

# CREATING MONARCH AND POLLINATOR HABITAT

## in Southeastern Canada



Private landowners are increasingly interested in restoring areas of their property to provide improved habitat for Monarchs and other pollinators. While there is abundant information on small-scale gardening with native plants, there is much less on planting at larger scales, such as on one acre or more of land. Here is a brief introduction for landowners in southeastern Canada interested in restoring an area of an acre or more in a cost-effective way. Establishing Pollinator Meadows from Seed\*, a document developed by the Xerces Society, is also available online.

### Choosing and Preparing a Site

Choose a site in full sun. Sites can range from moist to dry; wet sites are generally harder to prepare and maintain. If possible, choose a bare, weed-free site or recently cropped land where the competition from other plants (such as pasture grasses) is lowest. Sites that are former lawns or pastures can be the most difficult to prepare because they are dominated by aggressive non-native grasses. If you are working with this type of site, you could simply allow the site to regenerate naturally by reducing mowing (refer to CWF's Helping Monarchs and Pollinators: Rethinking Mowing factsheet\*). The fastest way to prepare a pasture site for seeding is to treat the aggressive grasses with herbicide. However, it is also possible to use herbicide-free methods such as sod stripping, covering the site with UV-stable plastic, or multi-year cropping. For more detail, see Establishing Pollinator Meadows from Seed\*. Before seeding, the soil surface should be smooth, weed-free and firmly packed. This will likely require follow-up weeding after initial treatments. A clean, weed-free site is critical: make sure you take the time to prepare your site properly.



### Buying Native Plants

When restoring an area of an acre or more, it is most economical to plant seeds. For best results, you want to use seeds of native species that are found in your area and that provide nectar for native pollinators. For faster results, seeds can be supplemented with seedlings ("plugs") of wildflower species. Native plant plugs are more widely available but require more care.

In many areas of Canada, it is difficult to find suppliers of native seeds and plants. The Canadian Wildlife Federation maintains a searchable database of native plant suppliers. Be sure to ask a supplier where native seeds originated. Ideally, try to find seeds or plants that originated in your general area or at least in the same hardiness zone (e.g., Zone 5).

\*For these resources and more, visit [HelpTheMonarchs.ca](https://www.helpthemonarchs.ca)