USDA

United States Department of Agriculture

BE A FRIEND TO POLLINATORS

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

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Three-fourths of the world's flowering plants depend on pollinators to reproduce. Most fruit, vegetable, and seed crops—and other plants that provide fiber, medicines, and fuel—are pollinated by animals. Some scientists estimate that one out of every three bites of food we eat exists because of animal pollinators like bees, butterflies and moths, birds and bats, and beetles and other insects.

Animal Pollination

Pollinators visit flowers in their search for food (nectar and pollen). During a flower visit, a pollinator may accidentally brush against the flower's reproductive parts, unknowingly depositing pollen from a different flower. The plant then uses the pollen to produce a fruit or seed. Many plants cannot reproduce without pollen carried to them by foraging pollinators.

Did You Know?

A world without pollinators would be a world without apples, blueberries, strawberries, chocolate, almonds, melons, peaches, or pumpkins.

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Pollinators Are in Trouble

Bees, bats, and other animal pollinators face many challenges in the modern world. Habitat loss, disease, parasites, and environmental contaminants have all contributed to the decline of many species of pollinators.

You Can Help!

Provide food and habitat for pollinators to help them thrive.

- Use pollinator-friendly plants in your landscape. Shrubs and trees such as dogwood, blueberry, cherry, plum, willow, and poplar provide pollen or nectar, or both, early in spring when food is scarce.

- Choose a mixture of plants for spring, summer, and fall. Different flower colors, shapes, and scents will attract a wide variety of pollinators.

- Reduce or eliminate pesticide use in your landscape, or incorporate plants that attract beneficial insects for pest control. If you use pesticides, use them sparingly and responsibly.

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- Accept some plant damage on plants meant to provide habitat for butterfly and moth larvae.

- Provide clean water for pollinators with a shallow dish, bowl, or birdbath with half-submerged stones for perches.

- Leave dead tree trunks in your landscape for wood-nesting bees and beetles.

- Support land conservation in your community by helping to create and maintain community gardens and green spaces to ensure that pollinators have appropriate habitat.

- Learn more online or contact your local Cooperative Extension Service office (**www.nifa.usda.gov/Extension/index.html**) or U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service office (**www.nrcs.usda.gov**) for information about selecting plants for particular pollinator

Did You Know?

The honey bee alone contributes to the production of many billions of dollars worth of crops in America every year.

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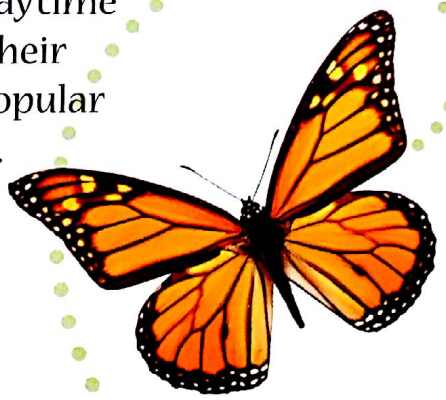
TYPES OF POLLINATORS

Bees

Bees are the main pollinators for fruits and vegetables. There are over 4,000 species of bees native to North America. They nest underground, in twigs and debris, or in dead trees.

Butterflies & Moths

Nectar-seeking butterflies are daytime garden visitors, and moths are their nocturnal counterpart. These popular creatures pollinate many plants.



Birds & Bats

Hummingbirds are the most common avian pollinators in the continental United States.

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Hummingbirds are the most common avian pollinators in the continental United States. These tiny wonders prefer tubular flowers in bright, warm colors—especially red. Two species of bat are major pollinators in the Southwest.

Beetles & Other Insects

There are many thousands of beetle species—in fact, 40 percent of all insects are beetles! Flies and other insects are common flower visitors and pollinators.

Did You Know?

Midges are small flies. Two species of midge are the only known pollinators of cacao trees, which produce the beans from which chocolate is made.

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