
Quick Facts

What is pollination? What are pollinators?

Pollination is the movement of pollen within a flower or from one flower to another by animals, the wind, or water. This transfer of pollen in and among flowers leads to fertilization and successful seed and fruit production for the plant, enabling the species to survive and persist over many generations.

Pollinators are the animals that pollinate over 90% of all flowering plants, and primarily include bees, flies, butterflies, moths, and other insects, although birds, bats, and other animals can also be pollinators. Together they are an indispensable natural resource, and their daily work is essential for over a billion dollars of apples, pears, cucumbers, melons, berries, and many other kinds of Canadian farm produce.

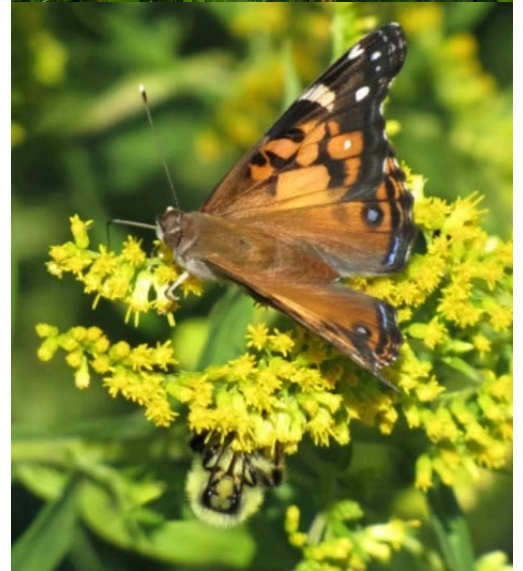
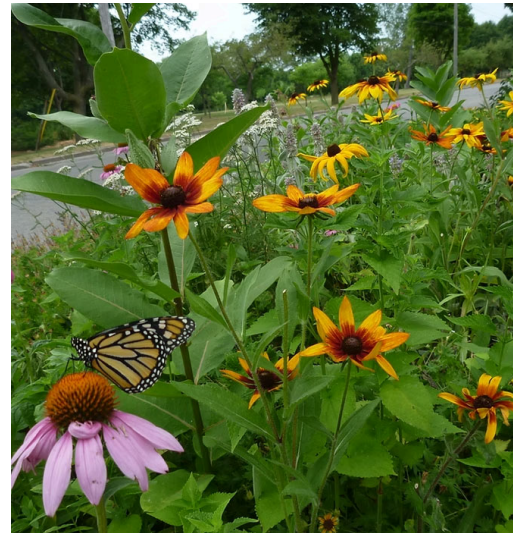
Why is there concern about pollinators?

These beneficial insects are under pressure from loss of habitat, loss of food sources, disease, and pesticides. Studies have shown that several pollinator populations have drastically declined.

For example, in Canada, one species of bumble bee is thought to have become extinct while four other bee species are known to be in rapid decline, butterfly species richness has declined by as much as 37% in some places, and beekeepers are dealing with high honeybee losses. As insect populations are threatened, so are fruit and vegetable production, and the wild ecosystems that depend on the actions of pollinators. As important as pollinators are to agriculture and ecosystem health, surprisingly little is known about their status, or how to reverse their decline.

What can I do?

- Make your garden and property pollinator friendly by planting native plants that provide food, nesting, or overwintering habitat for all life stages of bees, flies, butterflies, and other pollinators.
- Design your garden so that there is a continuous succession of plants flowering from spring through fall.
- Avoid pesticides. Be cautious of natural controls as they can also kill non-target insects. Use any controls at night when most pollinators aren't active.
- Support non-profit groups like Pollination Guelph that are working to keep pollinator populations healthy while educating the public.
- Work with your neighbourhood group or municipality to establish pollinator habitat.



Did you know?

- One out of every three mouthful of food we eat, and of the beverages we drink, is delivered to us by pollinators.
- Pollinators, through their interactions with plants, help to produce fruits, nuts, and seeds, which are a critical part of many animals' diets.
- Approximately 1,000 of the estimated 1,330 global crop plants cultivated for food, beverages, fibers, condiments, spices and medicines are pollinated by animals.
- A few examples of foods and beverages produced with the help of pollinators include: almonds, apples, bananas, blueberries, chocolate, coffee, melons, peaches, pumpkins, strawberries, and tomatoes.
- Bees may fly over 11km/h and beat their wings 190 times per second.
- Honeybees are the most important managed pollinator in Canada, but they are not native, unlike more than 800 other species of bees which are native.
- One pound of white clover honey represents about 17,330 foraging trips by honeybees to about 8.7 million flowers! That's 7,221 hours of bee labour!

