



**Wisconsin Corn
Growers Association**

Wisconsin Corn Growers *POLLINATOR GUIDE*

Pollinators are important to Wisconsin agriculture for the production of fruits and vegetables. Corn farmers play an important role in providing habitat for pollinators.

This guide from the Wisconsin Corn Growers Association will help you take simple and proactive steps to enhancing or improving pollinator habitat on your farm.

Improve Habitat in Non-farmed Areas

Improving habitat in non-production areas on your farm is one option to aid pollinators:

- **Increase plant diversity.** Add pollinator-friendly plants along buffers near water bodies, fallow fields, set-aside acres, field and road borders, ditches and wetlands.
- **Inter-seeding.** Introduce pollinator-friendly plants into existing stands of grasses to increase species diversity.
- **Grouping:** Group individual flowers together to provide easier and more efficient access for bees, native pollinators and Monarch butterflies.



Create New Habitat

You can adopt simple practices:

- **Coordination.** Work with other landowners to create a continuous corridor of pollinator-friendly plants along a fencerow or riparian area.
- **Spaces.** Use large and small spaces in the farm landscape to create habitat.
- **Timing and Diversity:** Use diverse annual perennial seeds/plants and make sure you select plants that can adapt to Wisconsin's climate.



Farming Practices

Doing small things on your farm will make a difference:

- **Minimize Tillage.** Many native pollinators live underground for most of the year.
- **Exercise Care.** Choose the type of insecticides you need, and time applications during the day and season to avoid harming pollinating insects.
- **Habitat Resources:** Check your local USDA Natural Resource and Conservation Service office about technical and financial assistance to provide pollinator habitat and adopt other protective practices.



Support a Bee-Friendly Landscape

Make your farm more pollinator-friendly:

- **Floral Resources.** Have abundant, diverse and appealing floral resources from forbs, shrubs and blooming trees during the grower season.
- **Protection.** Keep pollinator areas away from pesticides, fragmentation and mowing.
- **Diversity:** Bare and undisturbed ground, leaf litter, hollow stems, native grasses, dead wood and food plants are important for immature butterflies, moths and other insect pollinators.



Pesticide Practices

You can protect pollinators while also using crop protectants:

- **Low Toxicity.** When possible, use pesticide formulations with low toxicity to pollinators, particularly bees.
- **Prevent Drift.** Sport spray pests when possible and prevent drift during application.
- **Minimize Dust:** Follow planter manufacturer instructions when using treated seed to minimize abrasion and, when possible, use deflector equipment to direct exhaust toward the ground.
- **Communication:** Bee keepers should inform farmers where bees are located. Farmers should notify beekpeers when possible, when applying pesticides near bee locations.



Additional Resources

Learn more about how you can protect and improve pollinator habitat on your farm:

- **USDA.** Contact your local NRCS and FSA offices for information on funding available to help pollinators. USDA has special funding through the EQUIP and CRP programs for pollinators: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/plantsanimals/pollinate>
- **Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.** Our state department of agriculture will develop a pollinator protection plan.
- **Driftwatch™:** A website to help protect sensitive crops from pesticide drift. Growers register their sites of a half acre or more on the website. <https://wi.driftwatch.org>



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