

Earthtones

Summer 2021

How to Attract Pollinators to Your Yard

Did you know that one out of every three bites of food we eat relies on pollinators? Unfortunately, bees, butterflies, moths, bats, birds, beetles, and other insects, are facing challenges due to habitat loss, disease, parasites and pesticides. I think we can all agree that we cannot live without food. Fortunately, there are things we can all do to help increase our pollinators' chances of survival. Check out the tips below to attract pollinators to your own backyard.

The first step to attracting pollinators, is to diversify the plant community in your backyard. Take out the hedges that have taken over your front yard, and consider replacing them with a variety of shrubs, varying by species, height and blooming time. Grouping at least eight different species together attracts a considerably larger number and type of species. Pollinators particularly like flowers.



Next, go native. The cool thing about native flowers is that they adapt to local soil, and climate and pest conditions, making them hardier than cultivated varieties. Additionally, their smaller blooms often offer more nectar than hybrid varieties. This allows pollinators to use less energy as they feed. Natives also help you to cut down on fertilizer and watering. The more native flowers, the better!

While simply choosing native plants is important, it is even more important that you plant nectar-producing plants that bloom from early spring, to mid-summer, through late fall. This provides the pollinators with a habitat and food source all year.

Be sure to also include a few native warm season grasses, like Big-Bluestem, for overwintering habitat and weed resistance. Consider the specific plants some pollinators need to survive. For example, the Monarch Butterfly relies solely on milkweed as a nesting site and food source. Finally, choose a sunny location to plant your seeds.

Unlike what any experienced gardener would do, plant your seeds in a disorganized fashion. Nature likes untidiness. Bare areas with no mulch provide nesting areas for native bees. Small brush piles provide nesting sites for birds and bees, and if left undisturbed, provide overwintering shelters for many insects. Moreover, minimize the use of chemicals. Keep pesticides away from your pollinator habitat, as they can kill both your plants and the insects who benefit from them.

My hope after reading this, is that you are now inspired to plant a native pollinator garden in your backyard. It is important to purchase your seeds from a reputable source. Purchasing from a poor source, can increase your chances of receiving seed that is not truly native, or is an invasive species. The most important thing is to choose a local dealer. The Tallgrass Prairie Center at the University of Northern Iowa, is an excellent resource for finding a reputable seed dealer. Visit their website at tallgrassprairiecenter.org/seed-service-providers, for a list of local seed providers.



Spend Your Summer at the Park

With warm, sunny days ahead, it's the perfect time to get out and enjoy all the things Washington County Conservation has to offer! Whether you are camping all weekend or just out for the day, Marr Park has multiple amenities to make the most of your visit. Meet up with family and friends by renting one of our 5 facilities or camping in one of the 41 campground sites.

There are many different activities available while you spend your time here, including 4 playgrounds, 2 fishing ponds, 2 wading ponds, 1 bird blind, and multiple trails. And don't forget to stop by the Conservation Center to check out our new displays and educational snake and turtles!

Hall:

Seats 130 or 300 Standing
\$175 Rental & Deposit fee
Holidays - \$75/hour with 4-hour min.
16 8ft tables; 4 6ft tables
Kitchen Access - Stove & Fridge

Shelter 1:

Enclosed shelter at park entrance
\$40 Rental fee & \$50 Deposit fee
6 picnic tables
Covered patio
Wood stove & wood supplied

Shelter 2,3,4:

Open shelters
Free to rent
Reservations accepted

Mary Marr Lodge

Enclosed shelter between ponds
\$50 Rental & Deposit fee
Gazebo Rental: Extra \$25 Fee and Deposit
8 picnic tables; 2 standard tables
Covered Patio
Wood stove & wood supplied



Weddings

Open areas are no charge
\$50 deposit fee
Chosen area must be approved by WCCB

Coupon Books:

\$96 per book
Includes 7 coupons
Valid for 1 year from purchase date
No limit for books bought at one time

Campground Camping:

\$16/night
40 water & electric (50 amp) hookups
1 handicap site
Campers only allowed 14 consecutive days
\$5 dump fee for non-overnight guests
Sites are First Come, First Serve

Tent Camping:

\$10/night
Only in designated area (north of pond)
Allowed on campground for \$16

Amenities:

Dump Station
Shower House
Fire Wood

For rental date availability, open campsites, or general information, contact the Washington County Conservation Center at 319-657-2400 or email wscountyconservation@gmail.com

Word Search

Help Smokey
Find the Words Below
in the Puzzle

R	W	C	A	M	P	F	I	R	E	H	I	H
E	A	G	L	E	H	Y	E	W	P	S	N	E
O	T	N	S	A	C	B	I	R	D	I	S	L
Q	E	M	G	N	M	A	E	U	Y	F	E	P
D	R	I	B	E	A	L	R	A	E	R	C	R
O	E	R	M	U	R	K	D	E	R	F	T	E
C	P	E	A	D	C	D	E	I	F	V	S	V
H	R	L	R	B	P	K	U	E	R	U	G	A
I	T	W	A	K	B	Q	E	C	C	T	L	E
P	L	O	C	E	S	I	C	T	K	U	Y	B
M	O	I	C	B	U	T	T	E	R	F	L	Y
U	S	H	O	V	E	L	T	M	O	O	S	E
N	Q	W	O	N	P	L	F	W	O	L	F	C
K	V	X	N	D	P	R	E	V	E	N	T	Z

ANSWERS

MOOSE	BIRD	DUCK	FISH	DIRT
BEAR	SNAKE	RACCOON	CAREFUL	SQUIRREL
RANGER	BUTTERFLY	WATER	INSECTS	REMEMBER
DEER	EAGLE	CHIPMUNK	CAMPFIRE	HELP
OWL	SHOVEL	PREVENT	WOLF	
BUCKET	BEAVER	RABBIT	LION	

Teaser Alert

It is expected that in September 2021, WCCB will be increasing its camping rates in order to insure we stay competitive with surrounding recreation areas. Beginning on November 1, 2021 we will be running a holiday special for coupon books at \$96 (current rate) until December 31, 2021.

Cash is not kept on hand so please have the exact amount or use checks

Summer Calendar

The Washington County Conservation Board meets the second Thursday of each month. Meetings are held at the Conservation Education Center in Marr Park at 4:30 p.m.

Sat. June 26th 8:30 p.m.-10:30 p.m. Shelter #3
Movie Night at the Park

Join us at Shelter #3 for movie night! Bring your own chairs or blankets to sit on, as well as your own snacks and drinks. Keep an eye on our Facebook page for the movie title reveal.

Sat. July 3rd 9:30 a.m. CEC
Turtles of Iowa

Come out to the Conservation Center for an all-ages program about Turtles. Kids will be able to touch the live turtles we have at the Conservation Center and we will go on a short hike afterwards to see if we can find some basking in our ponds!

Wedns. July 7th 9:30 a.m.- 10:30 a.m. CEC
Toddler Time

Join us at the Nature Center for Toddler Time! This month, we are going to be learning all about the critters that are found in our wetlands. The kiddos will get the chance to look at them through a magnifying glass.

Sat. July 24th 9:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. CEC
Fly Fishing Clinic

Ever wanted to try fly fishing but have no idea where to start? WCCB is joined with fly fishing expert Mike Canas, for an adult clinic. Each participant will have the opportunity to fish. To register, please call us at 319-657-2400. The event is limited to 10.

Wedns. August 4th 9:30 a.m.- 10:30 a.m. CEC
Toddler Time

Join us at the Nature Center for Toddler Time! This month, we will be learning all about the life cycle of the Monarch Butterfly! We might even see some Monarchs, as they make their home in the prairie by the nature center.

Sat. August 14th 9:30 a.m. CEC
Dino-Dig

Come out to the Conservation Center for an all-ages program about Dinosaurs. Kids will have the opportunity to dig for dinosaur bones to see if they can correctly assemble the dinosaur and identify it!

Washington County Conservation Board

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Members: Craig Capps
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Megan Jorgensen, Naturalist
Randi Brase, Naturalist Assistant
Fritz Engel, Maint. Supervisor
Cody Smith, Ranger/Technician
Brett Johnson, Ranger/Technician

Washington County Conservation Board meetings are held the second Thursday of each month at 4:30 p.m. at the Conservation Education Center. Visitors are welcome.

The WCCB is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

If you would like a copy of this newsletter in larger print, please contact our office.

This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.

WASHINGTON COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD
2943 HIGHWAY 92
AINSWORTH, IA 52201

Electronic Service Requested

***Summer
Center Hours***
Tuesday-Thursday
8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Friday-Saturday
9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Closed
Sunday-Monday

Halloween Hike 2021

Join us for our annual Halloween Hike on Saturday, October 16th. This year, enter the Tall Tale Trail, where you will be introduced to a traditional Native American story at each station. Additionally, there will be fun activities along the way. The event will start at 6:00 p.m. with the last chance to enter the trail being 8:00 p.m.

For those unfamiliar with the event, our Halloween Hike is a family-friendly event, with entertainment for children of all ages. The hike will begin with check-in at the parking lot south of the nature center, or near the boat ramp. Participants will follow the portion of the Prairie Girl Trail that goes around the large pond. The hike will end at the Conservation Education Center, where refreshments will be served.



We encourage all of our participants, including the adults, to get in the Halloween spirit, and dress in their favorite Halloween costume. Who knows, you may even see some of our staff members joining in on the fun! After all, who says dressing up on Halloween is just for kids?

We look forward to hosting our Halloween Hike every fall. It provides us with the opportunity to give back to our communities for all of the support they provide us throughout the year, whether it be through the use of our outdoor recreation areas, or through their generous donations to the conservation board. Questions or concerns about the event? Give us a call at 319-657-2400.