



Working Together for Pollinators

April 2015 Snapshots

There is increasing evidence that insect pollinators are disappearing at alarming rates. Loss of plants and nesting habitat, disease, pesticides – there are a number of factors contributing to their decline. Reversing that trend is rapidly becoming a priority because the truth is pollinators are some of our local heroes, insects that are foundational to life.

While honey bees and bumble bees are the most commonly known pollinators, here in Minnesota they account for only 2% of the roughly 400 bee species native to the state. Butterflies, moths, beetles, flies, wasps, and hummingbirds are some of the other pollinators that call Minnesota home. We need them as much as they need us.

“One-third of our food production requires pollinators,” BWSR Landscape Ecologist Dan Shaw reports. “Some of Minnesota’s most important fruit crops, like apples and blueberries, are 100% reliant on insect pollination for growth. Those pollinators need our help to stay healthy.”

In April of last year, BWSR developed a Pollinator Plan that summarized our agency’s work to support healthy pollinators. BWSR’s monthly Featured Plant series has highlighted native plants that are pollinator-friendly for the past 18 months. The series gives a comprehensive overview of each plant, including tips for successfully incorporating them into a landscape.

In October, BWSR launched a pollinator initiative and webpage that provides a wealth of pollinator resources for our local government partners and others interested in incorporating pollinator-friendly habitat into their restoration, conservation and landscape projects.

The website “focuses on the habitat needs of Minnesota’s vulnerable native pollinator populations,” Shaw says, “combining tools from seed selection to maintenance in one easily accessible place.”

The pollinator website can be found at <http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/practices/pollinator/index.html>.

April 26-May 3 is the 60th annual Soil and Water Stewardship Week, recognizing the work of local soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs). This year’s theme is “Local Heroes – Your Hardworking Pollinators.” SWCDs around the state will have resources available to encourage local residents to get involved in efforts to support pollinators. It’s a great opportunity to learn more about what each of us can do to support this work.

A decline in pollinators affects us all. Reversing this trend is important to our ecosystem as well as to human health and well-being. It’s a team effort, being tackled at the state, local, and individual level.



Minnesota Milkweed (top), Liatris (center), and Frost Aster (bottom) are all native pollinators.