



State Environmental Agencies Kick-Off Third Year of Growing Wild Pollinator Habitat Campaign Throughout the Commonwealth

DCR, MDAR, and MNLA partner to continue the statewide movement encouraging residents to preserve and protect pollinators with free pollinator habitat starter kits for Massachusetts residents

BOSTON (June 2, 2023) – The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) today launched its third annual [Growing Wild Massachusetts](#) initiative to promote and preserve pollinators throughout the Commonwealth in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) and the Massachusetts Nursery and Landscape Association (MNLA), who joined the agencies as a partner this year.

As part of Growing Wild Massachusetts, DCR, MDAR, and MNLA are partnering with nurseries to distribute native pollinator garden starter kits featuring plants native to Massachusetts and wildflower seeds. The organizations will also provide educational resources for residents on DCR's website and social media channels while encouraging Bay State gardeners to share their pollinator progress on their own social channels using the hashtag #GrowWildMA. Kits will be available beginning Friday, June 2nd at 18 nursery and garden center locations across the state.

"DCR is dedicated to supporting and enhancing the Commonwealth's precious natural resources including our pollinators - which play an essential role in our efforts to maintain a healthy and thriving ecosystem," **said DCR Commissioner Brian Arrigo**. "We are thrilled to be launching our third year of the Growing Wild initiative and we hope to inspire more families to take an active role in helping us preserve these important members of our ecology."

Pollinators include bees, birds, bats, butterflies, and other species. Over 45 percent of agricultural commodities in Massachusetts rely on pollinator species for crop pollination and food production. Pollinator species provide significant environmental benefits that are necessary for maintaining healthy, diverse ecosystems, and produce valuable products including honey, propolis, royal jelly, and wax. However, many pollinator species are struggling due to loss of forage and habitat, the spread of invasive plant and insect species, climate change, and improper use of pesticides.

"Pollinators are a critical part of a vibrant ecosystem," **said MDAR Commissioner Ashley Randle**. "We encourage Massachusetts residents to get involved and be an active part of the ecological system that produces our food and resources. We're proud to once again be part of Growing Wild to help our residents support and preserve our environment."

DCR, MDAR, and MNLA are working to increase habitats for pollinators, enabling them to do their job of making food for all living things by promoting and protecting pollinator habitats on



their properties, planting pollinator gardens, managing wildflower meadows, and maintaining limited-mow zones.

These agencies are encouraging Massachusetts residents to support these efforts by planting their own pollinator garden using the Growing Wild starter kits.

“Bigelow Nurseries is proud to be one of 18 nurseries across the Commonwealth who is participating in this year’s Growing Wild movement,” said Pat Bigelow, President of Bigelow Nurseries and Former President of MNLA. “This year’s program will put 1,900 native pollinator garden starter kits into gardens around the Commonwealth and help introduce more Massachusetts residents to the joy of gardening for a good cause.”

Learn more about the Growing Wild Massachusetts movement, how to get involved, and how to register for the program by visiting: www.plantsomethingma.org/pollinator/growingwild

About DCR

DCR manages state parks and oversees more than 450,000 acres throughout Massachusetts. It protects, promotes, and enhances the state’s natural, cultural, and recreational resources. The health and happiness of people across Massachusetts depends on the accessibility and quality of our natural resources, recreational facilities, and great historic landscapes. DCR continues to improve the vital connection between people and the environment.

About MDAR

The Department’s mission is to cultivate a robust and equitable agricultural economy, promote a safe and resilient food system, and preserve a healthy environment for Massachusetts farmers, animals, and consumers.

About MNLA

The Massachusetts Nursery & Landscape Association, Inc. (MNLA) is a statewide association dedicated to advancing the interests of “green industry” professionals. MNLA is a nonprofit organization whose members are businesses and individuals committed to promoting awareness of environmental horticulture and upholding the highest standards of the nursery and landscape industry. MNLA is the largest green industry business development vehicle in Massachusetts, providing its members with educational opportunities, industry news, legislative representation, and business development resources. First established in 1910, MNLA has represented the needs of nursery and landscape professionals for more than 100 years.

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