



# Protecting Pollinators

## Increasing knowledge and pollinator friendly practices to improve pollinator health and habitats

**Situation:** Insects are the base of multiple ecological food pyramids, and 41% of species worldwide are in rapid decline. This has had a cascading effect on other parts of the food chain; for example, nearly 40% of all songbirds, many of which depend on insects for a food source, have disappeared within the same time span. Insects are vital to our flora as well; some plants have evolved to be pollinated by only one type of insect (specialist insects), such as the Eastern fringed prairie orchid that relies on certain species of hawkmoths and sphinx moths. Others are pollinated by more generalist species. Pollinator loss directly affects humans as a third of the plant-based food crops that humans eat rely on insect pollination.

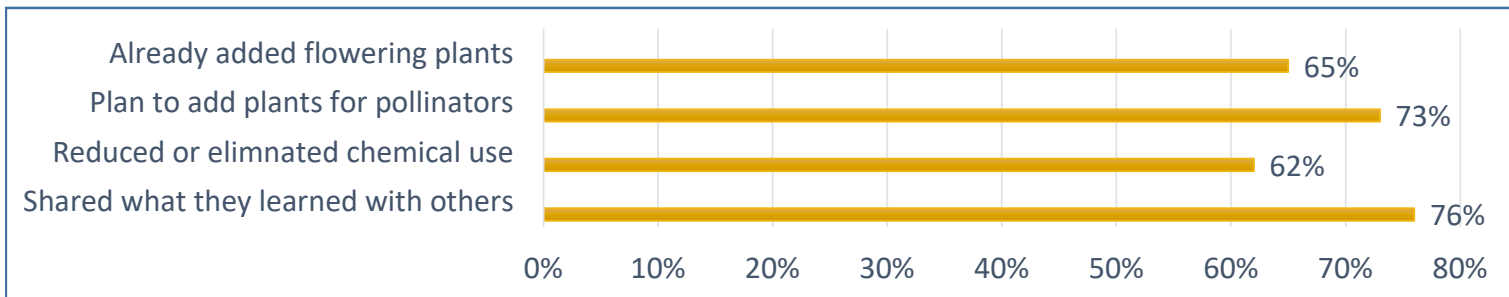
**Response:** Lisa Johnson, Dane County Extension Horticulture Educator, joined the Wisconsin Celebrates Pollinator Week team to create a plan for programming and resource creation. In May and June 2023, the team presented and recorded seven online webinars about various pollinator-related topics. Lisa presented the webinar 'Butterfly Garden Design' which had 210 attendees the day of the event and another 190+ people have viewed the video since. A [website](#) was developed with pollinator information and links to the recordings.

Lisa also collaborated with a colleague to produce a community radio show (Access Hour on WORT) about pollinators and native plants, gave a talk at the Aldo Leopold Nature Center (42 attendees), held an online Green Thumb Gardening classes on butterfly gardens and rain and pollinator gardens (56 attendees), and collaborated on a two-day pollinator-focused event with Dane County Parks (50 attendees).

Lisa provided two presentations at participating local libraries on pollinators and native plants and distributed more than 1000 bookmarks with information on pollinators to Dane County libraries. Some of the libraries created Pollinator Week displays to go with the bookmarks, which were handed out at the checkout desk.

UW-Madison Division of Extension's Horticulture Program provides research and evidence-based horticulture education, resources, and decision-making tools to home gardeners and commercial horticulture practitioners.

**Results:** In an 4 month follow-up survey, program participants indicated they:



These actions to increase the diversity and availability of habitat resources such as food and shelter, as well as decreasing stressors from pesticides will directly improve pollinator health and their habitats in Wisconsin.

### Feedback from participants in Lisa's Butterfly Garden Design webinar

*"Thank you!!! Your programs and resources are some of the best around! The caliber of information is outstanding."*

*"I've never done one of your courses before; I enjoyed it very much. It was very organized and well done."*

*"The information about what plants pollinators use for laying eggs as opposed to using as a nectar source was very useful."*



To learn more and watch the webinars:  
<https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/pollinator-week/>