

ROOTED

by (You)th Environmentalists

June 22-28 is Pollinator Week!

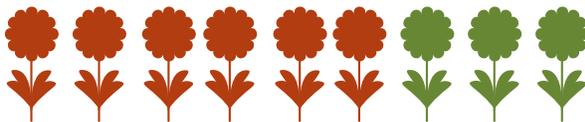


Birds, bats, bees, butterflies, beetles, and some small mammals are all pollinators! They help distribute pollen and allow plants to grow.



Click here for the video introduction of this newsletter: Why are Pollinators Important?

Pollinators are responsible for one of every three bites of food we eat!

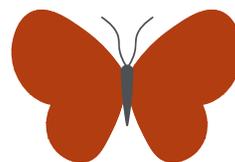


Bee-lieve it, or not

Bees were declared the most important species on Earth by the Earthwatch Institute.

At the Kitchener Public Library, as a part of the 85 Green Initiative, two honey bee hives were installed on the green roof in late May of 2019. The purpose was to bring awareness to the value of all pollinators. "On a personal note, I've always been fascinated by honey bees and the colonies in which they live. I also wanted to help spread the word about why pollinators are so vital to our natural environment...and of course they are just very cool!" says Lindsey Skeen, Manager of Children's and Teen Services. The hives help start conversations on this important topic! They are managed by a local beekeeper from *Best For Bees*. There are over 800 native species of bees in Canada, but honey bees actually aren't native, arriving here during the 17th century. For every hive, it's ideal that 5 acres of forage (flowering plants that bees like) are planted to support them, since honey bees will sometimes compete for food with their native counterparts. In the next page of this newsletter, we'll look into ways that you can help support pollinators like the bees at KPL!

Did you know that milkweed is the only plant that Monarch Butterfly caterpillars can eat?



Click on the butterfly to the left for an article by the Waterloo Region District School Board on milkweed identification.

"Everything we eat – every apple, every cherry, every tomato – depends on a pollinator to grow and bees are just one part of that puzzle." – Lindsey Skeen, Kitchener Public Library

Ways to help

It's been found that farms that turn portions of their crop fields into green spaces for animal habitats actually gained back more overall yield.

Making agricultural spaces more natural, like we discussed in Rooted's May issue, is one key part of helping pollinators -- and the whole world -- thrive. But, did you know that there's also stuff that you can be doing from your home to make a difference? As many pollinators have adapted to living in more urban spaces, small yard or apartment balcony pollinator gardens have proved to be just as effective when it comes to helping them out! Even the effort to grow even one small potted plant outside can make a difference! Below, we're going to look into some of the best plants to feature in your very own pollinator garden!

Getting started

- **Avoid the use of chemicals like pesticides on your plants.**
- **Don't rake some patches of leaves in your yard to leave spaces for bees to burrow and hibernate.**
- **Plant things that will specifically attract pollinators – use our guide below to help you.**
- **Most plants will do best with full sun exposure and shelter from the wind.**
- **Choose plants that will flower at different times so pollinators can always have a food source.**
- **Native plants usually contain more nectar.**



Attracting Bees



- Bees like blue, purple, violet, white, yellow plants in patches instead of scattering so they are more likely to find them.
- Bees have different tongue lengths, so variety of flower shapes are useful.

Bees like the plants below. They are listed in their blooming order so you can ensure they have a nectar source at all times:

- **Early:** blueberry, crab apple, cranberry, crocus, foxglove, heliotrope, hazelnut, heather, primrose, and willow.
- **Mid-season:** blackberry, catnip, chives, dahlia, hyssop, lavender, raspberry, sunflower, and yarrow.
- **Late:** aster, borage, coneflower, cornflower, cosmos, goldenrod, pumpkin, sedum, and squash.

[Click here](#) for a fun DIY activity: learning to make a bee bath!



Red flowers contain a lot of nectar and catch the eye of hummingbirds!

The following plants attract hummingbirds:

- **Perennials:** red or purple hollyhock, pink or red coral bells, bee balm, summer phlox, and sage.
- **Annuals:** begonias, cosmos, geraniums, petunias.
- **Shrubs and vines:** hibiscus, honeysuckle, and flowering currant.

Sunflowers are rich in pollen! Their tall stature serves as a beacon to attract pollinators.

- Push seeds 2cm into soil, 3-5ft apart .
- If growing in smaller areas: use smaller varieties, 1ft apart.



(You)th Environmentalists Challenge:

Take a picture of pollinators or pollinator plants and post it on social media to spread awareness about their importance!