

Islam and Pollinators

Helping Pollinators Through Faith



Photo Leah Lewis

From the beginning of time

When Allah laid out his grand design, it was

MADE FOR YOU THE EARTH A RESTING PLACE, AND THE HEAVEN AN EDIFICE FOR PROTECTION, AND CAUSED WATER TO POUR DOWN FROM THE CLOUDS. THEN HE BROUGHT YOU FORTH THEREWITH A GREAT VARIETY OF FRUIT FOR YOUR SUSTENANCE (AL-BAQARAH 3:22).

Along with the bounty of food and medicine that grew from the Earth he created, Allah also bestowed a host of living things to tend the growth and propagation of good plants. In other words, he gave us the gift of specialized species known as pollinators.

Pollination happens when pollen is carried to flowers by wind, water, or pollinating animals such as birds, bees, bats, butterflies, moths, and beetles.

Are pollinators in trouble?

Worldwide there is disturbing evidence that pollinating animals have suffered from disease, parasites, pesticides, loss of habitat, and competition from non-native plant and animal species.

- The U.S. has lost over 50 percent of its managed honeybee colonies over the past 20 years.
- Many pollinators are federally listed species, meaning that there is evidence of their disappearance in natural areas.



Prepared by the Faith Task Force of the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign (NAPPC)



NAPPC

POLLINATOR PARTNERSHIP



Why should our congregation care about pollinators?

Pollinators bring us nearly one of every three bites of food we eat and are vital in the procreation of nearly 80 percent of the flowering plants on the planet. Worldwide, roughly 1,000 of the 1,200 plant species grown for food, beverages, fibers, spices, and medicines need to be pollinated by animals. These foods include apples, blueberries, chocolate, coffee, melons, peaches, pumpkins, vanilla, and almonds. In fact, in the U.S., pollination by honey bees, native bees, and other insects produces \$40 billion worth of products annually.

There is an entire chapter of the Qur'an that bears the name of a pollinator—Al-Nahal, the Bee. It contains many verses celebrating Allah's blessings, including the bountiful gardens that sustain and heal us:

AND YOUR LORD INSPIRED THE BEES (SAYING), 'MAKE YOUR HIVES IN THE HILLS AND IN THE TREES AND IN THE TRELLISES WHICH THE PEOPLE ERECT, (AL-NAHAL, 9:68)

And, for the gift of honey that they bestow:

THERE COMES FORTH FROM THEIR INSIDES A FINE FLUID OF VARYING HUES WHICH IS A CURE FOR THE PEOPLE. (AL-NAHAL, 9:69)

Honey is a nourishing food and medicine that imparts many healthful benefits. The Prophet himself made note of its worth, saying:

HONEY IS A REMEDY FOR EVERY ILLNESS AND THE QUR'AN IS A REMEDY FOR ALL ILLNESS OF THE MIND, THEREFORE I RECOMMEND TO YOU BOTH REMEDIES, THE QUR'AN AND HONEY. (BUKHARI)

Visit www.pollinator.org/brochures.htm to order copies of this brochure.



How to get involved

Pollinators need our help. Luckily there are many things your congregation and youth group can do. Here are a few ideas...

- Mosque grounds offer a great place to plant a pollinator garden to attract and offer habitat for pollinators. Gardens allow adequate food, shelter, and water sources. You can introduce a diversity of plants to support a variety of pollinators. Flowers of different color, fragrance, and season of bloom will attract different pollinator species and provide pollen and nectar throughout the seasons. For more ideas on gardens: www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/gardening.shtml
- Research and select plants that provide nectar and larval food for pollinators. Access the free Ecoregional Pollinator Planting Guide at www.pollinator.org/guides.htm.
- Plant, water and observe your garden. Notice pollinators that visit and note the flowers that they like. Share your observations with www.pollinator.org
- Build bee boxes to encourage solitary, non-aggressive bees to nest on mosque property. For instructions on building bee boxes: www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/beebox.shtml
- Have a pollinator themed dinner during Ramadan. Celebrate food, flowers, biodiversity, mizan (nature) and tawhid (creation).
- Have your Imam host pollinator-themed study of the Qur'an, discussing what can be learned from the wisdom in the chapter Al-Nahal, and other relevant passages.



Ideas for our community

Have a celebration. Break ground on your garden. Talk about healthy gardening practices and the benefits of locally produced foods. Suggest to your congregants a reduction in pesticide use and ideas for substituting flowerbeds and native grasses for lawns. Enjoy the wonders of creation!

You may also be interested in the following brochures available at www.pollinator.org

- **Protecting Monarchs**
- **Solving Your Pest Problems Without Harming Pollinators**
- **Your School and Pollinators**

Photo: Greg Lavaty



AND EARTH - HE SET IT DOWN FOR ALL BEINGS, THEREIN FRUITS AND PALM TREES WITH SHEATHS, AND GRAIN IN THE BLADE, AND FRAGRANT HERBS. OF WHICH YOUR LORD'S BOUNTIES WILL YOU AND YOU DENY?

– QUR'AN 55: 1-12



The North American Pollinator Protection Campaign (NAPPC) is a collaborative body of over 140 organizations that work for the protection of pollinators across Mexico, Canada and the United States. The NAPPC Faith Task Force produced this brochure for your use and information. Feedback is welcome. For more information please contact info@pollinator.org or 415-362-1137 or visit www.pollinator.org.