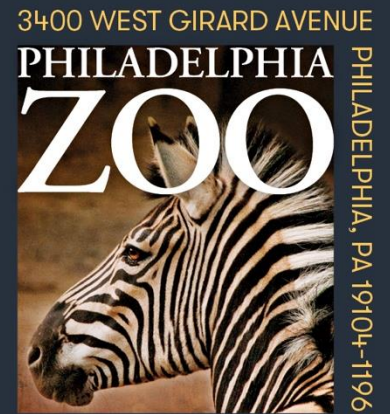


Container Gardens

Wildflower habitats in backyards and balconies, and along sidewalks or porches, can make a big difference for many precious pollinators. For example, milkweed plants help caterpillars thrive and grow, and purple coneflowers and aster plants provide nectar for butterflies throughout the season. Interested in growing native plants, but don't have a lot of space? You can start a garden using a variety of containers from your home!



Creating a container garden:

1. *Be resourceful* – many materials like yogurt containers, tomato cans, paint buckets, and old tires can become great containers to use for planting seeds.
2. *Clean out the containers* after emptying its contents. Containers can be cleaned with soap and water (or a solution of 1 part bleach, and 9 parts water for a deeper clean).
3. *Put holes in the bottom of the container for water drainage*, if not already present. This is important to ensure the soil isn't too wet, which inhibits the plants from getting the oxygen they need. With adult supervision, scissors can be used to create holes in your softer containers, or nails and a hammer for thicker containers.
4. *Label the container* with the types of plants you plan to grow (and decorate the container if you so wish, too).



Planting wildflower seeds:

1. *Identify a time to plant your wildflower seeds.* If planting in Spring, wait until frosts are past. If planting in Summer, you will have to water your seeds more often for the first 4-6 weeks. If planting in the Fall, be sure to place the seeds in soil 60 days before the first frost so the seeds rest over the winter are ready to sprout in the Spring.
2. *Prepare your containers* by cleaning them and filling them about $\frac{3}{4}$ full of soil. Wildflowers are very adaptable and can grow in any type of soil. However, making the soil as healthy as possible can help the wildflowers thrive. Make sure to remove all other existing plants from the soil, consider and adding in composted soil can provide some extra nutrients (like nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium) for the flowers to grow.
3. *Spread your wildflower seeds across the soil.* Only 2-4 wildflower seeds are needed per square foot of container. For your smaller containers, even fewer seeds are needed. Seeds planted too closely together may cause competition for resources between the seedlings, and prevent them from growing properly.
4. *Gently push seeds into surface of the soil* but be sure not to cover or bury them with the soil.
5. *Find a sunny spot* that gets at least 6 hours of sun a day. Plants, especially wildflowers, need a lot of sunlight in order to produce the nutrients and sugars they need to survive.
6. *Water your soil* every day until the seedlings are about 4-6" tall. The soil should stay moist, but not soaking wet. After your flowers have reached this height, the seedlings will survive on water every other week. Add additional water if the soil appears to be drying out.
7. *Watch your wildflowers bloom and observe visiting pollinators.* Sprouts will start to appear in late Spring or early Summer inviting native pollinators to stop by for a visit.

