

Challenge 3: Native Plant Network - Pollinator Gardens

YOUR CHALLENGE:

Join Fairchild's Native Plant Network – the local citizen science program that mobilizes South Florida residents and students to preserve and restore South Florida's native ecosystems! This year, give your schoolyard an ecological boost by planting native pollinator plants that increase biodiversity, support plant reproduction, and provide essential food and habitat for vital pollinators at your school. Those that participated in last year's middle school garden challenge can add these plants into their existing garden or can plant them in a different location.

Fairchild will provide you with bags of mulch and a set of medium-sized native plants to care for throughout the school year while you research the ecological benefits of local native pollinator plants. You will receive nectar plants to feed pollinators and host plants for butterflies to lay their eggs. Take what you learn while tending these plants and put together a student-led guided tour that shares your experience and explain why pollinator plants are important additions to the schoolyards of South Florida. Then, in Spring 2026, Fairchild staff will visit your school to tour your native pollinator plant garden and hear what you've learned through your guided tour.

POINT SYSTEM:

Maximum Points	<p>200 points per submission</p> <p><u>1 submission per school</u></p> <p>= 200 max points</p>
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You must register to participate in this Challenge by September 12, 2025



Important Dates:


Register to participate by:
September 12, 2025

Optional Virtual Teacher Workshop:
September 17, 2025 from 5:30-6:30pm

Plant and Mulch pick up at Fairchild:
Saturday and Sunday,
October 11-12, 2025 from 9am-5pm
**Plants will be 12-36" in size at pickup
and you will receive 3 bags of mulch
(please plan accordingly)*

**Schedule your Garden's Judging Visit by
submitting Digital Entry Form by:**
January 30, 2025

Native Plant Garden Judging:
March 2-13, 2026

 Digital Entry Form for each submission required

Participants per submission:
Individual or Student Group

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✓	SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:
	Optional Virtual Teacher Workshop (highly recommended) with Fairchild's Native Plant Network facilitators on September 17, 2025 from 5:30-6:30pm
	Plant and material pick up week – at Fairchild October 11-12, 2025 from 9am-5pm
	On-site student presentation describing your experience planting and maintaining your pollinator garden. Your students' presentation should also describe the long term and short term ecological, economic, and social benefits of adding these pollinator plants to your school.
	Mandatory Digital Entry Form. Form is required for scheduling your garden visit. The Fairchild Challenge team will reach out only to teachers who have completed this form to set up their school's judging visit.
	<i>One submission per school.</i>
	<i>On-time entry form submission. Late submissions will NOT be accepted due to scheduling needs for judging.</i>

For more detailed information and resources, please visit the **Middle School Challenge 3 webpage**.



You can also check out Fairchild's **Native Plant Network website** here.



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Prior Knowledge:

To be successful, students should be familiar with these concepts:

- How to conduct effective research on a topic, drawing from reliable sources.
- All living things require the resources of space, food, and water.
- Different plants have different adaptations which help them survive in their respective ecosystems.
- Some types of plants require pollination to reproduce.
- Plants and animals interact

Standards/Learning Targets:

Subject	Strand	Standard(s)
Science	Earth Systems and Patterns	SC.6.E.7.8 - Describe ways human beings protect themselves from hazardous weather and sun exposure.
	Interdependence	SC.7.L.17.2 - Compare and contrast the relationships among organisms such as mutualism, predation, parasitism, competition, and commensalism.
	Science and Society	SC.7.E.6.6 - Identify the impact that humans have had on Earth, such as deforestation, urbanization, desertification, erosion, air and water quality, changing the flow of water.
English Language Arts (B.E.S.T.)	Communication	ELA.7.C.4.1 - Conduct research to answer a question, drawing on multiple reliable and valid sources, and generating additional questions for further research.
		ELA.6.C.2.1 - Present information orally, in a logical sequence, using nonverbal cues, appropriate volume, clear pronunciation, and appropriate pacing.
Visual Arts	Skills, Techniques, and Processes	VA.68.S.1.1 - Manipulate content, media, techniques, and processes to achieve communication with artistic intent.

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Learning Goals/Objectives:

By the end of this Challenge, students will be able to:

Identify at least one type of plant native to South Florida.

Describe how native pollinator plants are vital to the health of local ecosystems.

Recognize mutualistic interactions between plants and animals.

Communicate at least one ecological, economic, or social benefit of adding native pollinator plants to an urban area.

Differentiation:

ESOL students are allowed to complete this assignment in their first language. If students would like to present their garden in a language other than English, please contact the Challenge Team at challenge@fairchildgarden.org so appropriate judges can be arranged.

We strive to be inclusive of all students' learning needs. If you have questions about specific accommodations, please email us at challenge@fairchildgarden.org.

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