

Family Guide to Native Pollinators

Good things come in small packages! Insect pollinators may be tiny, but they have a very big job!

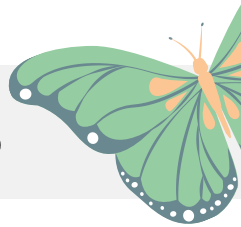
Pollinators are animals who help flowering plants produce their seeds by moving pollen from one flower to another. Their work ensures the continued existence of millions of plant species. These include some of our favorite native fruits and vegetable plants, such as wild blueberries, strawberries, and squash.

Did you know that honeybees aren't native to the United States? They were imported from Europe. However, there are many thousands native pollinators who quietly go about their work without any fanfare. These include native bees and wasps, beetles, flies, butterflies, moths, birds, and bats.



Bees

There are over 4,000 bee species native to North America, and they're critical pollinators for so many plants! They're drawn to with plants with yellow, blue, or purple blooms — especially tiny flowers with nectar they can sip with their small tongues.
Example Native Plant-Pollinator Friends:
 Native bees are important pollinators of wild blueberries and other berries. Bumblebees in particular are very efficient and impactful helpers.



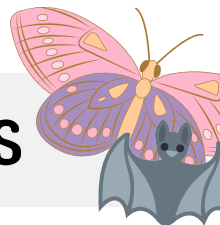
Butterflies

Flowers in bright shades of red, orange, yellow, pink, and blue are magnets for these winged wonders. Wide-topped blooms offer them a landing pad to rest and sip nectar.
Example Native Plant-Pollinator Friends:
 Milkweed foliage is the only food monarch caterpillars eat, while the plants' blooms provide nectar for adult butterflies.



Beetles

Because they don't fly much, beetles prefer bowl-shaped flowers where they can sit and sip nectar. Sometimes they eat the petals and other flower parts too!
Example Native Plant-Pollinator Friends:
 Southern magnolia flowers rely on a host of native beetles to produce their striking red seeds.



Moths & Bats

Foraging for food at night, these pollinators are attracted to white and light-colored flowers that smell sweet and fruity.
Example Native Plant-Pollinator Friends:
 Moths take the night shift for pollinating native fruits. The lesser long-nosed bat is an important pollinator of cacti in the Sonoran Desert.



Flies

Attracted to green, purple, brown, and white flowers, flies are also drawn to blooms that give off stinky odors that smell like rotting meat. Yuck!
Example Native Plant-Pollinator Friends:
 The pungent flowers of trillium, a woodland plant, have found a friend in pollinating flies.



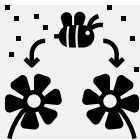
Hummingbirds

Irresistibly attracted to red blooms, hummingbirds' long beaks find a perfect fit in tube-shaped flowers that offer lots of nectar to fuel their energetic flights.
Example Native Plant-Pollinator Friends:
 The ruby-throated hummingbird pollinates a lot of native vines like coral honeysuckle and trumpet vine.

Show Your Support

Native pollinators need your help to make sure our ecosystems provide good homes for them. Here are some ways you can help preserve existing native pollinator populations and help them grow:

- Plant a diversity of plants (especially native plants) that bloom throughout the growing season at home, school, and/or community centers. This will provide a continuous supply of pollen and nectar for pollinators.
- Plant native plants that provide shelter and a food source for pollinators in all stages of their life cycles.
- Leave areas of uncut grass or wildflowers to provide shelter for pollinators.
- Spread the word to others! Teach your friends and family about the importance of pollinators



Pollinator Matching Game

Draw a line from the creature on the left to the plant it prefers.



My home is the desert.



I'm an important pollinator of berries.



My long beak reaches into tube-shaped flowers.



I like flowers with a place to sit.

