

ABIDE A WHILE

GARDEN BOUTIQUE



All About Pollinators and Butterflies

What is a pollinator? Pollination is the transfer of pollen from one plant to another, thus a pollinator does the transferring. Pollinations come in many different forms - everything from you and me to bees, butterflies, wasps, birds, other insects and even small mammals. Water and wind can act like a pollinator as well.

So why are pollinators so important? Pollinators are not just for flowers and garden enjoyment. Somewhere between 57% and 95% of all flowering plants on each need help with pollination. Pollinators provide pollination services to 180,000 different plant species and to more than 1200 crops! Needless to say, they play a huge role in the world's food production. 1 out of every 3 bites of food you eat is there because of pollinators.

HOW TO ATTRACT POLLINATORS AND BUTTERFLIES

- Having the right plants in your garden is the first step. To check out a full list of plants that attract butterflies, see our care sheet titled Plants for a Butterfly Garden.
- Having a variety of plants that bloom at different times of the year provides ample nectar production throughout the seasons.
- Some butterflies will only lay their eggs on certain plant, called host plants. You can see a list of these plants on our care sheet, Plants for a Butterfly Garden.

PEST CONTROL

When we begin to encounter unwanted pests in the garden, such as aphids and mealy bugs, our first instinct is to spray them away with a chemical repellent. However, those sprays are not good for pollinators. Spraying even with organics can still harm the pollinators. If you want to keep those pollinators happy in your garden, the best practice is to let nature run its course. Lady bugs, Lace wings and Hoverflies all have carnivorous larvae that will kill off pest populations. A single overfly larvae can eat up to 300 aphids a night! So the next time your Guara, Milkweed, Bee Balm or other pollinator plant has bugs, take a backseat and let nature work itself out - you might be surprised at the outcome!