

Protect Pollinators from Pesticides by Growing Pesticide-Free Plants

Pollinators like bees, butterflies, and bats are experiencing significant population declines. The widespread use of pesticide contributes to these declines. You can help struggling pollinators by making sure that the plants you cultivate that attract pollinators (including food plants) are free of harmful pesticide residues.

Here are some strategies to make sure plants are safe for pollinators:

1 Buy from nurseries that practice pollinator-friendly pest management.

Be wary of large retail nurseries, who source from wholesale nurseries that routinely apply pesticides to all plants (not just infected plants) without attempting non-chemical methods. These nurseries often use persistent herbicides and systemic insecticides, which permeate plants and can contaminate nectar and pollen long after purchase, especially in woody plants.

Instead, buy from small, local native plant nurseries who use integrated pest management to limit the use of pesticide as much as possible, and do not use systemic insecticides.



Scan for an interactive map of native plant nurseries in San Diego County!

2 Grow your own plants from seed.

Ensure that your plants are free of pesticide by growing them from seed yourself without the use of pesticide. There are plenty of options for native and nonnative flowers, herbs, and vegetables that provide valuable nectar or pollen resources for pollinators and are easy to grow from seed, such as marigolds, sunflowers, California poppy, basils, calendula, tomatoes, and lemon balm.



3 Buy organic plants and seeds.

Look for USDA Certified Organic plants and seeds, especially when purchasing plants known to be highly attractive to pollinators. Organic certification guidelines prohibit the use of most synthetic pesticides. You may be more likely to find organic plants at a small local nursery, native plant nursery, or at a farmers' market.



For more information, scan the QR on the left or visit xerces.org/publications/fact-sheets/buying-bee-safe-plants

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