

UMass Clean Energy Extension's Pollinator-Friendly Certification Program for Solar PV Arrays

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Why promote pollinator-friendly solar?

- **It's good for native wildlife and plants:** Native flowering herbs and shrubs provide habitat and food to pollinators and other wildlife species.
- **It's more attractive:** Wildflower meadows and vegetation screens of native shrubs are aesthetically appealing.
- **It's cost-effective:** Native plantings require lower long-term maintenance costs.

Development of Certification Criteria for Massachusetts

Massachusetts Certification Criteria

ESTABLISHMENT

- Establishment and maintenance plan
- Seed mix not pre-treated with insecticide or fungicide
- Amount of seed to be planted based on seed providers' recommendation
- Diversity of species, bloom times
- Seed mixes no more than 25% grasses and sedges
- Trim zone plantings include significant % of flowering plants
- Vegetation screen, if present, includes only native species
- Specialist bee forage plants, host plants for rare butterflies and moths
- Fencing gaps to allow wildlife passage
- *Other considerations: bee nesting habitat; perennial water source; educational signage; habitat for rare wildlife species, bird boxes*

MAINTENANCE

- Mowing no more than once per year, before May 1 or after October 1 (AFTER SITE ESTABLISHMENT)
- During establishment period (first 3-5 years), have botanist flag invasive plants for removal.
- Limit vegetation clearing in trim zone.
- Spot treatment of invasive species with herbicide or weed-whacker is acceptable where needed.
- No insecticide or fungicide use.
- Submit annual request for exclusion from spraying for mosquitoes.
- Maintain log of annual mowing and any other vegetation management activities occurring on site.

Certification Program Components

Certification & Re-Certification Process

So far in 2020...

April 2020 – updated SMART regulation

Solar incentive adder (\$/kWh) for pollinator-friendly certification

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/225-cmr-2000-final-071020-clean/download>

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Expected updates for 2021