

In our highly urbanized world nature tends to take the back seat when it comes to landscape design. In general, urbanized landscape plans include some tree species, some different types of shrubs maybe some small areas set aside for a few flowers, and lots and lots of grass; all of which are mostly chosen for aesthetic value instead of the actual value held for wildlife and the overall ecosystem. **To help increase the ecological value of urbanized landscapes**, a concept derived from a woman named Sarah Bergmann from Seattle, Washington called the Pollinator Pathway can be implemented.

A Pollinator Pathway is a series of small native gardens that are strategically placed throughout an urbanized area that provide habitat for pollinators. The concept is to plant native species in these gardens to attract and provide pollinators with distinct pathways in an otherwise scattered or barren landscape.

The pilot Pollinator Pathway created by Bergmann connects the gardens of the University of Seattle campus to Nora's Woods, a small wooded area that hosts a variety of native plant species. The pathway is a mile long by 12 foot wide, and consists of 20 pollinator friendly gardens that provide a vegetative path in an otherwise solely urbanized landscape.

Not only do Pollinator Pathways provide habitat for pollinators, but they also help support the wildlife that depends on these pollinators for food, and they hold other ecological benefits. **Furthermore, introducing a more diverse and native vegetative population to an urbanized landscape will help to reduce the habitat available for invasive species.** Invasive species tend to thrive in areas that are lacking competition from native species; therefore, by planting gardens in areas that would otherwise be dominated by a single species of grass—as found in traditional lawns, the likelihood of invasive species becoming established will be reduced. Choosing native plants also reduces the likelihood of exotic vegetation later becoming invasive, as a majority of invasive plants were once desired exotic nursery stock.

**The St. Lawrence Eastern Lake Ontario Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (SLELO PRISM) and the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County are leading a pollinator pathway project. The main purpose of this project is to increase pollinator habitat and reduce the susceptibility of the urban landscape to an invasive species introduction.**

The project promotes the planting of native plant species that hold the most ecological value for pollinators. A list of suggested native species has been developed and is available to those who choose to participate. **Project participants will also be asked to map their own gardens in a citizen science project hosted by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and The Nature Conservancy called YardMap through the Habitat Network.** This will help track the progress of the project and provide feedback to participants for different ways they can promote healthy pollinator and wildlife habitats in their own backyards.

**Anyone who is interested in participating in the Pollinator Pathway Project, please contact:**

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**Cornell University**  
Cooperative Extension

**Habitat Network**  
powered by yardmap

