

## National Pollinator Week – June 22-28

### Who are they?

Those Birds, bees, beetles, butterflies, bats, and small mammals that pollinate plants are responsible for bringing us one out of three bites of food. They also sustain our ecosystems by helping plants reproduce. Pollinators travel from plant to plant carrying pollen on their bodies in a vital interaction that allows the transfer of genetic material critical to the reproductive system of most flowering plants – the very plants that;

- Bring us countless fruits, vegetables, and nuts,
- That constitute ½ of the world's oils, fibers, and raw materials,
- Prevent soil erosion
- and increase carbon sequestration – important in helping to moderate the earth's temperature

### What do we know about their status?

Pollinator populations are changing. Many pollinator populations are in decline and this decline is attributed most severely to a loss in feeding and nesting habitats. Pollution, the misuse of chemicals, disease, and changes in climatic patterns are all contributing to shrinking and shifting pollinator populations. In some cases, there is not enough data to gauge a response, and this is even more worrisome

### Where and how can you help:

- In your local community by,
- Planting a Pollinator Garden ([Native Garden Guide of Southwestern Idaho](#)),
- Provide Nesting Sites – different pollinators have different needs for nesting sites
  - Hummingbirds typically nest in trees or shrubs, and use plant materials, mosses, lichens, and spider webs to construct their nests.
  - Many butterflies lay eggs on specific plants (host plants) that their young (caterpillars) eat. For example, monarch butterflies lay their eggs on milkweed plants. You can find out more about the plants butterflies use by searching on the [butterfly species of interest](#)
  - Most bees nest in the ground and in wood or dry plant stems Most bees are solitary nesters except bumble bees and the non-native honeybees. Bumble bees have been found nesting in holes in the ground abandoned by mammals, in openings in stone walls, in abandoned bird boxes, and other cavities. You can provide nesting sites for native bees -
    - Ground nesting sites: Simply maintaining a small, undisturbed patch of well-drained bare or sparsely vegetated ground may provide nesting habitat for ground-nesting bees. It is best if the site faces south so that it

gets the most sun possible during the day and is not inundated by a sprinkler.

- Wood nesting sites: Carpenter bees will chew their own burrows in wood, while many other bees use holes or cavities that are already in wood or dry plant stems.
  - If it is not a safety hazard, consider leaving a dead tree or limb undisturbed to provide natural nesting habitat.
  - When pruning shrubs if you notice stems that are hollow or soft inside (e.g., raspberries, roses, sumac, elderberry, goldenrod, coneflower), cut some stems back to a foot in height to provide bee nesting sites.
  - Some bees will nest in artificial nesting sites – blocks of preservative-free wood with drilled holes of different diameters. These "bee blocks" are a great way to learn about native bees because it is easy to observe them periodically. While they may provide some habitat, recent research raises concerns that these sites may provide habitat for non-native species [which may compete with our native species] and could result in increased parasitism rates on bees using them. Also, when used, it is very important to have an inner paper liner and replace it annually; otherwise if any of the bees are diseased, the disease can easily spread to the bees using the holes the next year. Note: solitary wasps will also use these for nesting sites.
- Avoid or limit pesticide use

#### Local Events:

Pollinator Celebration at Orton Botanical Garden Saturday, June 27, 2020  
2 pm to 5 pm  
867 Filer Ave W.  
Twin Falls, ID

#### Resources

##### [Pollinator Week Toolkit](#)

To order [Pollinator Posters](#)

Podcasts from U.S. Department of the Interior, Oregon State University Extension Service and USGS

- [Planting for Pollinators](#)
- [Spring Bees](#)
- [The Weird and Wonderful World of Alfalfa Pollination](#)
- [Pollinators](#)