

Native Container Garden Party

A project from Homegrown National Park®

What to know

A Native Container Garden Party is a hands-on community activity where participants plant a native container garden to take home. It's a low-cost, beginner-friendly way to bring native plants to apartment dwellers, beginners, and anyone without a yard — proof that you don't need land to support wildlife where you live.

Season

Spring, Fall

For

Communities, Teams, Families, Schools

Event Duration

1+ hour

Instructions

Step 1 | Choose the Date & Time

Container planting works best in spring and early summer, right after your region's last frost. You can still plant into fall, but interest is highest early in the season, so aim for a spring or early summer date if you can. Choose a weekend or weeknight time that's accessible to your community.

Step 2 | Secure a Location & Consider a Sponsor

Some location options include a community center, library room, apartment courtyard, farmers market, church, or garden club building.

💡 Consider asking whether a local group can co-host or sponsor the event, such as a nursery, garden club, native plant society, or community organization. Sponsors may help with space, promotion, or materials.

💡 If you don't have a sponsor, consider a suggested donation or charging a flat fee per person to help cover material costs (containers, soil, and plants are typically the biggest expense). See full materials list below. Alternatively, you can ask participants to bring their own container if they want.

 Collect recycled materials ahead of time. For containers people aren't using anymore, you can provide materials for folks to make the container look pretty. Remember to ensure every container has draining holes.

Step 3 | Determine Group Size & Registration

Decide how many people you can support based on your space and materials cost. Setting up a simple sign-up form, Eventbrite, or Facebook Event are good options.

Step 4 | Choose Your Plants

A key part of planning is choosing 3–5 native plants that do well in containers. Look for plants that:

- Support pollinators and birds
- Stay a manageable size in a pot
- Suit your region's sun and moisture conditions
- Many native plant nurseries sell plug or small-pot sizes well suited to containers.

Source through:

- A local native plant society or Wild Ones chapter
- A community plant swap or giveaway
- Your favorite native plant nursery

You can learn the most ecologically productive plants for your ecoregion using the HNP Keystone Plant Tool: <https://homegrownnationalpark.org/keystone-plants/>

Step 5 | Promote the Event

Some methods for advertising:

- Email announcement
- Facebook Event
- Flyer for local sharing

Optional: Encourage participants to bring a friend.

Here is a general description to help you begin your advertising:

Native Container Gardens

Join us for a hands-on workshop and plant a native container garden to take home. No yard? No problem — this is a simple way to support pollinators and birds right on your patio, balcony, or windowsill. All materials are provided, and beginners are welcome!

Below is our recommended timeline:

Social media

Post 1–2 weeks before your event (include photos, the film trailer, or graphics)
Create a Facebook event and invite your network
Tag local groups, organizations, or influencers

Email

Send a save-the-date, a reminder 1-2 weeks before, and a final reminder the day before

Flyers

Hang them at libraries, cafés, schools, and community centers

Partnerships

Ask local nurseries, conservation groups, or schools to co-host or spread the word

Event Day

Step 6 | Set Up the Space

Arrange tables in a circle or U shape so everyone can see the demonstration.

Prepare a plant table with clearly marked categories, such as:

- Spring Bloom, Fall Bloom, Summer Bloom
- Shade Tolerant, Sun loving, Attracts Butterflies

Set out a pre-planted container to show the finished example.

Optional: Offer simple snacks or drinks.

Optional: Play Doug Tallamy's short video "What's the Rush?" before planting. (You'll need to set up audio and video ahead of time.)

Step 7 | Demonstrate the Container Planting Steps

Show participants how to plant their first container:

1. Fill the container with potting soil, leaving space at the top.
2. Arrange plants in the container (taller plants toward the back or center, low spillers near the edge).
3. Settle plants into the soil and firm gently around the roots.
4. Water thoroughly.
5. Label the container so participants remember what they planted.

Guide everyone through their first container together, then let participants continue at their own pace.

Step 8 | Wrap Up & Send Participants Home with Their Containers

Remind people to:

- Place their container where it gets the right light for their plants
- Water regularly until plants are established

Encourage participants to add their new native plants on the [HNP Biodiversity Map](#).

 Instead of printing out a ton of take-home papers, send your attendees a follow-up email with materials included. If you don't want to collect emails, have them scan a QR code to the materials, and they can choose what to print.

Step 9 | Report Back and Help Us Improve!

Sharing your attendance numbers and event details is crucial. Your input directly helps us measure our collective impact and improve our resources. Did you do something special? We would love to see your marketing materials, photos, and hear about unique details to feature and incorporate for future events! [Contribute Your Feedback Here](#)

Keep in Mind

- Create a welcoming, inclusive atmosphere for all ages and abilities.
- Encourage participation and conversation.
- Take photos (avoid peoples faces unless permission has been given).
- Participants may have questions about at home care.

Materials

(Complete supply checklist)

- ☐ Name tags and markers/pens
 -  Laminated name tags and whiteboard markers
- ☐ Containers (one per participant, 5–10+ inches)
 -  Collect recycled containers or encourage participants to bring one they already have
- ☐ Potting soil
- ☐ Trowels, scoopers, or cups for soil
- ☐ Native plants (see recommended resources above)
- ☐ Wooden or plastic plant labels
- ☐ Watering cans or a water source on site
- ☐ Pre-planted demo container
- ☐ Signage by plant type (sun/shade/pollinator)
- ☐ Tables or a working space
- ☐ Chairs (optional)
- ☐ Apron (optional)
- ☐ [HNP flyers/brochures](#)
- ☐ Books/printed references
- ☐ A handout with some of your favorite resources: Homegrown National Park links, local native plant sellers, your closest Wild Ones chapter, state/local Native Plant Society, conservation groups, any co-hosting organizations
 -  Single laminated copy with a QR code or follow-up email instead of printing

Related HNP Activities

- [Native Plant/Seed Library](#) - Donate extra plants, or get plants from an overflowing library
- [Winter Seed Sowing Party](#) - Planting all plugs from seed the winter prior
- [Seed/Plant Giveaway or Swap](#) - Donate extra plants, or get plants from an overstocked event

Examples

