3.12 Enhance Pollinator Pathways

5 – 40 Points

Action Updates

This action is available for the **current certification cycle** and was newly added in 2021.

Objective

Protect pollinators by creating pollinator gardens, enacting policies to protect pollinators and enhance their habitat, and educating the public on the importance of pollinator friendly habitats in your municipality.

What to Do

The more you do, the more points you earn.

1. Provide education to residents and local businesses to improve pollinator habitat, reduce the use of insecticides on plants in flower, promote the addition of clover to grass lawns, and encourage the reduction of lawnmowing to once every 2 or 3 weeks. **(5 points)**

   Outreach may include:

   - Creating and maintaining a searchable, navigable space on your municipal website and associated social media outreach;
   - Hosting educational events and workshops—which may be in-person or virtual—on pollinator friendly practices; or
   - Educational signage on municipal, residential, and business properties.

   Submit: A description of outreach conducted, including copies of any educational materials used, methods of engagement, photos of events, groups in attendance, and/or a link to the dedicated space for pollinator education on your municipality's website.

   Timeframe for Credit: Eligible for new action credit and rolling credit. This action falls under the action type "Outreach, Education, Programs, Campaigns, Recognition/Designation in External Program, and Funding" (see "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for submission requirements).

2. Create pollinator gardens, upgrade existing gardens to be pollinator friendly and educate the public about the importance of pollinators to society. If the spaces developed through this program are not located on municipal property, you must demonstrate a significant partnership between the town and the initiative's administrators (in terms of in-kind and/or financial support). **(15 points)**

   Submit: A photo of each pollinator garden along with associated outreach and promotion materials. If the garden is not located on municipal property, provide evidence of in-kind and/or financial support from the municipality to the initiative's administrators.

   Timeframe for Credit: Eligible for new action credit. This action falls under the action type "Implementation Projects" (see "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for submission requirements).

3. Pass a Pollinator Friendly Community resolution. **(20 points)**

   Create a resolution that states your municipality's intention to protect pollinators that may support the

following:

- Include native plant and tree species on town property;
- Collaborate with suppliers on sourcing plants free of neonicotinoids and other chemicals that may be harmful to pollinators;
- Incorporate the use of integrated pest management (IPM) techniques on town owned land;
- Include plans to maximize pollinator protection through education and outreach and creating pollinator gardens;
- Encourage the addition of clover to grass lawns and/or the reduction of mowing to once every 2 to 3 weeks; and
- Identify areas where lawns are not used for walking, playing, sitting, or other human recreation, and replace lawns with native trees, shrubs, or perennials offering resources for pollinators.

Submit: A copy of the resolution and minutes or the agenda from the meeting where it was approved by your municipal governing body.

Timeframe for Credit: Eligible for new action credit and rolling credit. This action falls under the action type "Websites, Maps, Inventories, Checklists, Assessments, Plans, Ordinances, Policies, Regulations and Resolutions" (see "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for submission requirements).

Timeframe for Credit

Actions can either be "New" or considered for "Rolling Credit."

New Action Credit. Any action completed within the past three years (from January 1 of the year seeking certification) is eligible for potential certification points. If you are applying for recertification in your year of expiration, you may not claim New Action Credit for items that previously received credit.

Rolling Credit. For any action older than three years (from January 1 of the year seeking certification), you must demonstrate ongoing, currently relevant, and meaningful impact in your community to be considered for certification points. If you are applying for recertification in your year of expiration, you must apply for Rolling Credit for any item that previously received credit, even if it was completed within the past three years.

View the "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for detailed submission requirements.

Engaging Partners

Sustainable CT encourages regional collaboration and other forms of partnership. For every action, please complete the "Partners" box in your submission, indicating the name(s) of any municipalities and/or organizations you partnered with (if any) and a brief description of your municipality's role. If you collaborate with other municipalities, each community will receive points. For additional information, please see the "Partners Guidance Document".

Potential Municipal and Community Collaborators

Staff from the town council, planning and zoning, public works, parks and recreation departments, agriculture and conservation stakeholders, local beekeepers, landscaping businesses, local farmers and farming advocates, watershed organizations, garden clubs, faith communities, and local land trusts could be helpful in implementing this action.

Funding

If available, below are potential funding sources specific to this Action. For a complete listing of potential funding opportunities to assist with implementing Sustainable CT Actions, please visit the Sustainable CT Grants Portal, which is searchable by Action. Please also visit the Support for Your Town page for opportunities for technical assistance and other supports.

- Urban Green and Community Gardens Grant Program

Resources

Toolkits, Calculators, Guidance Documents

- US Fish and Wildlife Service: Pollinator Outreach and Education Materials
- The Last Green Valley: Protecting Pollinators
- Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection: Pollinators in Connecticut
- Pollinator Information – Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station
- The Xerces Society: Reducing Pesticide Use and Impacts
- The Xerces Society Pollinator Protection Pledge
- Pollinator Conservation Resources: Northeast Region
- Pollinator Plants—Northeast Region
- Selecting Plants for Pollinators – Eastern Broadleaf Forest
- Native Plant Lists for Pollinators – Pollinator Pathway
- NOFA Organic Land Care
- Lawn Mowing and Bee Diversity

Organizations and Relevant Programs

- The Last Green Valley
- The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation
- Pollinator Pathway
- Bee City USA
- CT Bees
- Connecticut Audubon Society
- The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station
- Connecticut Butterfly Association

Why This Matters

Pollinators such as bees, flies, butterflies, moths, bats, and birds play a vital role in upholding and enhancing the well-being of society. Crops pollinated by insects include many of our fruits (apples, pears, cherries, strawberries, raspberries), fruiting vegetables (squash, cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers), nuts (almonds) and sources of oils (sunflowers, canola). According to the US Forest Service, over 1,000 of the plants we harvest and depend on for food, beverages, fibers and medicines require pollination. In the United States alone, bees and other pollinating insects produce $10 billion worth of food products every year.

In addition to their value to human food security and the agricultural sector, pollinating animals play a critical role in maintaining ecosystems. In our region, about 75% of all flowering plants are pollinated by insects or other animals. Birds and other wild animals feed directly on caterpillars and other insects and also feed on fruits and seeds that are the products of pollination. The increasing use of herbicides in agriculture has decreased the floral resources available to pollinators, and the pesticides highly toxic to bees are another threat. In addition, honeybees and other pollinators suffer from the global spread of parasites and diseases. These factors have led to local extinctions of pollinator species. Creating pollinator habitat free from pesticides helps to counter these threats.

Benefits

Among the benefits to a municipality as a result of pollinator protection measures are enhancing agricultural production and local food supply/food security and protecting ecosystem services such as species protection and biodiversity. An important co-benefit of planting trees, shrubs and perennial plants is climate mitigation. Plants take up carbon dioxide, fix carbon as organic matter and produce oxygen as a result of photosynthesis, and pollinators are key to the reproduction of flowering plants that produce this vital service.

Other co-benefits of pollinator protection are the purification of water and prevention of soil erosion through sturdier roots and foliage to buffer the impacts of rain. Plants are needed to return moisture to the atmosphere and, of course, are dependent upon pollinators for reproduction. Creating pollinator pathways will also enhance community cohesion through new gathering places and educational opportunities that result from the creation

of pollinator gardens.