



Whiteside County SWCD Education Foundation 2020 Poster Contest

The Whiteside County Soil & Water Conservation District is again sponsoring a poster contest. The 2020 theme is: **“Where would we BEE without Pollinators?”**

The Simple Truth: We Can’t Live Without Them. Pollination is not just fascinating natural history. It is an essential ecological function. Without pollinators, the human race and all of Earth’s terrestrial ecosystems would not survive. Over 80 percent of the world’s flowering plants require a pollinator to reproduce. Animals that assist plants in their reproduction as pollinators include species of bats, butterflies, moths, flies, birds, beetles, ants, and bees.

What Is Pollination and Who Does It?

Pollinators visit flowers in search of food, mates, shelter and nest-building materials. The secret bond of the partnership is that neither plant nor pollinator populations can exist in isolation – should one disappear, the other may be one generation away from disaster. Pollination is the act of transferring pollen grains from the male anther of a flower to the female stigma. The goal of every living organism, including plant, is to reproduce. Successful pollination allows plants to produce seeds. Seeds are key to producing the next generation of plants, which provide food for the next generation of pollinators and other wildlife. Rooted in place, plants need an agent to transfer pollen for them. Wind, water and a wide host of animals move the pollen from flower to flower. This is the act of pollination. Plants and pollinators have co-evolved physical characteristics that make them more likely to successfully interact.

Why do pollinators visit flowers?

Pollinators obtain food in the form of energy-rich nectar and/or protein-rich pollen from the flowers they visit. In return, the pollinated flowers are able to develop and produce seed. While food is often a sufficient lure for pollinators, flowering plants also attract pollinators using a combination of shape, scent and/or color. For example, some plants use mimicry to deceive animals into visiting their flowers without having to provide a reward. The flower type, shape, color, odor, nectar, and structure vary by the type of pollinator that visits them. Such characteristics are considered pollination syndromes and can be used to predict the type of pollinator that will aid the flower in successful reproduction.

Why Garden with Native Wildflowers?

Native plants are adapted to the local climate and soil conditions where they naturally occur. A diversity of native flowering plants in your garden will provide a wonderful habitat for a large variety of native pollinators. Follow these simple steps to create a pollinator-friendly landscape around your home or workplace: Use a wide variety of wildflowers so there is always a flower in bloom from early spring through late fall. This will help provide food and other habitat needs for pollinators to survive throughout the changing seasons. Don’t forget that night-blooming flowers will support nocturnal pollinators, and red, tubular flowers will attract hummingbirds. Avoid modern hybrid flowers, especially those with “doubled” flowers. Often plant breeders have unwittingly left the pollen, nectar and fragrance out of these blossoms while creating the “perfect” blooms for us. Eliminate pesticides whenever possible. If pesticides are used, apply the least-toxic materials and spray at night when bees and most other pollinators are not as active. Before purchasing, read labels carefully and use the product according to the instructions. Include larval host plants in your landscape. If you want colorful butterflies, grow plants for their caterpillars. They WILL eat them, so place them where unsightly leaf damage can be tolerated. Accept that some host plants are less than ornamental if not outright weeds. A butterfly guide will help you determine the plants you need to include. Create a damp salt lick for butterflies and bees. Use a dripping hose, drip irrigation line, or place your bird bath on bare soil to create a damp area. Mix a small bit of table salt (sea salt is better!) or wood ashes into the mud. Spare that limb! By leaving dead trees, or at least an occasional dead limb, you provide essential nesting sites for native bees. Learn more about pollinators; visit your local library or the World Wide Web for more information about native wildflowers and pollinators in your region.

The above information was taken from: <https://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/documents/simpletruthbrochure.pdf>

The poster contest is grouped by grade level: K-1, 2-3, 4-6, 7-9 & 10-12. One poster will be chosen from each grade level group to be sent to the Illinois State Soil & Water District Office in Springfield in July 2020. State winning entries will advance to the national contest.

Contest Rules: Any media may be used to create a flat or two-dimensional effect (paint, crayon, colored pencil, charcoal, stickers, paper or other materials on regular posters (no computer only special category).

- Poster size must be between 8.5" x 11" and 22" x 28"
- Posters should be packaged so they remain flat when sent for judging.
- All posters must be created by an individual student rather than a team of students.
- The 2020 Stewardship title **“Where would we BEE without Pollinators?”** must be on the front of your posters. This is the only title eligible for the national poster contest, therefore please do not put names on the front of the poster.
- Each entrant must sign the entry form to be eligible for judging.
- Although younger students will most likely receive help in planning from parents or teacher, NACD encourages each student to do as much of the work as possible by him/herself. Entries completed by students in their hand writing and coloring will score better than those designed, drawn and colored by adult assistance.

Prizes: Are yet to be determined.

The deadline for the poster contest is 4pm March 20, 2020. For any further information please feel free to contact:
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