to use tool that helps you to both identify what ecological region you are in, and to determine which native plants fit the criteria for your pollinator garden.

Check out the full resource here: <https://pollinatorpartnership.ca/en/find-your-roots>

Grants and Supports

Knowing how to build and maintain a pollinator garden is one thing, but figuring out how to pay for it another. Costs can vary widely depending on the size, scale, and scope of your project. Depending on your goals, a pollinator garden can cost anywhere between \$100 - \$1000. If the garden you hope to create is small in scale, you may only need a few volunteers to pool their own personal funds, but for medium to large scale projects, outside funds or general fundraising may be required. The Climate Justice Committee has identified a variety of potential funding and support sources below to help you get started.

Synodical Funding - Mission Committee Grants

The Mission Committee of the Eastern Synod is looking for ways to support congregations in building new relationships, addressing challenges, establishing and strengthening partnerships, and furthering the mission of God's church. There are three categories of grants that congregations, specialized ministries, and Ministry Areas can apply for:

- Compassionate Justice Initiatives (addressing hunger and poverty related issues in the wider community, through CLWR Funds)
- Mission Partnership Support - Long Term (Programming taking place over the course of two or more years, support by Synodical and National Endowment Funds)
- Mission Partnership Support - Short Term (Programming for projects to be completed in a single calendar year, support by Synodical and National Endowment Funds)

Last year the Mission Committee approved 33 grants totalling \$412,015.27! The final deadline for 2026 applications is on September 30th, while a new deadline will be announced for the Spring of 2027.

For more information on criteria, deadlines, and general information on Eastern Synod Mission Grants, visit the [Mission Committee webpage](#).

General Grants and Support

TD Friends of the Environment Foundation Grant

Founded by TD Bank Group in 1990, the [TD Friends of the Environment Foundation \(TD FEF\)](#) is a national charity that funds environmental projects across Canada.

Funding requests are needs based, and there is no set minimum or maximum amount for which you can apply. However, the majority of TD FEF grants are between \$2,000 and \$8,000.

For tree planting and greening projects, there should be a focus on engaging the community as volunteers and on planting native species. Applicants should address the following questions:

- Where is the planting taking place? Why is the project needed at this point?
- Who is involved in planning the project and in carrying out the planting?

- How will the organization engage the community?
- Please provide a plant list in your application detailing what native or non-native plants will be used and why (e.g., increase pollinators, provide shade, etc.)
- Who owns and/or manages the property? Has the organization obtained permission to plant?
- How will the site/trees be maintained?

For more information visit:

<https://www.td.com/ca/en/about-td/ready-commitment/funding/fef-grant#accordion-6556b095b1-item-2314d9c1d0>

****CAVEAT:** Projects must be community-based, public-facing, and focus strictly on the environment. Access must be available to all regardless of religious affiliation. Funding may be difficult to attain based on the location of your garden/set up of your church property**

Pollinator Partnership Canada - Seeding Program

Pollinator Partnership Canada (P2C), with generous funding from Birks, is seeking to provide native plant seed packs for pollinator habitat projects in the following six Canadian cities: Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, and Quebec City. There are two species available in each city:

Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, and Quebec City: Wild Bergamot and Butterfly Bush Milkweed

If you have a pollinator habitat project in one of these cities that could benefit from native plant seed, [apply here!](#)

Ministry Area-Specific Grants and Support

Find below a variety of municipal-level grants and supports that can help you in starting a pollinator garden of your own. Grants and support of this nature are rare, so if you do not see your community/ministry area present, it is because no grants or support could be found for your area.

Grand River

Pollination Guelph's Community Grant Program for Pollinator Habitat provides funds to non-profit organizations requesting financial support for projects related to PG's mission. This year, grants will be focused on planting, enhancing, and/or maintaining sustainable pollinator habitat in Guelph and Wellington County. The 2026 Program will provide grants of up to \$2,000.

To be eligible to apply, interested community groups must:

- Have been established prior to 2023
- Have permission to plant or enhance the project site

- Submit the completed [Application Form](#) to pollinationguelph@gmail.com (as an email attachment)
- If funded, complete or substantially complete the project before the end of 2026
- Agree to share your project results and photos with us (a Year End Report form is available)
- Previous grant recipients will only be considered if all required reporting documents have been submitted for previous grant(s)

The project site must:

- Be located within Guelph or the surrounding Wellington County
- Be accessible to the public (no private gardens)
- Include a pollinator habitat that is 100 m² or greater in size

Full information can be found here: <https://www.pollinationguelph.ca/pollinator-habitat-grant>

Montreal

Many of the city of Montreal's libraries and éco-quartiers offer a variety of seeds, free of charge. Additionally, some have kits that they lend to help residents get started.

To find more information on this program, and what's offered, click here:

<https://montreal.ca/en/how-to/get-seeds-and-borrow-gardening-tools>

Nith Valley

Garden Stratford is a volunteer-led organization that promotes best gardening practices and beautification projects, from home backyards and balconies to public flower beds, in the City of Stratford, Ontario, Canada.

For members—non-member visitors are always welcome—Garden Stratford holds monthly get-togethers. These feature knowledgeable experts invited to discuss topical issues such as combatting invasive species and promoting pollinator gardens.

Our members volunteer to care for perennial beds in public gardens across Stratford. Newer gardeners who join us benefit from mentoring and advice from experienced gardeners who

share everything from tips to plants. We also offer an annual scholarship to a local graduating high school student interested in a career in horticulture, agriculture or related fields.

More information can be found here: <https://gardenstratford.ca/about/>

Toronto Area

Pollinate TO Grants

PollinateTO supports projects that directly result in the creation of publicly-visible pollinator habitat in Toronto. Community education and engagement components of projects inspire others and extend the reach of pollinator stewardship locally. PollinateTO advances the principles and priorities of the City's [Pollinator Protection Strategy](#) and [Biodiversity Strategy](#).

Since 2019, PollinateTO has helped create over 650 gardens!

For more information, click

here: <https://www.toronto.ca/services-payments/water-environment/environmental-grants-incentives/pollinateto-community-grants/>

Congregational Fundraising Ideas

If you are unable to receive funding through any of the resources provided above, here are a few fun ideas for fundraising within your congregation:

- Host a bake sale utilizing local ingredients
- Honey Product Raffle (items can include sustainably sourced wildflower honey, beeswax candles and soap, etc.)
- Organize a congregational lunch and learn on biodiversity/habitat loss with a donation box

Blessing Your Garden

Once you have completed the construction and planting of your pollinator garden, we encourage you to engage spiritually with your good deed by saying a brief blessing! You are free to come up with a blessing of your own, but the climate justice committee has prepared a short blessing for all to use:

God of the butterfly, the bee, the bird, "You ride on the wings of the wind, you make the winds your messenger" (Ps. 104:4). While we lament the loss of biodiversity, the erosion of soil, and disappearing habitats, losses that impact whole ecosystems in which all your creatures live, we also know that you plant hope. Within your rich tapestry, you bring healing on the flap of wings, in gentle buzzing, in the choir of birdsong.

We ask you to bless this pollinator garden with your abundant grace. Bless it as a place of shelter, nourishment, and rest for the littlest of your creatures. Bless us as we tend to your garden in ways both small and large, caring for what you have made. Bless us as we honour your beautiful world. Amen.