



Pollinator Quick Guide: What You Can Do to Help Pollinators

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Agriculture and Natural Resources

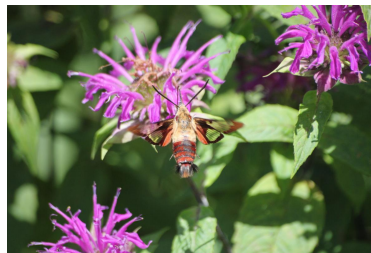
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Important pollinators, such as honey bees, bumble bees and monarch butterflies, have gained attention in recent years due to concerns about declining populations. This Quick Guide describes steps gardeners and others can take to help protect pollinators.



Honey bee on purple coneflower.



Hummingbird moth on monarda.



Honey bee on butterfly weed.

Key animal pollinators in Ohio include honey bees, native bees, flies, butterflies, moths and other insects, as well as hummingbirds. Pollinators are vital to the production of many food crops and provide a service essential to the survival of many native plants. Bees are considered the most important pollinators because they are uniquely adapted to gather and transport pollen. Ohio is home to about 500 species of bees.

Threats to Pollinators

Pollinators are facing many threats, such as lack of flowers for food (forage) and suitable nesting and overwintering sites. Other threats include viral and fungal pathogens, pesticides, invasive plants, pests such as the varroa mite (specific to honey bees), and climate change.

Gardening for Pollinators

Gardeners can play an important role in pollinator conservation by providing plants and nesting sites for pollinators and by adapting gardening practices to protect pollinators.

Plant Tips

- Grow more flowers, particularly those that are preferred by pollinators. Some hybrids and modern cultivars are not visited by pollinators or don't provide enough or the right kind of pollen and nectar. Observe plants and include more pollinator favorites, including Ohio native plants.

- Select flowers with a variety of colors, shapes and sizes to attract many different pollinators.
- Group plants together in clumps to help pollinators find their food.
- To provide a consistent source of nectar and pollen for an assortment of pollinator species, select a sequence of plants that bloom from early spring through fall.
- Pollinators and the plants they visit usually thrive in full sun. Shade gardeners can plant redbud, spicebush, hosta or jewelweed to attract pollinators.
- Many plants frequently considered weeds provide important food for pollinators, including dandelions, milkweed, goldenrod and clover. Consider tolerating these weeds.



Native mountain mint (center) is a favorite nectar source of many pollinators.

Habitat Tips

- Brush piles, dead standing trees, bare soil and clumping grasses all provide important nesting and overwintering habitat for bees and butterflies.
- Provide a water source, such as a shallow dish or a birdbath filled with stones or sticks, to allow visitors to land without drowning.
- In gardens and conservation areas, avoid the use of pesticides on plants visited by pollinators, including flowering plants and caterpillar host plants. Use an integrated pest management (IPM) approach to reduce pest pressure.

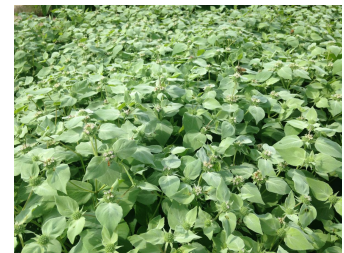
Key Plants for Pollinators



Fall-blooming aster



Wild bergamot



Mountain mint

- Trees: maple, crabapple, linden, serviceberry, willow
- Shrubs: hydrangea, ninebark, pussy willow, sumac, viburnum
- Perennials: aster, bee balm, hyssop, milkweed, purple coneflower
- Annuals: cosmos, lantana, marigold, sunflower, zinnia
- Herbs: basil, borage, catmint, lavender, oregano

Resources to Learn More

- Pollinator Partnership: pollinator.org
- The Ohio State University Bee Lab: beelab.osu.edu

- Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation: xerces.org

All photos by Denise Ellsworth.

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