Protect Pollinators-Plant Something

Pamela Corle-Bennett
Ohio State University Extension - Clark County
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I recently returned from a professional horticulture conference and protecting pollinators remains one of the top subjects. Several researchers presented a variety of papers on the topic.

I have talked about this topic a great deal this year as well, both through my column and presentations. Most that I talk to are taking action.


Salvia 'Playin the Blues' is an excellent pollinator plant for bees.

It's really pretty easy to take action – plant something!

Well, there may be a little more to it than just plant something; plant something that the bees and other pollinators like.

There are many species that are considered pollinators. Bats, birds, butterflies, moths, flies, and bees are among the top pollinators.

Of these, bees are the most efficient and of the bees, the honey bees or any bees that have fuzzy abdomens are the most efficient.

Pollen sticks to their fuzzy abdomen and is carried to other plants where pollination occurs.

Flies happen to be the second largest group of pollinators! They are pretty annoying but take a look at some of your flowers and you will notice flies hanging out as well.

To help you figure out what to plant, there are a specific types of plants that pollinators prefer. In general bees prefer single flowers, not double and the color purple. They also like tubular flowers.

One of the most important factors when it comes to planting is to have plants that bloom in the spring, summer and fall. This helps bees throughout the season.

I also suggest that you plant at least three different types of plants in each of these seasons to ensure complete coverage.


A mixture of plants is excellent for pollinators.

Other pollinators such as butterflies and moths like flat-topped plants such as yarrow or daisies.

One of the researchers from North Carolina State is looking as the design of your garden. She is trying to discover if a meadow-type garden planting (everything scattered throughout) or if a mass planting technique (large groups of same plants) is more efficient for pollinators.

While we all can plant something to help the pollinators, we also must be extremely diligent when it comes to using pesticides.

There are lots of reasons for honeybee population decline and pesticides tend to get the most blame. Misuse of pesticides is the problem.

Misuse is generally due to gardeners not reading the label. The label tells you straight up if the product is dangerous to honeybees and other pollinators. It will also guide you to spray early in the morning or late at night when pollinators are not present.

Do your part in helping the pollinators – plant something!