

# POLLINATOR LAWN IPM

## Why a pollinator lawn?

Turf lawns dominate urban landscapes. Traditional turf depletes the soil and provides no food for pollinators. Yet urban habitat is crucial for pollinator survival. A pollinator lawn provides food and habitat for pollinators with grasses and low growing perennials.

Advantages to a pollinator lawn . . .

- Feeds pollinators
- Requires less mowing
- Improves soil health
- Enhances biodiversity
- Reduces herbicide and pesticide use
- Promotes clean water and environment
- Promotes deeper roots for less watering
- Requires no weed & feed treatments



## Underutilized areas make good pollinator lawns:

- Turf
- Boulevards
- Sloped and steep areas
- Parks and green spaces
- Right of ways or easements
- Strips of land in-between lots



pussy toes



blanket flower



self heal



creeping thyme

## Pollinator lawn perennial flowers:

English daisy (*Bellis perennis*)  
White dutch clover (*Trifolium repens*)  
Common blue violet (*Viola sororia*)  
Calico aster (*Symphyotrichum lateriflorum*)  
Self heal (*Prunella vulgaris*) Sow in fall, needs to overwinter to germinate.  
Anemones

Blanket flower (*Gaillardia*)  
Creeping thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*)  
Wild strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*)  
Lance-leaved coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolata*)  
Pussy toes (*Antennaria plantaginifolia*)  
Creeping charlie and dandelion are pollinator plants

## Grasses:

Thin grass blades give perennials a better chance to grow, are long rooted and require less maintenance.

**Fescue grasses to use:** fine, creeping, chewings, hard (4 lbs seed / 1000 ft.)

## How to install a pollinator lawn: (overseed -or- from scratch)

**Overseed existing lawns** (Early spring is best. We recommend the overseeding method.)

1. Mow existing lawn very short, or scalp to 1" or less so you can see some dirt.
2. Aerate the lawn area by perforating the soil/lawn with small holes.
3. Add compost. Rake in compost with a hard rake leaving approx. 1" of compost over the top of the lawn. 6 yds/4000 sq ft (This is an important step to guarantee success)
4. Seed liberally over compost.
5. Water regularly for 2 weeks, and decrease watering over time.

**From scratch** (Remove all existing turf/vegetation. Avoid using pesticides.)

1. Remove existing turf by:
  - Smothering: cover existing turf with wood chips, mulch or cardboard pieces for several summer months.
  - Mechanical: sod cutter.
  - Solarization: cover with black plastic for 3 summer months to heat and kill vegetation. (see below)
2. After removing turf, follow steps 2-5 above..



Solarization is one method to remove existing turf.



Remove the plastic after three warm months. Turf is gone and ready to seed.



This pollinator lawn is established after 3 years.

## Maintenance:

Pollinator lawns require a medium level of maintenance until they are established. Once established (2-3 years), pollinator lawns are low maintenance.

**Mowing:** Keep lawn at least 4" tall. Taller lawns shade the ground, help prevent soil from drying and discourage weed seeds from sprouting. Refrain from mowing especially when flowers are blooming. Optimally, mow lawn to 4" inches or more. Fine fescue grasses will bend over creating a soft blanket with the look of a shorter lawn.

**Soil health:** White clover is a nitrogen fixer. Compost will help improve soil immensely. Lower rates of organic fertilizer such as 10-0-10, Sustane greens grade or milorganite can be added later in spots where needed.

**Weeding:** Use hand weeding to remove unwanted weeds. Diligent weeding at the start will pay off later as the weeds subside and the new pollinator lawn prospers.

**Overseed:** Add more perennials over time, and selectively seed areas in subsequent seasons to achieve desired flower/grass ratio.



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Legislative Citizen Commission  
on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR)  
Conservation Biocontrol 2017 - 2020