

Attracting Pollinators

Presented by



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What are pollinators and why should we help them?

A pollinator is an animal that causes plants to make fruit or seeds by moving pollen from an anther of a flower to the pistil thereby fertilizing it. They play a vital role in our ecosystem and food supply because it is estimated that over 1/3 of our food supply comes from the work of pollinators. If you are interested in helping pollinators (bees particularly) keep in mind these three needs: flowers, nesting areas, and hibernation sites.

- Native Bees
- Honey Bees
- Butterflies
- Hummingbirds
- Some flies
- Some moths

Native vs. Non-Native Pollinators

While non-native pollinators are beneficial, native pollinators are uniquely equipped to deal with the trials of the Chicago environment. Also, natives will promote local native biological diversity, require less maintenance, and provide permanent shelter and food for other wildlife. However, non-natives can provide forage for pollinators during times that natives may not be producing nectar or pollen, and may be a better choice in 'tough' areas.

What Attracts Pollinators?

In order to attract pollinators consider these tips. Pollinators have coevolved with flowers. Pollinators see hues of blues and purples best. Native plants attract native pollinators, and native pollinators are the most at-risk.

How to Maintain your own Pollinator Paradise

For your garden to be the best it can be for our local pollinators plan out your site thoroughly. Plant in clumps in 3' patches, keeping beneficial plants closer together lure pollinators and make foraging easier. Encourage diversity, different types of flowers attract different pollinators, so different colors, heights, shapes all help. Finally, consider bloom time succession. Simply put providing continuous blooms throughout the seasons (Spring, Summer, Fall) will give ample forage opportunities for pollinators.

Additional Resources:

Attracting Native Pollinators by The Xerces Society | www.xerces.org | plants.usda.gov

About Westside Bee Boyz

With over 50 years combined beekeeping experience, we are committed to keeping, educating, and promoting urban beekeeping and honeybees as well as other pollinators. Located in the heart of Chicago's Westside, it is our goal to serve the city's bees and beekeepers as stewards to both. We pride ourselves in taking the natural approach to beekeeping by avoiding potentially harmful chemicals and treatments. We manage hives across the Chicagoland area from Lincoln Park Zoo to Shedd Aquarium to Chicago's downtown rooftops as well as our own apiary. We provide consulting and beekeeping management services as well as selling bees, beekeeping equipment, and our own raw honey at local farmers markets.

Future Workshops:

Native Pollinator Houses

Wednesday, July 22nd @ 5pm

With a little bit of work and some easily accessible items you can provide a hospitable home for our native pollinators. Learn how with Westside Bee Boyz' head beekeeper Naaman Gambill.

Curious About Beekeeping?

Wednesday, July 29th @ 5pm

Want to learn what it takes to be a beekeeper? Learn the basics and get a primer from Westside Bee Boyz' head beekeeper Naaman Gambill.

Follow our beekeeping adventures on



Check out our Website & Blog at www.westsidebeeboyz.com