



Protecting Pollinators in Your Own Backyard

Pollinators such as bees, butterflies, birds, bats and other insects are a key element of our food supply chain, but their populations are threatened by the loss of habitat. As part of the EPA Pollinator Protection Initiative, EPA facilities across the country have made critical improvements to enhance their pollinator habitats. Now it is your turn to **bee the change!** Help protect pollinators at home by following these simple steps in your yard and garden.

Think locally. Incorporate a diverse mix of native species of flowering plants suitable for your climate and region to attract and benefit local pollinators. Use the Pollinator Partnership's Ecoregional Planting Guides (<http://pollinator.org/guides>) for ideas to get started.

Keep it clean. Provide a source of clean water for pollinators to drink from such as a bird bath or shallow dish. Make sure to change the water a few times a week to prevent mosquitoes.

Give a little ground. Leave a few spots in the garden unmulched and uncovered to provide space for ground nesting pollinators. Avoid tilling or disturbing the ground in these areas to preserve their habitat.

Cut down on cutting. Where possible, reduce the frequency of mowing to every 2 to 3 weeks and set your lawn mower blades to the highest setting. Allow low-growing, flowering groundcover, such as clover, to bloom and provide food for pollinators.

Leave these for the bees. Leave plant stalks and other organic materials in place during fall garden maintenance and wait to conduct outdoor spring cleanup until after pollinators appear.

