

Pollinator Pathway

By Diana Fletcher, March 2019

What is a pollinator pathway?

It is a pathway that connects two or more greenspaces. The way we use the term pollinator pathway is to describe an area where there are abundant nutrients in the form of nectar without pesticides contaminating them.

Why do we need pollinator pathways?

At the present time, due to habitat loss, pollution and pesticides, we are losing our pollinators. Most people have heard about the loss of our bees and how serious this is but we are also losing other pollinators. The Monarch butterfly numbers have been dramatically reduced due to the loss of milkweed plants that are needed for the parents to lay their eggs on. Other insect pollinators are being lost due to invasive species taking over their niche, degradation and fragmentation of their habitat, diseases and climate change. Bees are dying out due to the increased use of pesticides that seem to cause the bees to be unable to carry out their vital role of pollinating plants. Commercial bees are dying out due to colony collapse disorder which may be caused by pesticide use or disease or parasites.

What will the loss of pollinators mean to us?

According to some scientists, if we lose the pollinators, we will lose about one third to three quarters of the food we grow now. Some of the lost foods include: honey, fruit from fruit trees like apples, peaches, bananas, coffee, chocolate, strawberries, blueberries, cucumbers, tomatoes, onions, nuts like cashews, etc.

In some countries, up to 56% of people will be at risk for malnutrition if we don't have pollinators. Many of the crops that we will lose are important to us because they provide the vitamins and nutrients that we need to prevent diseases like scurvy and also blindness due to Vitamin A deficiency.

How can we help save the pollinators?

1. Grow a native plant garden. Remember dandelions are bee friendly flowers.
2. Plant some brightly colored, sweet smelling, early flowering plants in your yard.
3. Put out a dish with sugar water and some rocks in it so that bees can sip the sugar water for energy if there are no flowers available. Make sure to change the water daily.
4. Give bees nesting places by making bee boxes or leaving hollow stems on the ground in your flower bed so that bees have a place to go.
5. Avoid pesticide use in and around your garden.
6. Plant milkweed plants for the monarch butterflies to nest and lay eggs in.
7. Lobby the government to protect more grassland areas for pollinators.

