

Topic: Biodiversity

Objective: To empower youth to create an event that educates themselves and their communities about rapid bee species loss and how planting native wildflowers can make a difference.

Supplies:

- Soil (if needed)
- Sand (if needed)
- Several buckets to mix seeds with sand and for mulch
- Mulch
- Seeds - When purchasing wildflower seeds, make sure you're getting 100% native seeds to your area, and not filler. Get a mixture of annuals (bloom once) or perennials (lives more than 2 years)
- 3 rakes (if needed)
- Access to a water supply
- Several watering cans or a hose and spray nozzle
- Table and chairs (for information day of event)
- Each participant should have a pair of gardening gloves, comfortable shoes, a water bottle, and sun protection.

Note: The planning phase can start in April, with planting occurring mid-September to the end of October depending on your location. Consult with local specialists in your community as you're planning for best time to plant in your local area.

Prep work:

- Familiarize yourself with these resources before beginning your project:
 - [Sowing Wildflowers for Spring Color](#)
 - [How to Plant Wildflower Seed for Early Spring Flowers](#)
 - [How to Plant a Wildflower Meadow, Part 1](#) & [How to Plant a Wildflower Meadow, Part 2](#)
 - [5 Tips for Growing Wildflowers with Kids](#)

Kick off your wildflower garden planning on Earth Day!

- Identify and consult with knowledgeable adults within your community like naturalists and members of plant societies.
- Site Evaluation: Take a look around your faith community's grounds and identify a good place to grow wildflowers. Look for raised beds, window boxes, or other spaces. Typically, you'll want an area that gets at least four hours of sunlight per day.
- As part of your site evaluation, determine if you're going to need to weed the area before planting, measure and record the size of the area, and note if you're going to need to add soil.
- Depending on the size of the area, you may want to first use the Lead an Invasive Species Clean-Up one-pager found on page 21 to prepare the soil.
- If the area you've identified has densely compacted soil you may need to factor in tilling the area. Consult with adults in your community and make an action plan.
- Identify items that you'll need (see supplies below), and create a budget.

Late spring:

- Meet with adult leadership and tell them your idea about planting a wildflower garden.
- Request money to support your efforts or create a fundraising plan

Late spring/summer:

- Late spring and summer are great times to raise money for your project. Work with adults to help coordinate and carry out fundraising.
- Educate yourself about [native plant species in your community](#) and create a list of native flowers that you'd like to incorporate in your garden.
- Call or visit plant nurseries in your area to find out who sells native wildflowers
- Put together a shopping list. (Your local nursery can help you determine how much soil, mulch, and wildflower seed you'll need. You'll need to provide them with the dimensions of the area you're seeding and information on the consistency of the soil.)



Photo by Erda Estremera



Early fall:

- Purchase items for your wildflower planting.
- Decide if your group will manage the project or do the planting yourselves.
- If you're managing, outline responsibilities and how many people you'll need, and engage others in your wildflower planting to take place mid-September through the end of October.
- Invite your religious leader to attend the event and offer a blessing.

Welcome/Introduction:

- Around the world, we're experiencing a significant decline in [bee species](#). This is a problem because humans need bees to pollinate plants that we depend on for food. As humans, we have a special responsibility to help bees and other insects. A great way to protect bee species is to plant native wildflowers.
- Even the smallest patch of land or window box can be transformed into an area that fosters biodiversity and protects species. Planning ahead and communicating with those who usually have the power to make decisions and purchases will help you have a great project!

Activity:

The majority of this activity takes place in the planning stages. Here are some things to consider on the day of your project:

- Have supplies ready within close proximity of your project
- Set up an information table about the wildflowers you'll be planting.
- Thank everyone for coming and have your religious leader offer a blessing.
- Talk briefly about the importance of native wildflowers to protect bee species.
- If you've determined that it's best to mix your seeds with sand, do so and assign one (or more) individuals to disperse the mixture in the designated area.
- Assign several people to rake the area.
- After raking is completed, everyone can join in and gently step on the seeds to compact them.
- Assign another group of individuals to disperse the mulch.
- Assign someone knowledgeable about watering, and responsible to water your planting.
- For the first several weeks of your planting, the area should be watered several times a day. Coordinate with adults and staff on a schedule.

Closing:

- Clean up
- Thank everyone for coming!
- Talk about when you expect the wildflowers to begin growing.

Follow-up:

- At the end of the growing season, it is recommended to mow the area. Coordinate with adults to make a plan.