

## POLLINATOR FAQs

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### 1) What is the purpose of the BWSR Pollinator Initiative?

BWSR's Pollinator Initiative is focused on supporting pollinator populations by providing clear guidance about how to incorporate pollinator habitat into all BWSR programs, and how to restore high quality habitat.

### 2) What pollinators are most at risk?

There is concern that nearly all pollinator populations are in decline due to a variety of factors including habitat loss, pesticides, and parasites but we lack information for most of Minnesota's 350-400 native bee species. Honey bee losses have been well documented, as well as some bumblebee populations; along with many butterfly species such as monarchs, kerner blue butterflies and powershiek skipperlings.

### 3) What are the top three things that can benefit pollinators?

- 1) Decreasing [pesticide](#) use and using integrated pest management is considered an important step in protecting pollinators.
- 2) Establishing designated "pollinator zones" in rural and urban landscapes across Minnesota that have species that bloom throughout spring, summer, and fall.
- 3) Protecting and restoring natural areas, hedgerows, treelines, buffers and other natural features that provide important habitat.

### 4) What funding sources are available for pollinator habitat?

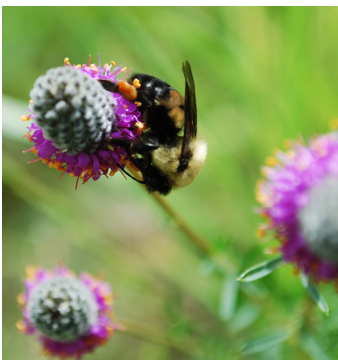
A variety of conservation programs can provide funding for pollinator plantings. Part 1 of the BWSR "pollinator toolbox" summarizes conservation programs as well as potential match sources to help cover additional costs.

### 5) How can BWSR programs be used to support pollinators?

BWSR is working to incorporate pollinator habitat into all programs. Part 2 of the "pollinator toolbox" summarizes how pollinator habitat can be incorporated into different types of projects.

### 6) Are there priority areas in Minnesota for restoring pollinator habitat?

Pollinator habitat is needed across our landscapes to maintain functioning ecosystems. In many cases, restoration efforts are focused as part of habitat corridors and complexes to help protect pollinators from pesticides and other impacts. Additional planning will occur in the coming years to better help identify "priority" areas for pollinators.





**7) Where can pollinator habitat be incorporated on farms?**

It is helpful to identify “pollinator zones” on farms where habitat can be protected from disturbance. These zones can include a combination of diverse conservation plantings, tree lines, hedge rows, and orchards. It is important that these areas are protected from pesticide use to the extent possible. Minnesota Department of Agriculture worked with partners to develop a [pollinator BMP brochure](#) for agricultural areas.

**8) Are certain plants better than others for pollinators?**

We have a wide diversity of pollinators with needs for different flower types in the landscape; as a result, high diversity plantings with species native to local areas and providing flowers throughout the growing season will provide the greatest benefit to pollinators. There are certain plant species that tend to provide habitat rich pollen and nectar sources for a wide range of pollinators including Marsh milkweed, Common milkweed, Butterfly milkweed, Meadow blazing star, Rough blazing star, Purple prairie clover, Prairie plum, Basswood, Golden alexanders, Wild bergamot, Mountain mint, Maximillian sunflower, Sneezeweed, Common goldenrod, and asters.

**9) What time of year should diverse seed mixes be planted?**

It is most common to plant diverse seed mixes in the fall to allow flower seeds to break dormancy over winter, but high diversity can also result from planting in mid to late spring.

**10) When should containerized plants be used?**

Containerized plants should be used for species that do not establish well, or quickly from seed including liatris, turk’s-cap lily, gentian lily, butterfly milkweed, and many woodland flowers. Containerized plants are also used for areas that need to establish quickly or need a more formal design layout such as rain gardens and urban lakeshore plantings. It is common to plant containerized plants in late May or June. In some cases they are planted in October or early November but need to be watered-in to promote their survival over winter.

**11) What can be done to support honey bees?**

Honey bees need protection from pesticides and require plants that provide high pollen and nectar sources including basswood, clovers, cherries, plums, bergamot, sunflowers, goldenrods and asters. In some cases, plots of non-native clovers such as white, red and alsike clover are planted to support honey bees. Sweet clover is not recommended as it is non-native, and because it can significantly increase maintenance needs in conservation plantings.

**12) How can diversity be maintained in plantings over time?**

Methods to maintain diversity should be considered based on individual site conditions and the plant community being restored. These methods should be included in an operation and maintenance plan for the project. Prescribed burning can be an effective way to maintain floral diversity in plantings and control woody plants in prairies. It is important to spot spray, mow, or pull weeds before they become more widespread in plantings. In larger sites, conservation grazing or haying can be conducted strategically to set-back non-native cool-season grasses and promote flowers. It is common to combine maintenance methods to maintain diversity.