

TOP 10 ACTIONS

TRY THESE!

Our 2024 Top 10 Actions you can take to support pollinators

Our 2024 "Top Ten Actions" are great ways to start or continue efforts that support birds, bees, and butterflies. Choose to implement one or all, every action is important, and no effort is too small!

BIRDS, BEES & BUTTERFLIES - BEMIDJI



A community-wide effort to support a healthy web of life in Bemidji!



BEE LAWNS



LEAVE THE LEAVES



COMPOST



ALTERNATIVES TO PESTICIDES



PLANT NATIVE SPECIES



SHORELAND BUFFER ZONES



CREATE HABITAT



RAIN GARDENS Rain Garden Installation at Watermark Art Center



SLOW THE MOW



ADVOCATE, COMMUNICATE, EDUCATE

ESTABLISH A BEE LAWN

Also known as pollinator lawns, bee lawns feature flowering plants along with turf grasses and provide many benefits to both pollinators and people. Bee lawns help provide essential pollen and nectar for pollinators while reducing the need for mowing and watering. Those with bee lawns are still able to use & enjoy their yard for recreational activities as they would with a traditional lawn. To learn more about establishing and maintaining a bee lawn visit: <https://beelab.umn.edu/bee-lawn>

LEAVE THE LEAVES

Leaving the leaves during Autumn is one of the best ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while avoiding tedious yardwork. Leaves create a natural mulch that suppresses weeds while fertilizing soil, and provides needed habitat for animals like birds, turtles, frogs, and insects as they over-winter. Microorganisms use the nutrients from fallen leaves to maintain the health of the soil. Later, this will lessen the need for fertilizer in your home garden or lawn. For more information, visit:

<https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2022/10/17/fall-leave-leaves>

ADD NATIVE SPECIES TO YOUR GARDEN & YARD

Native plants are well equipped to the local climate conditions and soils. These important beings support bird, insect, and animal populations (including humans!) by providing high-energy nectar, pollen, and seeds. Common horticultural plants do not provide these same benefits, or if they do, on a lesser scale. Additionally, native plants do not require fertilizer nor pesticides; they require less water, reduce air pollution, provide shelter and food for wildlife, look good, and are good for the natural environment! For more information and diverse ways to add native species to your garden and lawn, check out: https://www.fs.usda.gov/wildflowers/Native_Plant_Materials/Native_Gardening/index.shtml#:~:text=Native%20plants%20do%20not%20require,soil's%20capacity%20to%20store%20water

USE NATURAL ALTERNATIVES TO PESTICIDES

Pesticides are filled with harmful chemicals that pollute the natural environment and harm pollinator populations. Luckily, there are many alternatives to pesticides that do not negatively affect the health of our ecosystems. These stand-ins manage to get rid of unwanted pests and weeds outside or in the home. For a comprehensive list of options and their myriad of uses, visit: <https://www.slc.gov/sustainabilitypesticidefree-2/alternative-pesticides/>

SLOW THE MOW

This annual sustainable initiative allows Bemidji residents to reduce or stop mowing their lawns, May through early June. The goal is to provide early season forage for emerging native pollinators by reducing lawn mowing frequency during a time where foraging resources are limited. After the official initiative period is finished, consider continuing to reduce mowing or increase the deck height on your lawn mower. Slow the mow is intended to accompany other efforts that provide habitat and food sources for pollinators. There are a variety of benefits that come with adding native Minnesota plant species to your yard and garden spaces. To read more about Slow Mow May go here: <https://beelab.umn.edu/slow-mow-summer>

LIVE ON THE LAKE? CREATE A SHORELAND BUFFER ZONE

Living on a lake can have detrimental effects on property value and lake health. Luckily, buffer zones are here to help. They serve to stabilize shoreland, reduce erosion from crashing waves, increase fish and wildlife habitat, filter nutrients and pollutants (which help maintain a healthy ecosystem for the lake), reduce lawn maintenance, and create a natural aesthetic that is pleasing to humans and non-humans alike. For more information on their helpful capabilities, and how to go about implementing one yourself, visit:

<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/rys/st/bufferzone.html>

CREATE A COMPOST THAT SUITS YOUR LIFESTYLE

Composting is a great way to reduce household waste, limit the need for chemical fertilizers as well as enriching the soil. There are several ways to get started based on your home life. Start by getting a container with a lid by the trash, this is a small change to divert food scraps from the landfill. Once the container is full there are many options for removal. If you have a backyard, purchasing or building a compost bin to cultivate your own compost is a wonderful way to prepare soil for you own garden. If you don't have the space or a friend that wants them, there are often composting programs through schools, colleges, city gardens or your waste transfer station that will take your compost materials. Check out the Beltrami County organics collection process here: <https://www.co.beltrami.mn.us/living-here/garbage-and-recycling/organics/>

CATCH THE RAIN WITH YOUR GARDEN

Implementing a rain garden in your landscape is a great way to not only support pollinators but also the soil and our water systems. Rain gardens are typically planted with deep-rooted native plants, providing resources for pollinators, reducing soil erosion and proving to be beneficial during droughts. For more resources on rain gardens visit: <https://beelab.umn.edu/rain-garden-0>

CREATE HABITAT FOR POLLINATORS

Pollinators like to be fed year-round, so it is important to plant various native flowers that bloom in spring, summer, and fall. Allowing dead branches, stems, and logs to remain in your yard allows pollinators to nest throughout the year. Additionally, having native flowers grow in ditches and roadsides offers an uncomplicated way to promote biodiversity while reducing areas to mow. Help pollinators by leaving shallow dishes of water with small pebbles so they can drink as they collect pollen. More information is available at: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/pollinators/helping-in-our-own-backyards.htm>

ADVOCATE, COMMUNICATE, EDUCATE

Communicating about the need for pollinators and the need for native plants is a crucial step in maintaining a biodiverse, climate resilient, and beautiful landscape. By advocating for some of our most precious animals, wildlife, and ecosystems, you are helping not just yourself, but your community and the entire Earth. Conversing with neighbors, friends, and sharing what you are doing online are all great ways to spread the importance of caretaking for the natural world. For inspiration on local initiatives and resources go to <https://www.spearheadmhas.org/birds-and-bees.html> (and considering joining us!)