

Pollinators

- Who are pollinators and what do they do?
 - Pollinators usually take nectar from plants. In the process, they are covered with pollen which they transfer between plants. This results in fertilizations
 - Plants pollinate in a number of ways, but pollinators are the most effective & common way
 - Includes bees, beetles, butterflies, bats, other insects, birds and even mammals and reptiles
- Why are Pollinators important?
 - One out of three bites of your food comes from the work of a pollinator
 - This includes most crops you can think of
 - Honeybees give us honey and wax; not native to the US, was brought over from Europe hundreds of years ago
 - Some plants have very specific pollinators; losing them means losing that plant.
 - Pollinators also pollinate plants that are not a food source but give us textiles, like cotton.
 - Pollinators are a food source for other animals
- Pollinators are at Risk
 - Pollinators have been declining in the last few decades.
 - Rusty Patched Bumblebee
 - Since the 90's the Rusty Patched Bumblebee population has declined nearly 90%
 - This is a native bee to Indiana
 - Placed on Endangered Species List and is now protected as of March 2017
 - They pollinate many crops, including **tomatoes, berries**
 - Mason Bee
 - Not endangered; does compete w/ non-native bee species (honey bee) for plants
 - Mason Bees, like most bee species, are solitary and do not sting
- What can I do to help?
 - Don't use pesticides. Use beneficial insects
 - Ladybugs, cryptolaemus, tiny parasitic wasps
 - Plant native plants/a pollinator garden
 - Pollinator gardens use native plants to create food sources for pollinators. They also attract other wildlife like birds and mammals that eat insects or look for a place to shelter