

The Buzz About Backyard Pollinators



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Backyard Pollinators

- ▶ Who (Which pollinators) might inhabit your back yard?
- ▶ What are they looking for?
- ▶ When do I add pollinator attractants?
- ▶ Where should I place essential elements?
- ▶ How do I attract the pollinators?

Backyard Pollinators

Pollinators are important to our environment, providing essential services for backyard fruit and vegetable production, as well as more than two-thirds of the world's crop species.

Gardener's can help conserve pollinators by planting host, nectar or attracting plants, providing nesting habitat, protecting pollinators from pesticides, and even trying their hand at urban beekeeping.

Who?

Which pollinators might inhabit my garden?



- ▶ Insects: Bees, wasps, ants, flies & others

- ▶ Butterflies & Moths



- ▶ Animals: Birds, bats, humans & others



Backyard Pollinators

- ▶ Any or all of these pollinators may inhabit your back yard, and may provide far more to your garden than just pollination (although personally I could do without the mice).
- ▶ Many of the pollinating insects are considered beneficial and help you in battling garden pests. Bats eat mosquitoes. Birds provide song and enjoyment.



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Good Bugs Rule!

GOOD BUGS (Beneficials)



Ladybug



Praying Mantis



Predatory Nematode



Spider Mite Predator



Whitefly Parasite



Whitefly Predator



Thrip Predator Mite



Pirate Bug

Praying Mantis





What?

What are pollinators looking for in backyards?

- ▶ Pollinators are looking for what most living things look for: food, water, shelter, space
- ▶ Provide both nectar and host plants
- ▶ Provide shallow water sites
- ▶ Provide nesting/sheltering/resting areas
- ▶ Avoid or limit pesticide use

When?

When do I add pollinator attractants?

- ▶ Ideally, the food, water, shelter and space that pollinators are attracted to should be visible and accessible in your garden year 'round. Not all pollinators will be active in the winter - many are not; however, one example is leaving seed-bearing perennial plants up all winter for food. You can cut the plants back in early March before new growth appears.



Where?

Where should I place essential elements?

- ▶ This is a difficult question to answer without saying “everywhere”. Having a mixture of micro-climates and habitats in even a small back yard is the best. Some pollinators, like bees, prefer sunny areas with little wind. Others prefer shade. So try to have both.
- ▶ Several spots around the garden where pollinators can access water is great. Having at least one birdbath is important.
- ▶ Providing both ground nesting sites and a variety of shrubs and trees for pollinators who nest higher up is ideal.

How?

How do I attract pollinators to my back yard?

Again, attract pollinators by providing what they need to survive and thrive in your garden:

- ▶ Provide both nectar and host plants
- ▶ Provide shallow water sites
- ▶ Provide nesting/sheltering/resting areas
- ▶ Avoid or limit pesticide use

Host & Nectar Plants

- ▶ Choose plants that flower at different times of the year to provide nectar and pollen sources throughout the growing season. This also has the added bonus of your garden being visually pleasing throughout the year.
- ▶ Plant in clumps, rather than single plants, to better attract pollinators. This is also a garden designer's mantra - massing rather than onesies and twosies.
- ▶ Provide a variety of flower colors and shapes to attract different pollinators.

Host & Nectar Plants

- ▶ Whenever possible, choose native plants. Native plants will attract more native pollinators and can serve as larval host plants for some species of pollinators. Check field guides to find out which plants the larval stage of local butterflies eat.
- ▶ For example, if monarch butterflies are a desired pollinator in your back yard, plant milkweed (*Asclepias*) so their caterpillars have food. Many *Asclepias* species are native to Ohio.

Host Plants

Host plants are those plants that pollinator insects will lay their eggs on.

- ▶ Milkweed (*Asclepias* spp.)
- ▶ Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*)
- ▶ Turtlehead (*Chelone glabra*)
- ▶ Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*)
- ▶ Dogwood (*Cornus* spp.)
- ▶ Tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)
- ▶ Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*)
- ▶ Asters (*Aster* spp.)



Host Plants

- ▶ Violets (*Viola* spp.)
- ▶ Cabbage Family plants (*Brassica* spp.)
- ▶ Willows (*Salix* spp.)
- ▶ Viburnums (*Viburnum* spp.)
- ▶ Ash (*Fraxinus* spp.)
- ▶ Hops (*Humulus lupulus*)
- ▶ Hollyhocks (*Alcea* spp.)
- ▶ Clovers (*Trifolium* spp.)
- ▶ Lupines (*Lupinus* spp.)
- ▶ Grasses - many species



Nectar Plants

These are plants on which pollinator insects feed

- ▶ Milkweed (*Asclepias* spp.)
- ▶ Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia* spp.)
- ▶ Aster (*Aster* spp.)
- ▶ Beebalm (*Monarda* spp.)
- ▶ Blazing star (*Liatris* spp.)
- ▶ Cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)
- ▶ Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*)
- ▶ Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*)
- ▶ Joe Pye-weed (*Eupatorium* spp.)
- ▶ Ironweed (*Vernonia noveboracensis*)
- ▶ Goldenrod (*Solidago* spp.)
- ▶ Lupines (*Lupinus* spp.)



Nectar Plants

- ▶ Butterflybush (*Buddleia davidii*)
- ▶ Coneflowers (*Echinacea* spp.)
- ▶ Yarrows (*Achillea* spp.)
- ▶ Phlox (*Phlox* spp.)
- ▶ Mints (*Mentha* spp.)
- ▶ Perennial Geraniums (*Geranium* spp.)
- ▶ Goat's Beard (*Aruncus dioicus*)
- ▶ Onion Family plants (*Allium* spp.)
- ▶ Sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*)
- ▶ Tickseed (*Coreopsis* spp.)





Sources

- ▶ North American Butterfly Association
973.285.0907

- ▶ Association For Butterflies
<http://www.forbutterflies.org/>



- ▶ Attracting Pollinators to the Garden - Denise Ellsworth
https://u.osu.edu/beelab/files/2015/02/ENT_47_14_jan30-s4vma2.pdf

- ▶ Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens

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