



# **Pollinator Gardens**

## **2025**

# The Power of Pollinator Gardens

## KEYSTONE SPECIES

Pollinators are keystone species within our ecosystem—meaning that other species depend on them for the essential role they perform.

Native plants provide food and nesting sites for pollinators, but this relationship is not one-sided. Pollination increases genetic diversity within a plant species. The more diverse a plant's genes, the more likely they are to survive and reproduce under "stressful" conditions like drought or disease.

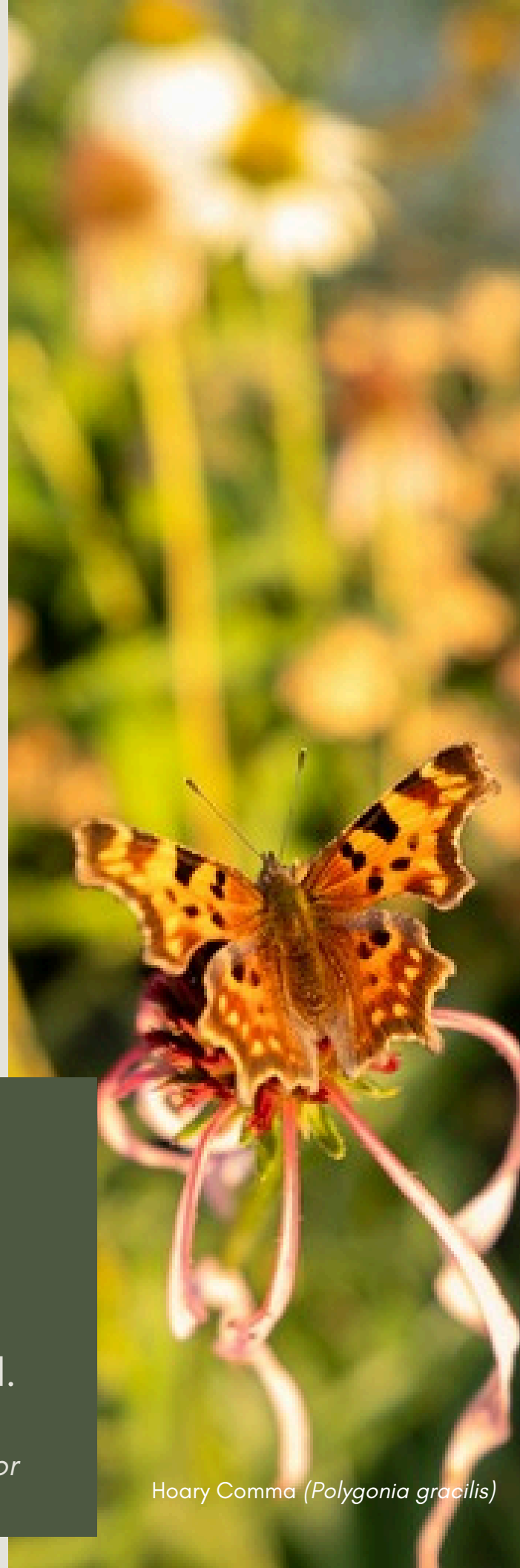
## INSPIRATION

With the intent to inspire at the core of our work, planting free, community-oriented pollinator gardens is key to ensuring that both residents and visitors alike are inspired by their surroundings during daily activities like going for a hike, attending book club at the community center, or dropping off their kids at daycare.

At Grow Wild, we create native pollinator gardens to support wildlife, strengthen local ecosystems, and connect our community with the natural world.

*—Jen Mohler, Executive Director*

Hoary Comma (*Polytonia gracilis*)



# Moose Pair Pollinator Garden



Over a year after planting, the Moose Pair Pollinator Garden is bursting with a rainbow of 17 wildflower species and buzzing with native pollinators.

Despite a few trampled plants around the base of the moose, these plants absolutely took off and have been growing faster than we ever expected!

Located at Ousel Falls Trailhead, a popular and highly trafficked public trail, our garden reaches an abundance of recreators.

- More than 200 recreators daily during peak summer months
- 25-30,000 recreators annually





# Community Engagement



## Outreach Materials

Our Pollinator Planting Guide and RAC cards have been taken all over southwest Montana, educating and inspiring future pollinator gardens. These resources are also available for free on our website.



## Community Events

We featured the garden during this year's Wildflowers & Weeds Walk during our Big Sky Wildflower Festival. Hikers toured the garden and then explored the diverse flora along Ousel Falls. Our partners on this project, the Gallatin Conservation District joined us and added their own expertise to the walk!



## Volunteer Opportunities

The garden has been flourishing but a little wear and tear is to be expected. To curb excited visitors and hungry wildlife, volunteers installed a protective rope around the moose sculpture and replaced plants that didn't fare well the first round with 28 more native wildflowers.

# Pollinator Garden at Morningstar Learning Center



**"Grow Wild's team built our pollinator garden from the ground up — supplying native plants, mulch, and expertise. Their work inspired curiosity and education about native plants and pollinators among our students and families, while beautifying our campus and creating a warm, welcoming entrance for everyone."**

*-Emily Reiersen, Morningstar Board Member*



On a balmy July 1<sup>st</sup>, we joined three volunteers to build and plant 128 native wildflowers at Morningstar Learning Center—an early education childcare nonprofit serving Big Sky. We started by digging out grass and placing rocks gathered by a MLC parent and volunteer. Just like the Moose Pair Pollinator Garden, this project came together in just one day! With the addition of the final plant, MLC's students arrived in full force with inquisitive minds and helping hands ready to take turns with the watering can.

We're excited to see these wildflowers flourish and grow alongside Big Sky's youth—providing opportunities for hands-on and explorative learning all the while providing habitat for native pollinators.



# BASE Planter

Two years in, the native planter outside BASE Community & Recreation Center in Big Sky is thriving. This small but mighty native garden showcases native wildflowers at the entrance to this well-loved community center.

Our temporary signage educates visitors on the purpose of the planter and directs them to our website for additional learning opportunities. We are pursuing permanent educational signage capable of withstanding Montana's harsh winters.

Plant labels are tucked beside their corresponding plant to give viewers a fuller picture of the diversity of species represented and inspire them to add a few species to their own gardens.

## Partners that made this garden possible:







# Looking Ahead...

Our plans for a Pollinator Pathway in partnership with the Arts Council of Big Sky are in progress as are more community projects! Coming Spring 2026, in partnership with Big Sky Community Organization, we'll be installing two native planters around Len Hill Park—the site of community events like Music in the Mountains and Big Sky Community Week. We're excited to see even more pockets of pollinator-friendly plantings around Big Sky supporting wildlife, strengthening local ecosystems, and connecting our community with the natural world.

