Attracting Pollinators to the Garden

Almost 90% of all flowering plants rely on animal pollinators for fertilization, and about 200,000 species of animals act as pollinators. Of those, 1,000 are hummingbirds, bats, and small mammals such as mice. The rest are insects like beetles, bees, ants, wasps, butterflies and moths.

Pam Bennett, co-author of "**Garden-pedia: an A-to-Z Guide to Gardening Terms**", defines pollination as the process of pollen being transferred from the stamens (male) to the stigma (female) to accomplish fertilization. The **pollinator** is the vehicle that moves the pollen. Pollinators such as insects, birds, and bees are selective about the plants they will visit. Therefore, great attention is given to using plants that local pollinators will visit and in minimizing any harm inflicted on them.

Are you interested in attracting pollinators to your garden? OSUE **Fact Sheet ENT-47**, "**Attracting Pollinators to the Garden**" (at ohioline.osu.edu), describes the importance of pollinators, their role in the ecosystem, and actions gardeners can take to help pollinator populations in their yards and gardens. Denise Ellsworth, OSU Entomologist, explains that grouping plants together in sunny locations helps pollinators find and feed on desirable flowers while expending less energy in the search for plants.

By observing flowers in the garden and taking note of any flower visitors, gardeners can learn which plants are most attractive to pollinators. Additionally, many plant lists are available to help with the selection of plants for pollinators (find plant lists at go.osu.edu/gardensandbees).

While literally hundreds of garden plants provide important sources of nectar and pollen for pollinators, try these garden-worthy additions recommended by Ellsworth: **Trees**: maple, crabapple, linden, serviceberry; **Shrubs**: ninebark, pussy willow, sumac, viburnum; **Perennials**: aster, hyssop, milkweed, purple coneflower; **Annuals**: cosmos, marigold, sunflower, zinnia; and **Herbs**: basil, borage, catmint, lavender, oregano.

Locally native plants attract native pollinators. Native plants offer nectar, pollen and other nutrients in quantities that native pollinators need. Consider adding more locally native trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants to the garden.

On **Tuesday, March 10, 2020**, The Brown County Beekeepers Association and the OSUE Brown County Master Gardener Volunteers will present the program, **Planting for Pollinators**.

Emily Archibold, a Private Lands Biologist with the Wildlife Division of The Ohio Department of Natural Resources, will focus this program on how to establish larger scale pollinator projects. Topics to be covered include: Site preparation, Choosing seed mixes, Treating noxious weeds, Long term maintenance of pollinator and prairie plots, and Resources and funding landowners can utilize such as CRP (Conservation Reserve Program), and EQUIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

This program is free and open to the public and will be held in the Community Room of Western Brown High School (476 West Main Street, Mt. Orab, OH 45154).

I believe that even if you aren't trying to establish a large-scale pollinator project, Emily will share some important information for gardeners as well.

We hope that you will plan to attend and learn more about how to attract pollinators to your property!