

SMALL GARDENS, BIG CHANGE

SMALL GARDENS, BIG CHANGE is a new program from the City of Boulder, Boulder Housing Partners, Butterfly Pavilion and Colorado State University Extension Service in Boulder County. In June 2020, [Colorado Pollinator Month](#), this program is piloting a creative and low-cost approach to expand pollinator habitat within the city.

In this challenging, uncertain time due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a resurgence in gardening as a way to seek solace and beauty, as well as to grow food and support pollinators and other wildlife. This program captures the movement to expand pollinator habitat throughout the city, which furthers the ecological and ecosystems objectives of the [Climate Action Mobilization Plan](#).

Many community members are feeling isolated while following social distancing guidelines. Among the groups most profoundly impacted are older adults, who are facing long-term isolation to protect themselves from exposure to COVID-19. **SMALL GARDENS, BIG CHANGE** was created to provide a vehicle to connect isolated older adults in our community to social relationships, collective action and the healing benefits of working with the natural world.

THE STRATEGY

Pollinator plant growing kits are being provided to older adult volunteers who are self-isolating. Each kit includes native seeds and supplies that are easy to manage in small indoor or outdoor spaces. In addition, each volunteer will receive remote trainings and weekly contact with an expert mentor, who will answer questions and connect volunteers to others.

Plants will be collected in the fall. Community organizations and groups will be trained to install the seedlings in areas that are currently being transitioned to pollinator districts. Community members are stewards of the habitat in these pollinator districts, and improve and manage it in way that creates safe connected spaces for pollinators.

Community members who are not officially participating in the pilot are welcome to purchase seeds and grow seedlings to provide for fall planting or to use in their own yards. A list of suitable plants is provided at [BeeBoulder.org](#).

MORE INFORMATION

Rella Abernathy
AbernathyR@BoulderColorado.gov



Deryn Davidson
ddavidson@bouldercounty.org



Amy Yarger
ayarger@butterflies.org



Tim Beal
bealt@boulderhousing.org



THE MISSION

Habitat destruction and fragmentation are significant factors contributing to the world-wide biodiversity and climate crises. We need to act urgently to not only protect pollinators, but also expand the native plant habitat the pollinators rely on for food and reproduction. The cost of native plants is one of the biggest obstacles to revegetating large areas of land. We need hundreds of thousands of plants to create large areas of connected pollinator habitat within the city. This program is piloting a replicable, low cost way to grow plants from seed and then plant the seedlings in pollinator districts. Our goal is to establish pollinator habitat corridors throughout the city.

OBJECTIVES

- Recruit and support a minimum of 100 older adult volunteers to plant seed and grow pollinator seedlings;
- Recruit and train 20 – 30 expert mentors to support the volunteers;
- Grow 3,000 – 4,000 native plant seedlings to be planted by community volunteers in the fall during Boulder Pollinator Appreciation Month;
- Seek funding and volunteers to expand the program and install more pollinator habitat in the spring of 2021;
- Create a replicable and expandable curriculum, planting, and implementation system that can be expanded locally and inspire similar efforts in other communities
- Recruit other organizations and community groups to join the program during the summer and to participate in fall plantings.

PILOT TIMEFRAME

The initiative will launch in June 2020 with the distribution of growing kits to older adult volunteers, including initial training and set up. Seedlings will be planted by community volunteers in the fall of 2020.

Health and safety of our volunteers is our highest priority. The majority of communication will be through phone or video meetings. While delivering materials or organizing planting events, we will ensure that public health guidelines (e.g., social distancing, using face coverings) are being followed by program participants and volunteers as appropriate.