

Wisconsin DNR: Give butterflies, bees and other pollinators a lift during Pollinator Week, June 20-26

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MADISON, Wis. – In celebration of Pollinator Week, June 20-26, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) encourages Wisconsinites to protect native pollinators by creating pollinator-friendly habitat, volunteering to monitor pollinator species and learning more about the bees, butterflies and birds buzzing in their own backyards.

A pollinator is any animal that visits flowering plants and transfers pollen from flower to flower, aiding plant reproduction. In Wisconsin, native pollinators include bees (Wisconsin has 400 species of them, including bumble bee species), butterflies, moths, flower flies, beetles, wasps and hummingbirds.

Several species of bumble bees and butterflies are in decline in Wisconsin, with potentially widespread implications.

“Our native pollinators are incredibly important to maintaining Wisconsin’s native ecosystems, many fruit crops and backyard gardens, but they need our help,” said Jay Watson, DNR Insect Ecologist. “Creating healthy habitat for pollinators and getting trained to help identify and locate bumble bees, Karner blue butterflies, and monarch eggs and caterpillars are great ways to help.”

In Wisconsin, many of these flowering plants and the insects that pollinate them feed other wildlife and support healthy ecosystems that clean the air and stabilize soils.

Pollinators are crucial for many of Wisconsin’s agricultural crops, too. Without

pollinators, Wisconsin cranberry growers would lose three-quarters of their crop, apple growers would lose 80%, and cherry growers would lose 60%. Concern over declines in pollinators led the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection to develop the [Wisconsin Pollinator Protection Plan in 2015](#).

Feed Pollinators And Help Find Them

Vegetable gardens, fruit trees and shrubs, flower gardens and even your lawn can all provide habitat for both honeybees and native pollinating insects.

It's not difficult to create an environment desirable to pollinators. A good pollinator habitat will include a diversity of native plants, leaf litter or unmanicured green spaces, and minimal to no pesticide use.

"Even individuals with only a small yard or an apartment balcony can grow native flowers that provide food for pollinators," Watson said.

The [DNR's Saving Pollinators webpage](#) has lists of plants that are good for pollinators and other resources.

There are several pollinator projects in Wisconsin that people can join to help provide high-quality data to be used for conservation and management. Volunteering with these projects can be done by anyone, wherever they are in the state. Volunteer projects include:

- [Wisconsin Bumble Bee Brigade](#), a new DNR effort to train the public to help identify and photograph bumble bees, including the rusty patched bumble bee. Wisconsin is one of the strongholds for this federally endangered species. Find more information on the [Bumble Bee Brigade's website](#).
- [Wisconsin Karner Volunteer Monitoring Program](#), in which trained volunteers monitor for wild lupine, the native plant Karner blue butterflies feed on. People can also photograph and submit information about Karner blue butterflies they see while outdoors. Learn how to get involved on the [Karner Volunteer Monitoring Program website](#).
- The [Monarch Larva Monitoring Project](#) needs volunteers statewide to search patches of milkweed for monarch eggs and caterpillars. Learn how to get started on the [Monarch Larva Monitoring Project's website](#).