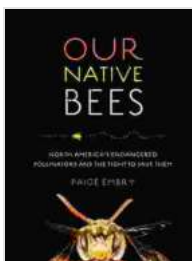


# North America's Endangered Pollinators: A Fight for Survival



## Our Native Bees: North America's Endangered Pollinators and the Fight to Save Them by Paige Embry

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

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Pollinators are essential to the survival of our planet. They play a vital role in the reproduction of over 90% of the world's flowering plants, including many of the fruits, vegetables, and nuts that we rely on for food. In North America, there are hundreds of species of pollinators, including bees, butterflies, moths, beetles, and flies. However, many of these species are now facing serious threats to their survival.

One of the biggest threats to pollinators is habitat loss. As human populations grow, we are encroaching on the natural habitats of pollinators, fragmenting their populations and making it difficult for them to find food and shelter. Another major threat is the use of pesticides. Pesticides are often used to control pests on crops, but they can also be harmful to pollinators. When pollinators come into contact with pesticides, they can be poisoned or killed.

Climate change is also a major threat to pollinators. As the climate warms, the ranges of many pollinator species are shifting northward. This can lead to mismatches between the timing of pollinator emergence and the availability of food sources. In addition, climate change is also increasing the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, such as droughts and heat waves, which can also be harmful to pollinators.

The decline of pollinators is a serious problem that has the potential to have a devastating impact on our food supply and the environment. However, there are many things that can be done to help save pollinators. One important step is to reduce our use of pesticides. We can also plant

pollinator-friendly gardens, which provide food and shelter for pollinators. In addition, we can support organizations that are working to conserve pollinators and their habitats.

Here are some specific things that you can do to help save pollinators:

- Reduce your use of pesticides.
- Plant pollinator-friendly gardens.
- Support organizations that are working to conserve pollinators and their habitats.
- Educate others about the importance of pollinators.
- Get involved in citizen science projects that are tracking the decline of pollinators.

By taking these steps, we can help to ensure the survival of pollinators and the many benefits that they provide.

## **The Importance of Pollinators**

Pollinators play a vital role in the reproduction of over 90% of the world's flowering plants. This includes many of the fruits, vegetables, and nuts that we rely on for food. In addition, pollinators also play a role in the reproduction of many wildflowers, which provide food and habitat for other animals.

The economic value of pollinators is estimated to be in the billions of dollars each year. In the United States alone, pollinators are responsible for pollinating over \$20 billion worth of crops each year.

In addition to their economic value, pollinators also play an important role in the environment. They help to maintain biodiversity by ensuring the reproduction of many different plant species. They also help to control pests by consuming insects that can damage crops.

## **Threats to Pollinators**

Pollinators are facing a number of serious threats to their survival, including:

- Habitat loss
- Pesticides
- Climate change
- Diseases
- Invasive species

## **Habitat Loss**

Habitat loss is one of the biggest threats to pollinators. As human populations grow, we are encroaching on the natural habitats of pollinators, fragmenting their populations and making it difficult for them to find food and shelter.

Pollinators rely on a variety of different habitats, including forests, grasslands, wetlands, and deserts. However, many of these habitats are being destroyed or degraded due to human activities, such as development, agriculture, and mining.

## **Pesticides**

Pesticides are another major threat to pollinators. Pesticides are often used to control pests on crops, but they can also be harmful to pollinators. When pollinators come into contact with pesticides, they can be poisoned or killed.

Some pesticides are more harmful to pollinators than others. For example, neonicotinoids are a class of pesticides that have been shown to be particularly harmful to bees. Neonicotinoids are systemic pesticides, which means that they are absorbed by the plant and then distributed throughout its tissues, including the nectar and pollen.

When bees collect nectar and pollen from plants that have been treated with neonicotinoids, they can be exposed to the pesticides. This can lead to a variety of health problems, including paralysis, disorientation, and death.

## **Climate Change**

Climate change is also a major threat to pollinators. As the climate warms, the ranges of many pollinator species are shifting northward. This can lead to mismatches between the timing of pollinator emergence and the availability of food sources.

In addition, climate change is also increasing the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, such as droughts and heat waves, which can also be harmful to pollinators.

## **Diseases**

Diseases are another threat to pollinators. Some diseases, such as the varroa mite, are specific to pollinators, while others, such as the fungal disease Nosema, can infect a variety of insects.

Diseases can weaken pollinators, making them more susceptible to other threats, such as pesticides and climate change. In some cases, diseases can also kill pollinators.

## **Invasive Species**

Invasive species are another threat to pollinators. Invasive species are plants or animals that have been introduced to an area outside of their native range. Invasive species can compete with native pollinators for food and habitat, and they can also transmit diseases to native pollinators.

One example of an invasive species that is a threat to pollinators is the Asian honey bee. The Asian honey bee is more aggressive than the native honey bee, and it can outcompete the native honey bee for food and nesting sites. In addition, the Asian honey bee can transmit diseases to the native honey bee.

## **What Can Be Done to Save Pollinators?**

There are many things that can be done to help save pollinators. Some of the most important things include:

- Reduce our use of pesticides.
- Plant pollinator-friendly gardens.
- Support organizations that are working to conserve pollinators and their habitats.
- Educate others about the importance of pollinators.
- Get involved in citizen science projects that are tracking the decline of pollinators.

## **Reduce Our Use of Pesticides**

One of the most important things that we can do to help save pollinators is to reduce our use of pesticides. We should only use pesticides when necessary, and we should choose pesticides that are less harmful to pollinators.

There are a number of different ways to reduce our use of pesticides. One way is to use integrated pest management (IPM) techniques. IPM is a holistic approach to pest control that emphasizes the use of non-chemical methods, such as crop rotation and biological control.

Another way to reduce our use of pesticides is to support organic farming. Organic farming is a method of farming that does not use synthetic pesticides or fertilizers. Organic farmers use natural methods to control pests and diseases, such as crop rotation and biological control.

## **Plant Pollinator-Friendly Gardens**

We can also help to save pollinators by planting pollinator-friendly gardens. Pollinator-friendly gardens are gardens that contain a variety of plants that bloom at different times of the year, providing a continuous source of food for pollinators.

Some good choices for pollinator-friendly plants include:

- Sunflowers
- Goldenrod
- Purple coneflowers
- Milkweed

- Lavender
- Aster
- Bee balm

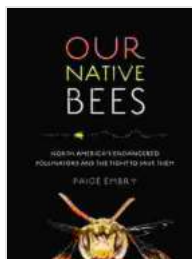
## Support Organizations That Are Working to Conserve Pollinators and Their Habitats

There are a number of organizations that are working to conserve pollinators and their habitats. These organizations are ng important work to protect pollinators from threats such as habitat loss, pesticides, and climate change.

We can support these organizations by donating money, volunteering our time, or spreading the word about their work.

## Educate Others About the Importance of Pollinators

We can also help to save pollinators by educating others about their importance



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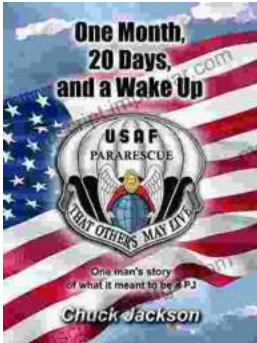
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