

# Pollinators

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Pollinators are responsible for assisting over 80% of the world's flowering plants. Without them we wouldn't have much to eat or look at. Animals that assist plants in their reproduction include species of bats, butterflies, moths, flies, birds, beetles, ants and bees.

Pollinators are key to reproduction of wild plants in our fragmented global landscape. Without them, existing populations of plants would decline, even if soil, air, nutrients and other life-sustaining elements were available.

Flowering plants help to purify water and prevent erosion through roots that hold the soil in place and foliage that buffers the impact of rain as it falls to the earth. The water cycle depends on plants to return moisture to the atmosphere, and plants depend on pollinators to help them reproduce.

## Gardening for Pollinators

- Use a variety of plants that bloom from early spring into late fall. Help pollinators find them by planting in clumps, rather than single plants. Include native plants and don't forget night blooming flowers for the moths and bats.
- Eliminate pesticides!
- Grow plants for your caterpillars. They WILL eat them, so place them where unsightly leaf damage can be tolerated. With your help, these caterpillars will turn into beautiful butterflies!
- Create a damp salt lick for butterflies and bees. Use a dripping hose or drip irrigation line to create a damp area. Mix a bit of sea salt or wood ashes into the mud.
- Avoid modern hybrid flowers, especially those with "doubled" flowers because they often have been bred to eliminate the pollen and fragrance that attracts the pollinators.
- Add hummingbird feeders and bat houses to your landscape.
- Butterflies need resources such as rotting fruits. Try putting out slices or overripe bananas, oranges and other fruits to attract them.

Create a pollinator-friendly landscape around your home and enjoy watching these creatures that work hard to help provide us with the air we breath, the water we drink and the food we eat!

### Fun Facts!

- In the Middle Ages, honey was believed to promote the birth of a male child, which was considered lucky as a first-born. On their wedding day, the father of the groom would give the couple enough honey to last a month (a moon), assuring that the child conceived during the first days of marriage was a boy - **HONEY MOON!**
- More than half of the world's diet of fats and oils come from animal-pollinated plants (oil palm, canola, sunflowers, etc.)
- More than 150 food crops in the U.S. depend on pollinators.