Protecting Pollinators

Factsheet

Pollinators are important members of local ecosystems. How we manage these ecosystems and landscapes therefore plays a critical role in long-term pollinator health. The expansion of urban, suburban, and agricultural areas has reduced pollinator habitat and access to food. Intensive chemical use in these areas has harmed these beneficial organisms and been an important contributing factor to Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). Pesticide applications to manage weeds and insects in gardens and landscapes, along roadsides and rights-of-ways, and in parks and forestland expose bees, birds, butterflies and other beneficial organisms to acute and sublethal levels of pesticides, which can result in impaired foraging, reproductive abnormalities, and even death.

Managing lawns and landscapes with attention to sustainable practices can result in the elimination of materials that are harmful to bees and beneficial organisms. This approach is distinguished from chemical-intensive practices where toxic chemicals are incorporated into seeds and then the vascular system of the plant, expressing themselves through pollen, nectar, and guttation droplets. Chemical-intensive management, in this context, results in the indiscriminant poisoning of pollinators and other beneficial insects. By adopting sustainable management practices that focus on soil, cultural practices, and biological and least-toxic materials, as a last resort, the health of people and the environment are better protected.