

National Pollinator Week – June 20-26, 2022

National Pollinator Week is an annual international event celebrating pollinator health. Celebrate with us out on BLM Idaho Public Lands and check out some activities and resources at <u>Pollinator Partnership</u> including the <u>Pollinator Toolkit</u>.

National Pollinator Week was started and is managed by the Pollinator Partnership. The first National Pollinator Week was observed in 2017 in America after the Senate's unanimous approval that acknowledged the week as a necessary step in taking cognizance of the urgent issue of declining pollinator populations. Unfortunately, around 40% of invertebrate pollinator species, especially bees and butterflies, face the danger of going extinct. Rising temperatures, scarcity of habitats, and increased human activities threaten the existence of these friendly animals. Today, the week is observed as an international celebration to protect the ecosystems that sustain pollinators like bees, birds, butterflies, bats, and beetles.

Why Celebrate Pollinators?

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?

Many pollinator populations are declining worldwide. This decline is attributed most severely to a loss in feeding and nesting habitats. Pollution, pesticides, 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:

Plant a Pollinator Garden (<u>Native Garden Guide of Southwestern Idaho</u>), 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 <u>butterfly species of interest</u>. About 2/3 of our native bees nest in the ground and the re-

maining 1/3 nest in wood or hollow plant stems. Most bees are solitary nesters except bumble bees and non-native honeybees. Bumble bees have been found nesting in abandoned rodent holes in the ground, 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 old 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

Volunteer to survey for bees or butterflies (see links on page 3)

Upcoming Local Idaho Events:

Pollinator Garden Tours

Boise Parks and Recreation are offering tours of a few pollinator gardens during pollinator week and the over the course of summer. Tours will cover basic garden design, management/maintenance, commonly seen pollinators, and highlight the plants in each garden. Tickets are \$2.00 and can be purchased <u>here</u>.

Bee Watch

Boise Parks and Recreation are engaging volunteers in their <u>Bee Watch Pro-</u><u>gram.</u> This is a community scientist project that trains participants to conduct surveys of pollinators at bee boxes and surrounding habitat in predetermined parks and/or open space reserves. Volunteers will be trained, no experience is needed!

Annual Idaho Butterfly Surveys – Bogus Basin (July 10th)

Reservation required. Contact Paul Castrovillo paul.castrovillo@isda.idaho.gov

Check out these References

Wasps: The Astonishing Diversity of a Misunderstood Insect

The Bees in Your Backyard

The Solitary Bees

The Lives of Bees

Following the Wild Bees

Bumble Bees of North America

The Bee: A Natural History

Butterfly Gardening

A Swift Guide to Butterflies of North America

The Last Butterflies

Monarchs and Milkweed

Pollination: The Enduring Relationship between Plant and Pollinator

<u>Bumble Bee Watch</u>

My Garden of a Thousand Bees

Xerces Society: Mountain Region

