



## WILDLIFE WINDOW: Nature's Vital Pollinators Special Benefits of Butterflies, Bees, & Hummingbirds.

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**Create a Pollinator Garden in your yard and reap the benefits!** Formerly known as a “butterfly” garden, nectar-lovers include not only butterflies, but also hummingbirds, bees, and many other flying animals. To attract butterflies, your garden must provide food for both the adult butterflies and their caterpillars. Although many butterflies will drink nectar from a variety of flowering plants, their caterpillars are often limited as to which plants they can feed on. *(Please check ARC/HOA approval requirements before proceeding with any garden plan.)*

**The most obvious benefit of pollinator gardening is that it attracts wildlife**, bringing butterflies, birds, insects, and more into your garden for purposes of enjoyment, observation, study, and photography. But there's another important reason: **ecosystem and habitat conservation**. A well-planned pollinator garden becomes a small, but representative sample of the surrounding habitat and as such, provides a safe haven for nectar-loving wildlife to gather, seek shelter, acquire food and water, reproduce and build populations. Do not underestimate the importance of even a small garden.

**Habitats are threatened.** Butterfly, bee, and bird populations have been declining in recent decades. Loss of habitat and breeding grounds are likely due to increased use of pesticides, over-development, clear-cutting, and deforestation. Pollinators are essential to the reproduction of the vast majority of flowering plants, including most food crops.

**Creating a pollinator garden offers excellent practical benefits too.**

- **Use of Florida native plants:** plants that are hardy and drought-tolerant, disease & pest resistant, they are specially adapted to our region and perform better under local conditions.
- **Food for natural enemies:** healthy butterfly, bird and bee populations attract and sustain healthy populations of beneficial insects and organisms as well as provide food for birds, lizards, mammals, etc. which in turn help control garden pests. Most nectar sources also attract beneficial insects.
- **Plant diversity:** less susceptible to pests, plus these microclimates provide home and shelter for other insects and wildlife.
- **Scientific:** keeping detailed logs on the pollinator species encountered, times, & abundance can provide important and useful information on these population numbers nationwide.

**And don't discount the special therapeutic benefits!** Pollinator gardens provide a soothing retreat from everyday life. And if you use herbs to attract nectar-loving wildlife, you will have the bonus of aromatherapy. Plant a pollinator garden today! It will be a win-win for wildlife and humans alike!

Monarch Butterfly	Giant Swallowtail	Honeybees	Hummingbirds
			
Plant a pollinator garden and invite this “King” into your backyard. While feeding on nectar, they pollinate many types of flowers. (B. Frank)	Striking and exotic-looking butterflies with countershading, dark on the topsides of wings & yellow on the bottom. (B. Frank)	Many plants produce pollen for bees, but honeybees still need nectar for honey production. (ifas.ufl.edu)	These birds need high-energy food to support their high-energy activities and flying. (ifas.ufl.edu)

(Source: ifas.ufl.edu)

Click here to visit the Ponds & Preserves website at <https://www.rivendellcommunity.com/ponds>.  
Plus, check out the North American Butterfly Association site at: <http://nababutterfly.com/>