

POLLINATORS NEED OUR HELP!

Pollinators are a necessary part of our ecosystem. Pollinators are responsible for fertilizing many of our food crops. Without them, many food crops would no longer exist.

A pollinator is a bee, moth, butterfly or other insect, a bird, a bat or other animal that moves pollen from the male anthers to the female stigma of flowering plants. In Iowa, 300 to 400 species of native bees, 110 species of butterflies, and over 2,000 species of moths serve as pollinators.¹ The wind can also serve as a pollinator.

Once pollinated, the plant can produce fruits, vegetables and seeds.

In the United States, managed honeybee colonies have experienced significant losses of bees. Other pollinators are also in decline. The exact causes have not been identified, but many causes are suspected.

Pollinators are in decline for many reasons, including:

- the loss of diversity of flowering plants
- the loss of native habitat due to expanding urban areas and monoculture farming of soybeans and corn
- widespread use of pesticides which also kill beneficial insects such as pollinators
- climate change and changing weather patterns
- disease and parasites



Photo credit USDA NRCS, Stephen Kirkpatrick

You can help by:

- planting a variety of native plants in your yards and gardens
- reducing the use of pesticides on your lawn
- following application guidelines for the pesticide and treating only when necessary
- consider planting an organic lawn that does not use artificial fertilizers and pesticides
- purchasing organically grown foods, that are produced without the use of pesticides and artificial fertilizers

Bring Back the Pollinators

¹ "Did you know?", *Iowa Outdoors*, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Spring, 2020, Page 61