



Be a friend to POLLINATORS



Without pollinators, we would go hungry. Butterflies, bees, moths, beetles and many other insects enable our food production. One in every three bites of food we eat is courtesy of insect pollination.

As many as 2,000 pollinator species live in New Mexico, including 300 butterfly species and 1,400 bee species. Moths, beetles, flies, wasps, bats, and hummingbirds also contribute to pollination. The survival of most flowering species of plants and trees depends on pollinators.

Albuquerque is certified as a Bee City USA, the first city in the Southwest. Bee Cities are pollinator-

friendly cities that create welcoming habitats for the pollinators that feed our planet.

Over 70% of our favorite foods are pollinated by bees. This includes apples and almonds, chocolate and coffee, strawberries and sugarcane.

Some pollinators also serve as biological “pest” control: A ladybug can eat 5,000 aphids in its lifetime, and wasps keep caterpillars and flies in check.

Our pollinators are at risk

Nearly 40% of pollinator species on earth are at risk of extinction because of habitat loss, pesticide use, diseases, and climate change.

How you can help preserve pollinator habitat:

- Most pollinators become active in the spring. They must be able to find nutritious forage to survive. Yet our paved urban environment is not pollinator-friendly.
- You can grow flowering plants, skip mowing your lawn and allow wildflowers to emerge, and turn a gravel area into a planting bed.
- Leave underground nests of wild bees alone. You may see tiny holes popping up in late spring; these are the dwellings of wild bees. Most of these bees live alone and don't have stings.

How you can keep pollinators safe:

- Pesticides and insecticides make pollen and nectar

toxic to pollinators. Common garden sprays contain neonicotinoids, which cause honey bee kills.

Bees and many wasps pose no threats to humans:

- Bees and many wasps are not aggressive, and solitary bees are often stingless.
- Honey bees with stings die after stinging, so they only use their sting as a last defense.
- Yellowjacket wasps and hornets are exceptions, and their sting can be painful. You can tell them apart from bees because they don't have hair on their bodies and legs. Clean up food and trash to avoid attracting them.
- Bee swarms are harmless: In the spring bees may swarm to establish a new colony. This starts as a cloud of buzzing bees, which then settles down on a branch or other surface until the scout bees find a new home. It's best to leave the swarm alone.

ACTION TIPS

Be a friend to pollinators! Here's what you can do.

TIP #1

Grow pollinator-friendly flowering plants

- Native plants are especially attractive to bees and other pollinators.
- Lawns are inhospitable to wildlife. Reduce the times you mow your lawn, which may lead to the emergence of wildflowers.

TIP #2

Preserve your local habitats

- Common vegetation on your street or in your yard may look like “weeds” to you, but many of these plants are food for pollinators.
- Tolerate some self-seeded plants such as dandelions, scarlet globemallow, aster, chamisa and other flowering species.
- Provide winter nesting sites for pollinators by limiting your fall clean-up. Leave the leaves and save the stems as pollinator habitat until late spring.

TIP #3

Go chemical-free

- Avoid pesticides and instead use soap sprays, essential oils or vinegar (apply early mornings or late evenings).
- Grow flowers and herbs that are natural bug repellents (such as mint) or that attract natural predators.
- Pull weeds manually.

TIP #4

Keep wasps in check

- Yellowjacket wasps may become a nuisance in late summer, but you can prevent this.
- Seal garbage cans securely.
 - Empty trash frequently.
 - Don't leave food and drink outside.
 - Collapse abandoned rodent burrows in the winter to prevent yellowjackets from nesting in them next season.

TIP #5

Attract hummingbirds

- Plant nectar-rich tubular flowers that hummingbirds like, such as penstemon, flowering sage, red yucca, and yarrow.
- To supply artificial backup, fill hummingbird feeders with refined white sugar (mix 1 part sugar for 4 parts water). Never use honey, corn syrup, molasses, powdered sugar, brown or raw or unprocessed sugars, and don't use any dyes, as they are toxic to hummingbirds.

NEED HELP?



Ask the city not to spray pesticides near your property: call 311 and request to be added to the “No Spray List.”

Report a honey bee swarm, but don't disturb it: if you see a bee swarm establishing a colony in an unsuitable place, ask a local beekeeper at ABQbeeks.org to relocate the swarm.

For more information on coexisting with our Albuquerque wildlife, visit cabq.gov/coexistwithwildlife