

Christianity and Pollinators

Helping Pollinators Through Faith



Photo Sheila Colla

In the beginning

God gave us plants, seeds, trees, flowers and fruits. With this gift of food came “the birds of the air and every thing that creeps on Earth” — animals that would fertilize and propagate his earthly garden. In other words, he gave us a host of specialized species called pollinators.

Pollination happens when pollen is carried to flowers by wind, water, or pollinating animals such as birds, bees, bats, butterflies, moths, and beetles.

Are pollinators in trouble?

Worldwide there is disturbing evidence that pollinating animals have suffered from disease, parasites, pesticides, loss of habitat, and competition from non-native plant and animal species.

- The U.S. has lost over 50 percent of its managed honeybee colonies over the past 20 years.
- Many pollinators are federally “listed species,” meaning that there is evidence of their disappearance in natural areas.



**SUSTAIN ME WITH RAISINS:
REFRESH ME WITH APPLES**

Song of Solomon, 2:5



Prepared by the Faith Task Force of the
North American Pollinator Protection Campaign (NAPPC)



NAPPC



Why should our congregation care about pollinators?

Pollinators bring us nearly one of every three bites of food we eat and are vital in the procreation of nearly 80 percent of the flowering plants on the planet. Worldwide, roughly 1,000 of the 1,200 plant species grown for food, beverages, fibers, spices, and medicines need to be pollinated by animals. These foods include apples, blueberries, chocolate, coffee, melons, peaches, pumpkins, vanilla, and almonds. In fact, in the U.S., pollination by honey bees, native bees, and other insects produces \$40 billion worth of products annually.



Photo Bryan Jones



Visit www.pollinator.org/brochures.htm to order copies of this brochure.

How to get involved

Pollinators need our help. Luckily there are many things your congregation and youth group can do. Here are a few ideas:

- Church grounds offer a great place to plant a pollinator garden to attract and offer habitat for pollinators. Gardens allow adequate food, shelter, and water sources. You can introduce a diversity of plants to support a variety of pollinators. Flowers of different color, fragrance, and season of bloom will attract different pollinator species and provide pollen and nectar throughout the seasons. For more ideas on gardens: www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/gardening.shtml
- Research and select plants that provide nectar and larval food for pollinators. Access the free Ecoregional Pollinator Planting Guides at www.pollinator.org/guides.htm
- Plant, water and watch your garden. Notice pollinators that visit and note the flowers that they like. Share your observations with www.pollinator.org
- Build bee boxes to encourage solitary, non-aggressive bees to nest on church property. For instructions on building bee boxes: www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/beebox.shtml
- Have a pollinator themed Sunday service. Celebrate food, flowers, biodiversity, and creation.
- Start a Pollinator Team or a Garden Team to help cultivate your garden and educate your congregation.

Ideas for our church

Did you know that bees and honey are mentioned 21 times in the Bible? Honey was a symbol for abundance and God's blessings. It represents the fat of the land as well as a healing and spiritual elixir.

"AND HE PUT FORTH THE END OF THE ROD, AND DIPPED IT IN THE HONEYCOMB. AND HE CARRIED HIS HAND TO HIS MOUTH AND HIS EYES WERE ENLIGHTENED. (1 SAM 14: 27)"

- Find passages that touch on nature, food, agriculture, animals and flowers in the *Green Bible*, New Revised Standard Version, 2008

"A LAND OF WHEAT AND BARLEY, AND VINES, AND FIG TREES AND POMEGRATES:
A LAND OF OIL OLIVE AND HONEY,
A LAND WHEREIN THOU SHALL EAT BREAD WITHOUT SCARCENESS, THOU SHALL NOT LACK ANY THING IN IT.... (DEUT 8:8)"

- Give a sermon on the joy of creation. Consider Genesis 1:11-12. Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. Recognize and acknowledge flowers and their pollinators.

Bees are a symbol of the forces of good over evil. In the story of Samson killing a lion on his way to Timnah, bees and honey appear in the slain carcass of a lion. By inhabiting the lion, bees signify that with the defeat of wickedness comes the sweetness of grace.

THE FLOWERS APPEAR ON THE EARTH, THE
TIME OF SINGING HAS COME,
AND THE VOICE OF THE TURTLEDOVE IS
HEARD IN OUR LAND.



(Song of Solomon, 2.12)

"THEN SAMSON WENT DOWN TO TIMNAH WITH HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, AND CAME AS FAR AS THE VINEYARDS OF TIMNAH; AND BEHOLD, A YOUNG LION CAME ROARING TOWARD HIM. THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD CAME UPON HIM MIGHTILY, SO THAT HE TORE HIM AS ONE TEARS A YOUNG GOAT THOUGH HE HAD NOTHING IN HIS HAND.... WHEN HE RETURNED LATER TO TAKE HER, HE TURNED ASIDE TO LOOK AT THE CARCASS OF THE LION; AND BEHOLD, A SWARM OF BEES AND HONEY WERE IN THE BODY OF THE LION. SO HE SCRAPED THE HONEY INTO HIS HANDS AND WENT ON, EATING AS HE WENT. (JUDGES 14:5-9)"

- Have a celebration. Break ground on your garden. Talk about healthy gardening practices and the benefits of locally produced foods.
- Suggest to your congregants a reduction in pesticide use and ideas for substituting flowerbeds and native grasses for lawns. Enjoy the wonders of creation!



You may also be interested in the following brochures available at www.pollinator.org

- Protecting Monarchs
- Solving Your Pest Problems Without Harming Pollinators
- Your School and Pollinators

The North American Pollinator Protection Campaign (NAPPC) is a collaborative body of over 140 organizations that work for the protection of pollinators across Mexico, Canada and the United States. The NAPPC Faith Task Force produced this brochure for your use and information. Feedback is welcome. For more information please contact info@pollinator.org or 415-362-1137 or visit www.pollinator.org.