



WHAT ARE POLLINATORS?

Pollinators are essential to plants' growth and overall health. Many plants are unable to pollinate with other plants on their own due to their lack of mobility. Pollinators are animals or insects that assist plants by unintentionally transferring pollen from one plant to another. This allows plants to reproduce and grow. Examples of pollinators include butterflies, bees, bats, hummingbirds, and even slugs.

WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

Pollinators are vital to all ecosystems. Without pollinators, 30% of the food we eat today would not exist! The earth would not be as beautiful. And many animals would die due to lack of plant food. Bees, in particular, are expert pollinators. Their bodies have evolved to hold as much pollen as possible. They spend their entire lives traveling between different flowers, causing cross pollination. Cross-pollination is a type of pollen distribution many plants need to survive. Thus, without bees, many plant species would die.

HOW CAN I HELP THEM FROM HOME?

Bee populations are rapidly declining due to habitat loss, pesticides, and global climate change. There are, however, a few things you can do at home to help.

NATIVE PLANT GARDEN

Plant a garden with native plant species is a simple and easy way to help save pollinators. These plants can provide a safe nesting area for native bees. Ensuring that only native plant species are in your garden is also important. Invasive plants can sometimes destroy entire plant ecosystems. These plants are known to sometimes kill native plants in order to get more food and energy from the sun. Residents of Mississippi can learn more about native plant species and how to care for them [here](#).

AVOID PESTICIDES

Pesticides are chemicals used to kill insects and other pests in yards and gardens. This, however, also kills bees and other pollinators. There are a few different ways you can avoid killing pollinators via pesticides:

1. Avoid spraying the flowers themselves.
2. Use less toxic and faster degrading pesticides.
3. Pay attention to the formula of pesticide used.