

Let's Get Buzzzzzing for the Wee Ones-the Pollinators



These days in February are a great time for dreaming and planning what we are going to be doing and planting outdoors when the spring comes. As we look upon the massive blankets of snow all around, give some thought to the wee ones-our pollinators - the butterflies, bees, moths and hummingbirds and what they need to thrive. To get started, check out this sweet video that my son, Nick put together last spring in my yard when the apple trees were blooming. You can see several types of bees and a sphinx moth (one of my favorites!) in the bee balm.

Why is landscaping for pollinators Important?

It is estimated that pollinators are needed for the reproduction of 90% of flowering plants and one third of human food crops. We depend on these industrious pollinators to provide us with the wide range of foods we eat. In addition, pollinators are part of the intricate web that supports the diversity in natural ecosystems that helps sustain our quality of life. Unfortunately, the numbers of both native pollinators and domesticated bee populations are declining. They are threatened by habitat loss, disease, and pesticides.

Whether you have many acres or own a small lot, you can increase the number of pollinators in your area by making a conscience choice to include plants that provide essential habitat for bees, butterflies, moths, hummingbirds, and other pollinators.

Choosing the Right Flowers

In my garden I provide a range of plants that offer a succession of flowers, and thus pollen and nectar, through the whole growing season. Last year the bees and butterflies were amazing! My yard was buzzing for days on end. Patches of habitat can be created in many different locations, from backyards and school grounds to golf courses and city parks. Even a small area planted with good flowers will be beneficial for local bees, because each patch will add to the mosaic of habitat available to bees and other pollinators. Native plants are usually best as the nectar is more plentiful, and can be used in both wild areas and gardens. They seem to prefer a variety of bright colors - yellows, reds, oranges, purples and bright pinks. As you can see in the video- apple trees and shrubs are also good sources of nectar. Here is a list of favorites that will love bees:

Flowers:

- Moonbeam coreopsis

- Speedwell
- Phlox
- Columbine (all varieties)
- Japanese anemone
- Bee balm
- Crocus
- Asters
- Echinacea
- Milkweed
- Goldenrod

Trees:

- Fruit trees (all varieties)
- Flowering crabapple
- Linden
- Maple
- Choke Cherry
- Willows

Shrubs:

- Butterfly bush
- Viburnum (all varieties)
- Honeysuckle
- Highbush Blueberry
- Barberry
- Elderberry

Garden Plants:

- Squash
- Thyme
- Melon
- Chive
- Grape
- Sunflower
- Raspberry
- Gooseberry
- Strawberry

If you get the buzz to help these guys out, go to this website that is jam packed full of information about the importance of pollinators including what specific plants are good to plant in our northern area.

www.pollinator.org