



Connecticut Council on Soil and Water Conservation

Press Contact: Lilian Ruiz, Executive Director

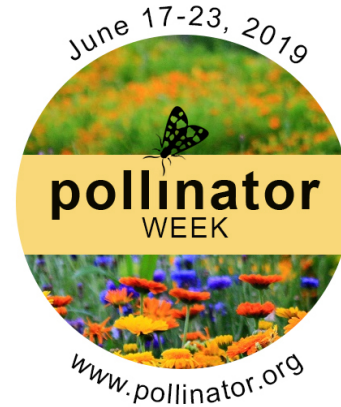
33 Mead Ave. Cos Cob, CT 06807

203-424-8469 ctcouncilswc@gmail.com

Press Release

Time to Celebrate Our Butterflies and Bees!

The Connecticut Council on Soil and Water Conservation is pleased to announce that Governor Ned Lamont has proclaimed June 17-23, 2019 as **POLLINATOR WEEK** in the State of Connecticut. Twelve years ago the U.S. designated a week in June as “National Pollinator Week” to bring attention to the issue of declining pollinator populations. “With the proclamation, Connecticut joins what has grown into an international celebration of bees, birds, butterflies, bats, beetles, and other pollinators” states Lilian Ruiz, Executive Director for the CT Council on Soil and Water Conservation. “We were thrilled to receive the Governor’s proclamation and acknowledgement of this important issue.”



Pollinators are estimated to be responsible for the pollination of 75% to 95% of flowering plant species on earth. The plants provide not only much of the food we eat, but healthy forests for clean air and clean water. Unfortunately, pollinator populations are threatened mostly due to loss of habitat. Additionally, pollution, misuse of chemicals, disease, and climate change are all contributing to the decline.

In Connecticut, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and private citizens across the state are working hard to protect pollinators and the valuable ecosystem services they provide.

The five Conservation Districts in Connecticut provide technical assistance to municipalities and landowners related to soil health, water quality, and habitat protection. "Supporting pollinator health is a big part of the CT Conservation District annual spring plant sales" explains Jane Brawerman, Executive Director for the CT River Coastal Conservation District. "One of the criteria we use in selecting plants to sell, almost all of which are native to CT, is their value to a variety of pollinators--including bees, flies, butterflies and hummingbirds--from early in the season through the fall."

The CT Dept. of Transportation has been working on pollinator habitat in road right of ways beginning in 2017 with eight sites. They have expanded the program to 50 sites this year as designated “Conservation Areas”, as explained in a press release earlier this year. “We’re very proud of this program and excited to get it off the ground” stated Kimberly Lesay, Connecticut DOT Transportation Assistant Planning Director.

According to Mary Ellen Lemay, Facilitator, Hudson to Housatonic Regional Conservation Partnership and member of the Pollinator Pathway team, Connecticut has become a leader in pollinator awareness starting with the approval of the Pollinator Protection Act (2016) and the subsequent launch of the Pollinator Pathway in Fairfield County in 2017. The Pathway has grown to over 40 towns in CT and over the border into NY in the last 2 years. The Pollinator Pathway teams have encouraged the planting of native plants and the avoidance of pesticides and herbicides. “Transforming our backyards into pollinator habitats has the ability to help reverse the decline in biodiversity that pesticides and exotic plants have created,” explains Lemay. “By connecting people across town lines and across our landscape, the Pollinator Pathway is an effective strategy for restoring the natural world around us.”



Photo credit. D. Savageau 2018

For more information on Pollinators in Connecticut and the efforts to protect them, go to the following links.

Connecticut’s Conservation Districts – for technical information and annual plant sale contact your local district.

<https://www.conservect.org/>

Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES)

<https://portal.ct.gov/CAES/Publications/Publications/Pollinator-Information>

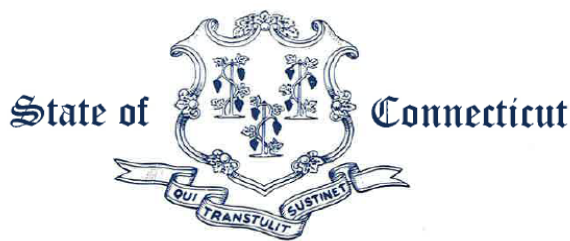
Pollinator Pathways

<https://www.pollinator-pathway.org/>

Connecticut Department of Transportation Pollinator Program

<https://www.ct.gov/dot/cwp/view.asp?A=1373&Q=608658>

*****END*****



By His Excellency Ned Lamont, Governor: an
Official Statement

*W*HEREAS, pollinator species, including birds, mammals, and insects, are essential partners of farmers and ranchers in producing much of our food supply; and

*W*HEREAS, pollination plays a vital role in the health of our national forests and grasslands, which provide forage, fish and wildlife, timber, water, mineral resources, and recreational opportunities in addition to enhanced economic development opportunities for communities; and

*W*HEREAS, pollinator species provide significant environmental benefits that are necessary for maintaining healthy, bio-diverse ecosystems; and

*W*HEREAS, the State of Connecticut is home to at least 326 documented species of wild bees in addition to the domesticated honey bee; and

*W*HEREAS, the State of Connecticut provides assistance to beekeepers throughout the state through the work of the State Apiary Inspector, as well as providing research on both domesticated honey bees and wild bees at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station and the University of Connecticut; and

*W*HEREAS, the State of Connecticut has managed wildlife habitats and public lands, such as State forests and grasslands, for decades; and

*W*HEREAS, the State of Connecticut provides producers with conservation assistance to promote wise conservation stewardship, including the protection and maintenance of pollinators and their habitats on working lands and wild lands; now

*T*HEREFORE, I, Ned Lamont, Governor of the State of Connecticut, do hereby proclaim the week of June 17 – 23, 2019 as

POLLINATOR WEEK
in the State of Connecticut.



Ned Lamont

GOVERNOR