



How your garden can help pollinators

Flower Types



Flower structure may restrict access to the nectar for some pollinators, for example long corolla flowers, such as Pentas, may produce copious nectar but are too deep for the short tongues of bees and hover flies. In this case, butterflies with their long tongues can reach the nectar while the short tongued pollinators may only collect pollen.



Most bees and pollinating flies will visit short corolla flowers and daisy type flowers in which they can easily access nectar and pollen.



Pollinators

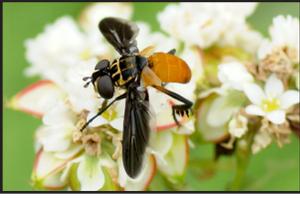


The most common pollinators found on local gardens fall into three large categories: bees, hover flies, and butterflies. There are many species of bees that visit urban gardens, most of which were introduced to Hawaii. Among the most common are the European honeybee (*Apis mellifera*), the much larger and heavier carpenter bee, and several species of leafcutter and sweat bees.



Planting native plants can help

There are a number of native Hawaiian plants that can attract pollinators and can easily be introduced to the urban landscape, these include hardy species such as Ohi'a lehua, Naupaka, and Ilima.



Edible Gardens

Many herb species are also great forage for pollinators, especially honeybees. Mint, sage, rosemary, oregano, and thyme are a few of the many plants that can be used to attract pollinators. Here in Hawaii, herbs can grow year round and their blooms provide long lasting food sources for honeybees and other pollinators.

Many crop plants provide ample resources for their insect visitors. Honeybees are fond of eggplant, beans, garlic, chives, and borage. Some of these plants also contribute to soil

improvement, as is the case of the “pigeon peas”. Plants in the melon family such as pumpkins and watermelons, are bee dependent and require adequate bee visitation to produce fruits. Having a healthy urban pollinator community is essential for garden productivity.



Top Left) Sweet Potato
Top Right) Pigeon Peas
Center Left) Onion
Center Right) Borage
Bottom Left) Thai Basil

Recommendations

- Use a variety of plants, rather than a single type. This will ensure there is always something in bloom in the garden and that you are providing food for a variety of pollinator types.
- Plant the same species in clumps. As a rule, the larger the floral display, the more attractive the patch will be to the pollinators.
- Include species that produce flowers for long periods, such as basil, and supplement with short lived species, such as sunflowers.
- Become familiar with bee friendly plant species.
- Choose plants that are not pest susceptible, to reduce the need for pesticide applications.
- Reduce pesticide use and/or select least toxic materials whenever possible.
- If using pesticides, read labels carefully and apply in the evening when most insects are not active.

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