

# Judaism and Pollinators

## Helping Pollinators Through Faith



Photo Greg Lavaty



NAPPC

POLLINATOR PARTNERSHIP



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

## Why should our synagogue 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.

GOD SAID, 'SEE, I GIVE YOU EVERY SEED-BEARING PLANT THAT IS UPON ALL THE EARTH, AND EVERY TREE THAT HAS SEED-BEARING FRUIT; THEY SHALL BE YOURS FOR FOOD.'

*Torah, Gen 1:29*

THERE IS NOTHING SUPERFLUOUS IN THE UNIVERSE. EVEN FLIES, GNATS, AND MOSQUITOES ARE PART OF CREATION AND, AS SUCH, SERVE A DIVINELY-APPOINTED PURPOSE.

*Midrash: Bereshis Rabba 10:7*

## In the beginning

God gave us plants, seeds, trees, flowers and fruits. With this gift of food, came “the birds of the air and every thing that creeps on Earth” — animals that would fertilize and propagate his earthly garden. In other words, he gave us a host of specialized species called 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.

SUSTAIN ME WITH RAISINS:  
REFRESH ME WITH APPLES

*Song of Solomon, 2.5*

Visit [www.pollinator.org/brochures.htm](http://www.pollinator.org/brochures.htm) to order copies of this brochure.

# How to get involved



Here are a few of the many ways your congregation and youth group can help:

- Synagogue grounds offer a great place to plant a pollinator garden to attract and offer habitat for pollinators. Planned 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, height 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](http://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: [www.pollinator.org/guides.htm](http://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](http://www.pollinator.org)
- Build bee boxes to encourage solitary, nonaggressive bees to nest on synagogue property. For instructions on building bee boxes: [www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/beebox.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/beebox.shtml)
- Have a pollinator themed Shabbat dinner. Serve local food and celebrate flowers, biodiversity, and creation.

Check for new ideas: [www.biggreenjewish.org/](http://www.biggreenjewish.org/)



## Ideas for our synagogue

Rebbe Nachman of Breslov teaches,

**“IF YOU BELIEVE THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO DAMAGE, BELIEVE THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO REPAIR.”**

Rosh Hashanah is about renewal. Honey is celebrated in the Torah and also during Rosh Hashanah, when apple slices dipped into honey represent the hope for a sweet year ahead.

- Consider making Rosh Hashana a celebration of abundance, restoration, and an on-going commitment to protect creation.
- Consider a reduction in pesticide use and ideas for substituting flowerbeds and native grasses for lawns.

We live in a world of milk and honey. Celebrating the plants and gardens of Earth is a way to recognize the many wonders of creation, including the pollinators that keep Earth's bounty alive and vibrant. Pollination affords us the bounty of crops, and the honey that bees produce is another sweet reminder of God's generosity.

**A LAND OF WHEAT AND BARLEY, AND VINES, AND FIG TREES AND POMEGRANATES: A LAND OF OLIVE OIL AND HONEY, A LAND WHEREIN THOU SHALL EAT BREAD WITHOUT SCARCENESS, THOU SHALL NOT LACK ANY THING IN IT.... (DEUT 8:8)**



You may also be interested in the following brochures available at [www.pollinator.org](http://www.pollinator.org)

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



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](mailto:info@pollinator.org) or 415-362-1137 or visit [www.pollinator.org](http://www.pollinator.org).