

Pollinator Week, June 19–25

Steps You Can Take to Help Pollinators

Mary Jane Frogge
Extension Associate

Pollinator Week is an international celebration of the valuable contribution provided by bees, birds, butterflies, bats and beetles. The week of June 19–25 will spotlight an opportunity to learn about some amazing animals, the pollinators.

Often overlooked or misunderstood, pollinators are, in fact, responsible for 1 out of every 3 bites of food we eat. In the United States, bees undertake the astounding task of pollinating over \$15 billion in added crop value, particularly for crops such as almonds, blueberries, apples, peaches, tomatoes and squash.

Beginning in 2006, pollinators started to decline rapidly in numbers. Participating in Pollinator Week can help save these important animals.



Homemade bee houses (also called bee nests) can range from small and simple, to large and complex.

What You Can Do to Help Pollinators

- Educate yourself on pollinators that live in your area.
- Avoid pesticides in your home landscape.
- Plant a pollinator garden using native plants to Nebraska and the Midwest.
- Consider certifying your habitat. Learn more about the Nebraska Pollinator Habitat Certification program and view the application at <http://entomology.unl.edu/>

pollinator-habitat-certification.

- Provide nesting sites, like bee houses or insect hotels, for pollinators.
- Provide a water source such as a bird bath, small pond or water feature.
- Learn more about the Cherry Creek Pollinator Habitat located at the Lancaster County Extension Office by reading the blog: The Buzz at Cherry

Creek, <https://buzzatcherry-creekunl.wordpress.com>.

- Go to the Pollinator Partnership website to learn more about pollinators, <http://pollinator.org>.
- Share the information you learn with others.
- Establish green corridors by working with your neighbors to include several backyards in a pollinator habitat plan.



GARDEN GUIDE

THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH

Mary Jane Frogge, Extension Associate

Mid- to late June is an excellent time to take softwood cuttings of shrubs to start new plants. Some shrubs which can be propagated in this way are spirea, lilac and viburnum.

When you buy nursery stock that is container grown, check the root ball and make sure it is not bound too tightly. A mass of circling roots will stay that way even after it is planted in the ground.

Remove old flower heads from annual bedding plants to keep them blooming.

Leftover vegetable and flower seeds may be stored in a cool dry location to be saved for planting next year.

Start a gardening notebook. Keep all your gardening records in this one location.

Spring flowering shrubs such as spirea, viburnum, lilac and forsythia should be pruned as soon as they are done blooming.

Remove foliage from spring bulbs after it turns yellow and begins to dry.

Use bark mulch around young trees to protect them from lawn mower damage.

Keep a close eye on the quality of your spring crops. Hot weather causes lettuce to bolt and become bitter. Plant a warm season crop as soon as the spring vegetables are harvested.

In most cases, blossom-end rot on tomatoes, peppers, squash and watermelons can be prevented. Do this by maintaining uniform soil moisture by mulching.

Identify garden pests before you attempt to control them. If you decide to use chemical control, read the label carefully.

Bats can be an effective way to control insects. One big brown bat can eat 3,000–7,000 insects each night. Attract bats by building and placing bat houses in your yard.

During the hot summer months, mulch can be especially useful for conserving water. For vegetable gardens, shredded leaves or grass clippings are good mulch material. For ornamentals, pine needles or wood bark do the best job.

Weed removal is important for a number of reasons. It conserves moisture, conserves nutrients in the soil and helps prevent the spread of disease and insects.

The Learning Child: Parents as Teachers

Carrie Gottschalk
Extension Educator in
Seward County

Parents are a child's first and most important, most valuable teacher. Children are beautifully designed and purposefully wired at birth for a deep attachment and connection with their primary caregivers.

Research continues to demonstrate children are highly sensitive to the attunement and emotional availability of their parents. In fact, research states, "In humans, the attachment figure's internal state also regulates the child's internal state during most of the first THREE years of life."

Infants make intentional attempts to engage through babbling, facial expressions and body movements. They are always watching and listening, and they are also always gauging and adjusting, based on the response and reaction they receive.

But they need a lot of guidance, direction and support. They are wired to learn, but can't figure it out on their own. They need safe, predictable, understanding adults to provide

the boundaries needed to be successful in navigating this very complicated "social-emotional" world.

Social-emotional skills children of all ages need the most support in learning include:

- Emotional understanding in how to experience, express and manage difficult, strong emotions like frustration, anger, disappointment and sadness.
- Self-control skills like paying attention, staying on task, delaying gratification and waiting patiently.
- Relationship skills like disagreeing appropriately, resolving conflict and saying "I'm sorry."
- And self-management skills like following directions and accepting criticism, consequences and responsibility.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Nebraska Extension has several resources — including a series of 10 Parenting Your child Effectively guides — how to help teach and support your child in learning these skills at <http://child.unl.edu/parenting>.

Four Tips Preparing for a Family Vacation

Jaci Foged
Extension Educator

School's out and that means families will be packing their bags and preparing to go on summer adventures. Whether you are taking a car, train, boat or plane, traveling with children can be both exciting and stressful at the same time. Here are four tips to an enjoyable family vacation.

- **Make a list of items you want to take with you.** After all the laundry is done and you are ready to pack, cross the items off the list as you put them into your bag. This is a great way to have your children take part in the process of preparing to leave your house. Try not to over pack, as you will want to save room for items you purchase at your destination. If possible, pack early so your last evening at home isn't spent worrying about last minute details.
- **Find a bag your child can pull or carry.** This is the place for their things and children enjoy being helpful. Let them know they can take what they can fit into their bag.

Some favorites include sketchpads, markers and colored pencils. There are also varieties of activity books that are fun for school-age children. Boogie boards (LCD writing tablets) are draw and erase boards that are great if you do not want to worry about the hassle of pencils and paper. Remember to bring board books for little ones and chapter books for the older kids (and adults).



- **Snacks.** Single serving snacks are great, especially for train and plane rides. Some of my family's favorites include Nutella sticks, cheese and crackers, dried fruit and nuts and fruit snacks.

- **Don't forget to pack your camera (smartphones and tablets take great photos too).** Let children take photos of the journey — you might be surprised when you see how they view the world. When you get home, you can make a book about your adventure with their photos!

With a little planning, you can enjoy your time away from home exploring with your children. Each day is new and exciting for them. Capture the look on their faces as you take off in the airplane. Look at the sparkle in their eyes as the wind blows through their hair on the ferry. Watch how they react to each bump on the train ride. Let them be bored in the car, they just might see something they would have missed if they were busy.

Where will your next adventure take you?