

Supporting Native Pollinators With Edible Landscapes

An edible landscape is more than a productive garden—it's an interconnected system where your food plants and the local ecosystem support each other. It blends fruits, vegetables, herbs, nuts, and flowers into a functional and beautiful planting that feeds both people and pollinators. This guide offers practical strategies, regional plant recommendations, and seasonal maintenance tips to help you create a landscape that is both productive and ecologically supportive.

Why Native Plants Matter for Pollinator Health

Native plants evolved alongside local pollinators and are adapted to your region's climate and soil. They bloom at the right times, offer nectar suited to local species, and require less maintenance. Examples include serviceberry, pawpaw, elderberry, and American plum.

Planning for Continuous Bloom

A pollinator-friendly edible garden should provide flowers from early spring to late fall. Early-season plants like willows and serviceberries help emerging pollinators, midseason blooms from herbs and perennials sustain them, and late-season plants like goldenrod and asters prepare them for winter.

Regional Planting Strategies

Choose plants suited to your climate zone. In the Northeast, blueberries and goldenrod work well; in the Southeast, figs and passionflower; in the Midwest, pawpaw and coneflower; in the Southwest, mesquite and globe mallow; and in the Pacific Northwest, apples and Oregon grape.

Soil Preparation and Maintenance

Healthy soil is the foundation of a thriving edible landscape. Add compost, reduce tilling, and leave some bare ground for nesting bees. Mulch most beds to conserve moisture while avoiding complete coverage to preserve habitat.