POLLINATOR PARTNERSHIP

NAPPC

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Fast Facts for the General Public

What is pollination and who does it?
Pollination is a vital stage in the life cycle of all flowering plants. When pollen is moved within a flower or carried from one flower to another of the same species it leads to fertilization. This transfer of pollen is necessary for healthy and productive native and agricultural ecosystems. Pollination, in some cases, by multiple pollinator visits to a single flower, ensures that a plant will produce full-bodied fruit and a full set of fertile seeds. With no pollination at all, most plants could not produce fruit nor set seed and many of the foods we eat would no longer be available. The plants that many wild creatures rely on for food or shelter would also disappear.

- About 75% of all flowering plant species need the help of animals to move their heavy pollen grains from plant to plant for fertilization.
- About 1,000 of all pollinators are vertebrates such as birds, bats, and small mammals.
- Most pollinators (about 200,000 species) are beneficial insects such as flies, beetles, wasps, ants, butterflies, moths, and bees.

Why are pollinators important to us?
The work of pollinators ensures full harvests of many agricultural crops and contributes to healthy plants everywhere. Pollinators are often keystone species, meaning that they are critical to an ecosystem. Their role in ecosystem health, however, has been largely unnoticed. As landscapes are converted from wild to managed lands, many pollinators' habitats may be destroyed or fragmented. Habitats that remain are often in isolated patches, degraded by invasive plant species or other biological or man-made influences. These changes can lead to the loss of wildflowers used by pollinators for foraging, nesting and/or egg-laying.

- Of the estimated 1,330 crop plants grown worldwide for food, beverages, fibers, condiments, spices, and medicines, approximately 1,000 (75%) are pollinated by animals.
- An estimated third of all foods and beverages is delivered by pollinators.
- In the U.S., pollination by insects produces nearly $20 billion worth of products annually.
- Pollinators are essential components of the habitats and ecosystems that many wild animals rely on for food and shelter.
- Approximately 25% of birds include berries, other fruit or seeds as a major part of their diet, as do many wildlife species as they fatten themselves for winter or migration. Most of these food sources depend on animal pollinators.

Visit the Pollinator Partnership website at www.pollinator.org for more information

- Plants provide egg-laying and nesting sites for many insects, including butterflies.

It is important to note that the use of pesticides affects both pollinators and their habitats and has contributed, directly or indirectly, to significant declines in many of these beneficial species. For example, pesticides that target insects can kill hummingbird nestlings if they are mistakenly sprayed directly. If not enough insects are available for such birds, they can starve to death. Bacterial and fungal diseases can also threaten pollinators.

Help pollinators help you:

- Visit the websites and links here to get ideas and explore what is already being done for pollinators.
- Host pollinator themed lectures, seminars, tours, or children's activities.
- Take the opportunity to educate your neighbors, schools, community groups and places of worship about pollinators. Offer to give a special talk about them!
- Have a pollinated foods dinner, recipe exchange, or cook-off.
- Speak with your local grocer, farmers market, and/or plant nursery. Do they sell produce and plants that are grown in a pollinator-friendly way?
- Speak out and celebrate pollinators.
- "Get Involved" with the Pollinator Partnership at www.pollinator.org.

What everyone can do for pollinators:

- **Watch for pollinators**. Get connected with nature. Take a walk, experience the landscape and look for pollinators midday in sunny, planted areas.
- **Reduce your impact**. Reduce or eliminate your pesticide use, increase green spaces, and minimize urbanization. Pollution and climate change affect pollinators, too!
- **Plant for pollinators**. Create pollinator-friendly habitat with native flowering plants that supply pollinators with nectar, pollen, and homes. Find your ecoregional guide at www.pollinator.org.

Join the Pollinator Partnership (P2)

To find out more about pollinators, sign up for the Pollinator Listserv, or download a free ecoregional guide on how to plant for pollinators, go to the Pollinator Partnership website at www.pollinator.org to "Getting Involved."