



**“Plant Your Own Pollinator Garden”
National Community Day of Service
August 22, 2015
Talking Points**

Why are pollinators so important?

Pollinators play an essential role in the nation's food supply chain. We are dependent on bees, flies, moths and other insects to help pollinate crops.

However, these essential species are under threat from a number of sources, such as lack of available nectar and pollen sources due to increased urbanization.

As a result, we are joining a national day of service organized by the National Pest Management Association (NPMA) to call attention to the importance of pollinator health and to showcase some ways communities and private companies, along with government agencies, can come together to help pollinators.

Won't these gardens pose a hazard to the public by attracting bees and other insects that can sting?

While some of these pollinator insects - bees in particular - are also known to pose health and risks to the public, sending an estimated 500,000 people to the hospital every year, we're ensuring these gardens are planted a distance away from residential or commercial buildings and any public seating areas.

It's also important to note that bees and yellowjackets rarely sting unless provoked. We advise people to avoid panicking and swatting at a stinging insect and instead, gently blow on it from a distance so it does not feel threatened.

Considering pesticides are one of the main reasons behind Colony Collapse Disorder, why isn't the pest control industry doing something about that instead of planting gardens?

Most scientists agree that declining bee health is a result of multiple factors. In fact, the May 19, 2015, White House Pollinator Task Force report put forth a strategy that “addresses the many factors impacting pollinator health, including certain land-use practices, declining forage and nesting resources, pests and diseases, pesticides, and bee biology.” The report also stated “in particular, the Varroa mite (*Varroa destructor*) is seen as a significant parasite and challenge to maintaining healthy honey bee colonies.”

The professional pest management industry is committed to proper product stewardship. Recognizing the recent concern about pollinators, industry professionals have been extra diligent to ensure proper training related to pollinators is provided. Professionals understand that bees should not be unnecessarily exposed to pesticides, unless they are the intended target for structural or public health reasons.

What are some other steps the professional pest management industry has taken to protect pollinators, specifically bees?

The NPMA along with its member companies, including ours, is working with federal and state regulators, and other stakeholders equally committed to ensuring an appropriate relationship exists between the safety of the American public and the essential role bees play in our environment.

Some of the steps the industry has taken include:

- Supporting the Pollinator Partnership, a coalition of businesses and non-profits; committed to honey bee health;
- Urging the development of a bee foraging summit to support the development of better research about pollinator foraging needs;
- Conducting a pollinator health workshop for regulatory officials;
- Participating on various regulatory panels focused on ensuring products used by consumers and professionals offer proper guidance on usage around pollinators; and
- Extensive promotion of good stewardship practices within the industry.

More information can be found on www.pollinatorhealth.org

What are some ways the public can help protect pollinators in addition to planting pollinator-friendly gardens?

- 1. Become a beekeeper.** Once a garden is in place, the next step is beekeeping. Not only will this help support honey bee populations, but the plants and vegetables will also thrive. It's important to check with local zoning officials to ensure your property has the space and clearance needed to support hives.
- 2. Support Local Beekeepers.** It's okay if beekeeping is not someone's thing. They can still buy local honey and support your community's beekeepers. Beekeepers, also known as apiarists, are responsible for maintaining healthy hives and producing honey and bee byproducts, and may also provide pollination services to neighboring farms. Many will sell raw, local honey as well as other bee products including pollen, candles and handcrafted lotions, soaps and balms containing beeswax. Check your local farmers' market or state apiary for more information.
- 3. Contact a professional.** If you do see a swarm or hive of bees that are unwanted on your property, stop, and do not attempt to eliminate the hive or on your own and do not treat the hive with DIY sprays. If it is a honey bee colony, it cannot be relocated if it's

been treated. Call your local beekeeper or apiarist for honey bee hive removal. If you are unsure of the species, contact your local pest professional to properly identify the stinging insects who will either safely relocate the hive or remove hornet, wasp or yellowjacket nests.