Design for a Pollinator Patch
By Adrian Doble – 2021

Considerations:

1. Siting re. sun, wind, people
2. Area and shape
3. Ground preparation
4. Annuals, perennials, shrubs, bulbs
5. Evergreens
6. Structures
7. Maintenance, watering, weeding, reseeding

Ideal plant selection:

Annuals

Borage	*Borago officinalis*
Cornflower	*Centaurea cyanus*
Cosmos	*Cosmos bipinnatus*
Field poppy	*Papaver rhoeas*
Foxglove	*Digitalis purpurea*
Marigold	*Calendula officinalis*
Musk mallow	*Malva moschata*
Red campion	*Silene dioica*
Vipers bugloss	*Echium vulgare*
Yellow rattle	*Rhinanthus minor*

Yellow rattle

Perennials

California poppy	*Eschscholzia*
Catmint	*Nepeta*
Common knapweed	***Centaurea nigra***
Cowslip	*Primula veris*
Field scabious	***Knautia arvensis***
Hedge woundwort	*Stachys sylvatica*
Hollyhock	*Alcea rosea*
Marjoram	*Origanum vulgare*
Meadow clary	*Salvia pratense*
Purple loosestrife	*Lithrum salicaria*
Rough hawkbit	*Leontodon hispidus*
Sweet clover	*Melilotus officinalis*
Yellow toadflax	*Linaria vulgaris*

Purple loosestrife

Evergreen perennials

Comfrey	***Symphytum officinale***
Hellebore	***Helleborus niger***
Lungwort	***Pulmonaria officinalis***
Primrose	*Primula vulgaris*
Red clover	*Trifolium pratense*
Selfheal	*Prunella vulgaris*
White dead nettle	***Lamium album***

Comfrey

Shrubs

Lavender	*Lavandula angustifolia*
Pussy willow	*Salix caprea*
Rosemary	*Rosmarinus officinale*
Winter clematis	*Clematis cirrhosa*
Winter honeysuckle	*Lonicera fragrantissima*

Pussy willow

Bulbs & Corms

Crocus	*Crocus sativus*
Dahlia	*Dahlia pinnata*
Native bluebell	*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*
Snowdrop	*Galanthus nivalis*
Tenby daffodil	*Narcissus obvellaris*

Crocus

Exclusions

Birds foot trefoil	*Lotus corniculatus*
Corn cockle	*Agrostemma githago*
Corn marigold	*Glebionis segetum*
Ox eye daisy	*Leucanthemum vulgare*
Ragwort	*Senecio jacobaea*
Stinging nettle	*Urtica dioica*
Thistle	*Cirsium vulgare*
Yarrow	*Achillia millefolium*

Corn cockle

Siting re. sun, wind, people

The site would need protection from wind, people, and full sun. Ideally it would back on to a hedge or woodland to allow creatures to travel between the wildflower area and the existing habitat.

Area and shape

A natural shape, such as half of an oval, would be appropriate and visually interesting. A line of low pegs may be needed to outline the exposed border and give protection against contract mowers if necessary

Ground preparation

Where the site is occupied by short-rooted grass, the top 5 cm would need to be removed, or thoroughly scarified to this depth, and then raked to break up the surface. In a paddock situation involving grass with long roots, this approach would not work.

Annuals, perennials, shrubs, bulbs

The list is based on a selection of the species known to provide the best forage for pollinators for as many months of the year as possible, while avoiding those that are of little value and that rapidly dominate an area.

Evergreens

These species supply forage for a long time and provide visual interest when other plants have died down.

Structures

The evergreen plants should be placed in a visually attractive way to maintain the interest of residents.

A group of several logs, placed together vertically would add interest to the site as well as providing habitat for insects. These should be sunk to a depth of 2 foot to encourage stag beetle nesting, and be of different height up to about 4 foot above ground.

Maintenance, watering, weeding, reseeding

The area would need to be kept moist for the first three months. In the summer, the area would need to be watered to prevent new growth dying. This would be less likely for autumn-sown plants which have a chance to develop decent roots before the sun gets too hot.

Unwanted weeds like nettles, thistle, ragwort and ox-eye daisy will need to be removed to prevent their domination. Monthly attention to this will be enough.

The annuals will need to be reseeded each year to maintain the ecological and visual interests of the project.