

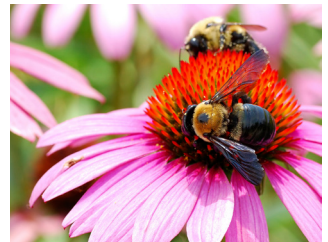
# Creating habitat for Minnesota pollinators

Pollinators like bees and butterflies are essential for the food we eat, the health of our environment and the beauty of our world.

We rely on native bees and other pollinators to pollinate fruits and vegetables like apples, tomatoes, pumpkins, and strawberries. Pollination is also critical for the production of oils, fibers, biofuels, and dairy and meat products.

## Ways to create habitat for pollinators

- **Plant a bee lawn:** Provide habitat for pollinators (and cut down on yard work!) by replacing your turfgrass with low-growing native plants. Plants that are commonly used include fine fescue, self-heal, and creeping thyme. These plants provide food for pollinators while being inexpensive to plant and maintain.
- **Be a champion of pollinator habitat:** Plant native pollinator friendly flowers at home and encourage landlords, neighbors, and local businesses to join in, too!
- **Leave your gardens messy:** Last year's plants, leaves, seedheads and stems provide important overwintering and nesting habitat.
- **Keep flowers clean:** Do not treat flowers with pesticides.



## Get funding and support to increase pollinator habitat

Residents can apply for grants to increase pollinator habitat through the Lawns to Legumes program, offered by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources and Blue Thumb. Grants can help cover costs associated with establishing pollinator habitat in your yard.

The program, which aims to increase habitat for at-risk pollinators on residential properties, also offers workshops, coaching, and planting guides. Learn more and apply at [bluethumb.org/lawns-to-legumes](https://bluethumb.org/lawns-to-legumes)

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources also provides grants for neighborhood demonstration projects to support community-wide pollinator projects. Government agencies and nonprofit organizations are eligible for these grants. Learn more at [bwsr.state.mn.us/L2L](https://bwsr.state.mn.us/L2L)

## What is the rusty patched bumble bee?



Just 20 years ago, the rusty patched bumble bee was a common sight. It's now on the brink of extinction and is the first-ever bumble bee in the United States to be listed as endangered.

To raise awareness of the bee's predicament, the State of Minnesota named the rusty patched bumble bee the Minnesota state bee in 2019.

Rusty patched bumble bees live in colonies that include a single queen and female workers. All rusty patched bumble bees have a rusty reddish patch centrally located on the back except for the queen.

Learn more about the rusty patched bumble bee through the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service: [fws.gov/Midwest/endangered/insects/rpbb](https://fws.gov/Midwest/endangered/insects/rpbb)

## Bee involved!

Everyone can help support bees and other pollinators.

You can help scientists understand how pollinators are doing and what they need by collecting data through simple observations.

Learn more about helping Minnesota's bees through the University of Minnesota Bee Lab: [beelab.umn.edu](https://beelab.umn.edu)