How Irrigation Helps Pollinators

PLANNING FOR WATER SOURCES TO INCREASE POLLINATORS: PART 1 OF 2

Why Do We Need Pollinators?

- Birds, bats, bees, butterflies, beetles, and other small mammals that pollinate plants are responsible for bringing us one out of every three bites of food. They also sustain our ecosystems and produce our natural resources by helping plants reproduce.
- https://www.pollinator.org/pollinators

Agriculture Requires Pollinators

- In the United States one third of all agricultural output depends on pollinators.
- https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/pa/plantsanimals/?cid=nrcs142p2_018171

What are Pollinators?

- Birds, bats, butterflies, moths, flies, beetles, wasps, small mammals, and most importantly, bees are pollinators. They visit flowers to drink nectar or feed off of pollen and transport pollen grains as they move from spot to spot.
- https://www.pollinator.org/pollinators

Pollinator Shortages

- There is evidence that populations of native and managed pollinators are in decline, and the loss of benefits derived from them is being felt by the agricultural community.
- https://ento.psu.edu/pollinators/resources-and-outreach/globally-pollinators-are-in-decline

Bees as Pollinators

- Bees are the most efficient pollinators. In the United States, there are 4000 species of native bees.
- https://ento.psu.edu/pollinators/resources-and-outreach/globally-pollinators-are-in-decline

Butterflies as Pollinators

- Highly perched on their long thin legs, butterflies are not efficient pollinators. Butterflies select flowers based on shape. Unlike bees that can hover while feeding, butterflies need a place to land because they cannot feed while flying.
- https://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/documents/simpletruthbrochure.pdf

Nighttime Pollinators

- After dark, moths and bats take over the night shift, visiting nocturnal blooms heavy with fragrance and large amounts of dilute nectar.
- https://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/animals/moths.shtml

Pollinators Need Habitat

- The main threats facing pollinators are habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation. As native vegetation is replaced by roadways, manicured lawns, crops and non-native gardens, pollinators lose the food and nesting sites that are necessary for their survival.
- https://www.fws.gov/pollinators/PollinatorPages/Threats.html

Pollinators Require Water

- Pollinators need sources of water for many purposes, including drinking and reproduction.
- https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/MI/Biol_TN_20_Pollinator-Biology-and-Habitat_v1-1_honey_bee_preferences.pdf

Native Plants Reduce Water Requirements

- Whenever possible, choose native plants to attract pollinators. These plants will be better adapted to your soil type, climate, precipitation, and local pollinators. Native plants often require less irrigation as they are adapted to precipitation conditions.
- https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/pa/plantsanimals/?cid=nrcs142p2_018171

Native Plants, Pollinators, and Water Quality Cycle

- Native plant habitat will attract beneficial insects that are predators or parasitoids of crop pests and lessen the need for pesticides on your farm and improve water quality.
- https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/MI/Biol_TN_20_Pollinator-Biology-and-Habitat_v1-1_honey_bee_preferences.pdf

Plan Water During Dry Spells

- Pollinators need water. You can provide water for pollinators with a shallow dish, bowl, or birdbath with half-submerged stones for perches. Include areas of moist soil, fresh water, and mist to attract pollinators in summer months when water is scarce.
- https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/pa/plantsanimals/?cid=nrcs142p2_018171

Pollinators Need Clean Water

- A clean, reliable source of water, is essential to pollinators. Running water and ponds provide resources for drinking. Water sources that are shallow or have sloping sides allow for easier approach without drowning.
- https://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/BMPs/documents/PollinatorFriendlyBMPsFederalLands05152015.pdf

Landscape A Pond For Pollinators

- Many beneficial insects such as dragonflies, damselflies, and water striders are attracted to a wildlife pond, especially if you put large numbers of flowering plants in or near the pond.
- https://extension.psu.edu/water-for-wildlife-bird-baths-and-backyard-ponds

Drip Irrigation Supplies and Parts

- Drip irrigation is a simple way to plan for providing a variety of water sources for pollinators and plants with different water requirements.
- https://www.irrigationsupplyparts.com/product-category/drip-irrigation/sprinklers-drip-irrigation/

Drip Irrigation Supplies and Parts

- IrrigationSupplyParts.com is a privately owned company based in Michigan. Our parent company is Triple K Irrigation, who has been serving the agricultural community for over thirty years.