



## Pollinator Habitat Grant Program 2022-2023 academic year

Eligible applicants:	High school educators
Eligible states:	Iowa, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin
<b>Deadline to apply:</b>	<b>November 18, 2022</b>
Awards announced:	December 2, 2022
Seeds shipped to schools:	December 2022
Progress report due:	March 2023
Plants shipped to schools:	April 2023
Final report due:	June 2023

### OVERVIEW

This competitive grant program strives to increase the diversity of native forbs within an agricultural or other working landscape for the benefit of native bees, honeybees, and monarch butterflies. We encourage applicants to team up with a farmer or other land manager in their community. School properties can be offered if the site is dedicated to agricultural or ecological restoration purposes. In all cases, proper site preparation prior to seeding and transplanting will be key to a successful outcome.

Successful applicants will receive native forb seeds to germinate in late winter, and up to 640 live forb seedlings in early spring. Students will grow these plants in a school greenhouse or other suitable indoor area, transplant them onto an appropriate site in late spring, and maintain and monitor the plants through the summer. Projects also have the option to receive a grass/forb seed mix to hand-sow in spring or fall, for additional plant diversity and weed control. Teachers will join a live orientation and have access to remote consultation from Taylor Creek Restoration Nurseries. A \$1,000 cash award will be paid to the school district or FFA chapter.

This grant program is provided by Sand County Foundation, a non-profit conservation organization dedicated to working with private landowners across North America to advance ethical and scientifically sound land management practices that benefit people and the environment. Financial sponsorship of the program is provided by Enel Green Power North America Inc, Syngenta, Monarch Joint Venture, the U.S. Forest Service International Programs, Wisconsin Public Service Foundation and We Energies Foundation.

## GRANT ELIGIBILITY

This is a competitive grant. High school educators from high schools (public, private, or charter) in Iowa, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin can apply.

Schools who have not previously received a Pollinator Habitat Grant from Sand County Foundation will be prioritized for funding. Schools who previously applied but were not awarded a grant are welcome to apply again. Teachers may contact the Grant Program Coordinator for feedback regarding prior unsuccessful applications.

## GRANT ACTIVITIES

Applicants who are offered a grant on December 2<sup>th</sup> will complete the following activities for the 2022-2023 academic year:

1. Return a grant award acceptance form and school's W-9 form (December)
2. View instructional stratification video included in award materials
3. Receive seeds via mail from Taylor Creek Nurseries, and moist-cold stratify seeds in a cool location for two to six weeks (page 77\*) (December/January)
4. Join a live orientation via zoom for grant recipients (January)
5. Germinate seed flats indoors, for about three weeks (page 77\*) (February/March)
6. Complete interim report and germination results form (March)
7. Receive live seedlings via mail (if needed, up to 640 seedlings total in trays of 1" cells) from Taylor Creek Nurseries, to supplement seedlings germinated in step 5 (April)
8. Transfer all seedlings from 1" cells to 2½" pots, and grow these "plugs" indoors for several weeks (page 79\*) (April/May)
9. Work with project site landowner/manager to prepare site by mowing, spraying, tilling, burning, or other methods (pages 67 and 70\*) (timing varies by methods used)
10. Optional: complete direct seeding of a native grass/forb seed mix (page 82\*) (spring or late fall)\*\*
11. Harden-off seedlings, complete transplanting of plugs outdoors, and mark/document locations for future monitoring (page 84\*) (May/June)
12. Complete student surveys and final report (June)\*\*
13. Monitor site, water and weed as needed (pages 86, 90, 92\*) (Summer)

\* Page numbers above refer to corresponding activities in the [Pollinator Habitat Curriculum Guide](#)

\*\*Flexibility in timeline can be accommodated to ensure pollinator habitat success

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Sand County Foundation will provide to each grant recipient:

- A flat-rate payment of \$1,000 paid to school district or FFA chapter in two installments (\$750 upon receipt of grant acceptance form in December 2022 and \$250 upon receipt of final report in June 2023)
- Video training and one hour of individual expert consulting (by phone/email) from Taylor Creek Restoration Nurseries
- Native forb seeds shipped to schools in December, for stratification and propagation.
- Optional: A seed mix of native grasses and additional forb species to sow on the project site.
- Up to 640 live seedlings shipped in April, if needed to supplement plants propagated from seed. These will arrive in trays with 1" cells.
- 20 trays each with 32 empty 2½" pots for "upshifting" (transferring to larger pots) 640 seedlings to continue growing as "plugs" until ready for transplanting.

Grant recipients agree to provide:

- Ongoing project supervision by the lead and/or secondary teacher.
- A team of students committed to completing all activities. The highest time demand will likely be during March/April in greenhouses, and May/June in the field.
- Approximately 40 square feet of greenhouse space at 60° - 85° daytime / 40°+ nighttime temperatures from March through May. Schools without a greenhouse may provide other means (grow lights, heat mats) to meet these criteria.
- Permission and support from the landowner (individual, entity, or school) to prepare the project site, allow student access, and maintain the site in the future.
- Necessary watering of plants in the first summer, if rainfall is not sufficient
- Permission to share photos, video, and data collected from the project
- An interim report (March) and a final report (June), including administering a post-project student survey developed by Sand County Foundation.

## HOW TO APPLY

Complete this [online form](#) by Friday, November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

Questions? Please read the attached Q&A sheet, or contact Haley Diem at 651-303-8288 or [hdiem@sandcountyfoundation.org](mailto:hdiem@sandcountyfoundation.org)

## Pollinator Habitat Grant Program

### Frequently asked Questions - Eligibility

*My teaching is not focused on agriculture. Can I still apply?*

Yes. While we are promoting this grant opportunity to agriculture and environmental science educators, we warmly welcome teachers of any discipline to participate.

*Our school does not have a greenhouse. Can we still apply?*

Yes, in lieu of growing out plants in a greenhouse you can propose an alternative indoor growing space as long as it meets criteria as stated in the grant recipient roles and responsibilities above.

*Can elementary or middle school teachers apply?*

Unfortunately, no. The scope of this program is limited to the high school level (grades 9-12). We welcome students from younger grades to participate in a project but the proposal and leadership of the project must come from a high school educator and their students.

*Can I use this grant to plant habitat on our school grounds?*

Yes, but only if it is part of land used for agricultural or ecological restoration education objectives. Please note this program intends to expose students to the process of integrating native habitat within an agricultural or other “working” landscape. Proposals with planting sites along a school entrance or courtyard or other intensively landscaped area are unlikely to be selected for funding.

*My school is in the city. Can urban agriculture or habitat sites qualify?*

Yes! Our goal is to integrate pollinator habitat with agriculture and working landscapes, no matter the scale or style. We welcome your creativity in finding an open area in your community. This can include urban farms as well as electric transmission rights-of-way, industrial sites, etc.

## Pollinator Habitat Grant Program

### Frequently asked Questions - Activities

#### *What species of seeds/plants will we receive if we are awarded a grant?*

This program uses native perennial forbs (wildflower plants) that are common to prairie and savanna ecosystems that once dominated the Midwestern landscape. Examples of species you may receive include blazing star, blue aster, prairie coreopsis, purple coneflower, whorled milkweed, and culver's root.

#### *What materials will I receive and what do I need to provide?*

To start plants from seed you will need to provide up to five germination flats and germination media beginning in late December or early January. We will ship the seeds to you in mid December. Your first step will be to "moist-cold stratify" the seeds by placing the germination flats in a cold dark location (a walk-in cooler, a refrigerator, a dark outdoor shed, etc) for several weeks. We recommend that you initiate stratification before or immediately after the winter holiday break, and begin germination in a greenhouse or under grow lights by early March.

In late March or early April you will need to "upshift" the small seedlings to larger pots. We will ship to you 20 trays, each with 32 empty square pots of 2½" size (enough for 640 plants). Each tray is 12" x 22" in size (about 40 square feet of growing area total). You must provide approximately ½ cubic foot of growing medium per tray (10 ft<sup>3</sup> total for 20 trays).

In March after sending in your interim report and germination results, we will ship to you as many as 640 live seedlings in trays of 1" cells in late March or early/mid April, as needed to supplement your supply of plants.

You will need to provide all necessary supplies and equipment for site preparation and transplanting. You can use the \$1,000 cash award for any project-related expenses. We don't ask for receipts but we will ask you to report how the funds were used to help us learn more about what resources teachers need to complete these projects.

## *What determines whether I can receive live plants in addition to seeds?*

If your seed stratifying and germination efforts fail (as sometimes happens with native forbs), we'll ship enough live seedlings so that you have at least 640 plants to upshift to the larger pots. If your seed starting is successful, we may be able to ship you some supplement seedlings depending on supply.

## *Do I need to do the direct seeding of a grass along with transplanting the plugs at my project site?*

This depends on your site. If you are enhancing an existing habitat area by mowing and planting among other desired plants, seeding the grasses is probably not necessary. However if you are starting with bare soil or a freshly tilled field, we strongly encourage that your students hand-spread the seed mix that we ship to you. The native grasses (such as wild rye and little bluestem) will complement the forbs you transplant to create a more prairie-like plant community. The mix also has annual oats to compete against the weeds that will inevitably infest your site in the first year, and additional forb seeds (such as black-eyed susans and partridge pea) to add diversity to your site.

## *What kind of technical assistance can we get along the way?*

All grantees will receive a printed copy of our [Pollinator Habitat Curriculum Guide](#) with 29 activities including and beyond the required Grant Activities described above. We will also provide an introductory webinar and one hour of free individual remote consulting (phone or email) with an expert at Taylor Creek Restoration Nurseries. That said, habitat projects are very site-specific and will require your discretion and some independent investigation to fit your project needs.

## *What are the reporting requirements?*

We require a mid-term update via an online form (in March ) and a final report (in June). Please note 25% of the cash award will be withheld until you deliver a complete final report, including photos, plant survival rates, and results of a student survey (we provide the survey form for you to administer). We will also expect occasional email/phone responses for scheduling of the webinar, delivery of plant materials, etc.