

Living Collections

SCAVENGER HUNT



NATURAL
HISTORY
MUSEUM
LOS ANGELES COUNTY

LET'S LOOK FOR

POLLINATOR PLANTS

Let's learn about pollinators!



DID YOU KNOW OUR NATURE GARDENS ARE A CERTIFIED WILDLIFE HABITAT?

Home to over 600 kinds of plants—including California natives and others from around the world—our gardens attract birds, butterflies, lizards, squirrels, and more! The Pollinator Meadow is a tapestry of colors and textures, an exuberant mix of grasses and wildflowers. As our native plants are just about ready for peak bloom, they're already taking visitors: lots of pollinating insects.

WHY DO WE NEED POLLINATORS?

Nearly 90% of flowering plants rely on animal pollinators for fertilization, and pollination is vital for a strong ecosystem. Pollinators are responsible for 1 out of 3 bites of food we take each day, and yet they are at a critical point in their own survival. Many factors are contributing to their recent decline, but we know for certain that providing more flowering plants and eliminating use of toxic chemicals will help improve their health and numbers. Learn tips for welcoming wildlife to your garden below!

POLLINATOR GARDEN TIPS PROVIDED BY THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION:

1. **Plant native flowering plants in your garden.**

Get a list for your zip code at nwf.org/nativeplants or calscape.org.

2. **Reduce the size of your lawn and replace it with native blooming plants.**

3. **Provide water for pollinators** by filling a shallow birdbath with gravel and water or creating a muddy patch in a corner of your yard.

4. **Attract hummingbirds** by planting dense shrubs for nesting and native plants with bright red and orange tubular flowers for food. Supplement as needed with a nectar feeder.

5. **Most native bees are solitary** and lay eggs in tiny tunnels in dead trees, fallen branches, hollow stems, or in sandy soil. Leave standing dead trees, fallen logs, and bare patches of sandy soil.

[You can even put out a bee house filled with nesting tubes.](#)

6. **Butterflies need special “host plants”** as food for their caterpillars. Monarchs, for example, rely on only one host plant, milkweed, so planting it will provide essential habitat. Find host plants for butterflies and moths native to your area at nwf.org/nativeplants and at calscape.org

To learn how to get your garden recognized as a Certified Wildlife Habitat by the National Wildlife Federation, visit nwf.org/gardenforwildlife.

For more tips and tricks on how to welcome wildlife to your garden, visit <https://nhmlac.org/welcome-wildlife-your-garden>

Can you spot these plants?



CALIFORNIA POPPY
Eschscholzia californica



FLOSS SILK TREE
Ceiba speciosa



BOUGAINVILLEA
Bougainvillea spectabilis



JACARANDA
Jacaranda mimosifolia



ALLEN CHICKERING SAGE
Salvia 'Allen Chickering'



LILAC VERBENA
Verbena lilacina

Species Notes

California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*)

California is the “Golden State” not just because of the Gold Rush, but also because of our iconic state flower. Thanks to an increase in native landscape planting, you might also see California poppies along freeway margins. They typically start blooming in March and can linger all the way through June. They are pollinated mostly by beetles, and also by bees. They don’t have nectar, so hummingbirds, butterflies, and other nectar seekers don’t come around.

Floss silk tree (*Ceiba speciosa*)

With its showy pink flowers and spine-covered green trunks, floss silk trees are hard to miss. The natural range of this South American species overlaps with that of the yellow-chevroned parakeet, which loves to tear into the seed pods in search of large black seeds. Now that both have been introduced to the area, you can observe this dynamic along the sidewalks of LA. But here, eastern fox squirrels compete with parakeets for those tasty seeds. Bees, hummingbirds, tanager and orioles like floss silk blooms.

Bougainvillea (*Bougainvillea spectabilis*)

The immense popularity of this South American shrub or vine, which can be found blossoming in courtyards and adorning walls across LA, has been earned thanks to an exceptionally long flowering time. It’s not the flowers that make this plant so colorful, it’s actually the magenta, pink, orange, red or purple bracts that surround the small, white flowers. They contain nectar that attracts butterflies, moths and hummingbirds.

Jacaranda (*Jacaranda mimosifolia*)

Jacaranda season may be brief, but for a short burst of time all of Los Angeles seems to be in purple-blue bloom. Technically, there are 49 species of jacaranda trees, but it’s the *Jacaranda mimosifolia*, also known as the “blue jacaranda,” that is ubiquitous here. Blue as a color is rarely found in nature—less than 10 percent of the world’s 280,000 species of flowering plants have the ability to produce blue flowers. Bees are common pollinators of various species of Jacaranda.

Allen Chickering Sage (*Salvia ‘Allen Chickering’*)

One of California’s most popular native plants, this fragrant shrub is in full, glorious flower right now. Thousands of lavender-blue blossoms held on foot-long stalks are magnets for hummingbirds. Discovered at the California Botanic Garden (formerly Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden) decades ago, this natural hybrid of Cleveland and purple sage is perfectly adapted to our summer-dry Mediterranean climate.

Lilac Verbena (*Verbena lilacina*)

Although lantana is more common in local gardens, lilac verbena is its equal when it comes to attracting butterflies. This mounding shrub is covered with masses of light to dark purple flowers from spring through fall. Be sure to smell them for a whiff of the baby powder-like scent. Found on Cedros Island off the coast of Baja California, which is technically part of Mexico, lilac verbena is nonetheless within the California Floristic Province, one of the world’s biodiversity hotspots.