



To: Newsroom Directors and Assignment Editors

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Celebrate National Pollinator Week

Governor Minner proclaims the week of June 24 – 30 as Pollinator Week in Delaware

On June 21, Governor Ruth Ann Minner proclaimed the week of June 24 -30, 2007 as **Pollinator Week in Delaware**. “I am very aware of the essential role our bees, butterflies, birds and other pollinators play in our food supply,” said Governor Ruth Ann Minner. “They are also vital to maintaining our environmental quality. I hope that all Delawareans will become more aware of the importance of our pollinator friends and help protect them and their habitats.”

Pollinators are among the hardest working creatures on earth. Most of the 200,000 species that act as pollinators are insects. One thousand are hummingbirds, bats, and small mammals such as mice. These creatures transfer pollen grains from flower to flower of the same species so the plants can reproduce. You might ask why this is so important, but our food supply and our quality of life would be seriously impacted if we lost our pollinators. For example, seventy-five percent of world’s flowering plant species rely on pollinators. Also, 130 of the crop plants grown in the United States are pollinated by bees. The rich biodiversity in our forests and other natural areas is dependent both directly and indirectly upon our native pollinators.

According to the USDA Forest Service:

- *Worldwide, approximately 1,000 plants grown for food, beverages, fibers, spices, and medicines need to be pollinated by animals in order to produce the goods on which we depend.*
- *Foods and beverages produced with the help of pollinators include: apples, bananas, blueberries, chocolate, coffee, melons, peaches, potatoes, pumpkins, vanilla, almonds, and tequila. (Imagine a world without some of these things!)*
- *In the United States, pollination by honeybees and other insects produces \$40 billion worth of products annually!*

Many of our pollinators are threatened by human activities, loss of habitat, diseases, and other factors. Some are disappearing at startling rates. Much has been written lately about the decline in domesticated honey bees. Dr. Faith Kuehn, Delaware Department of Agriculture’s (DDA) Plant Industries Administrator, says, “There are low cost pollinator-friendly practices that we can all utilize to help protect our pollinators and their habitat. These include planting nectar and pollen rich native plants, and minimizing the use of insecticides. We have included native plants such as coneflower, aster, joe pye weed, boneset and bee balm to attract bees, butterflies and other beneficial insects. Native plants tend to be low maintenance and hardy, because they are adapted to our region. Anyone who has a yard, or manages land or farms land can create a pollinator-friendly landscape.” The pollinator garden also

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contains 2 species of milkweed, and the Department's garden has been designated as an Official Monarch Waystation (#1172, www.monarchwatch.org). Monarch waystations are a nationwide system to provide habitat for monarch butterflies to stop along their migratory route to Mexico (www.monarchwatch.org). These habitats provide nectar sources and the required host plant of milkweed, so butterflies can lay their eggs.

Dr. Kuehn has joined forces with University of Delaware Professor and Extension Entomologist Dr. Dewey Caron, a bee expert, for a four-year research project, "Farming for Native Bees," that will inventory and catalog native bee pollinators of Delaware's vine crops, such as watermelon, cucumber, squash and cantaloupe. This four-year project is funded by NESARE (Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education). Information gathered from this research will help develop management practice recommendations to enhance native bee populations and to enhance their valuable pollination activities in vine crops. During 2006, the pilot year of this project, 76 species of native bees were collected, including six new Delaware State record bees, ones that had never before been collected in the state. The USDA-NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) has also provided grant support to this project, for development of two publications. The first will detail groups of native plants that provide forage and habitat for native pollinator insects. The second will provide row crop best management practices for creating and improving pollinator habitat.



Placing bee bowls at field's edge to sample native bees

*Heather Harmon, DDA Entomologist and Ben Cramer, DDA bee assistant. Fifer Orchards, Wyoming, DE.
Photo: Randy Ciurlino, DDA*



Collecting bee bowl sample from Bee Meadow at Lister Acres, Harrington, DE

*Heather Harmon, DDA Entomologist
Photo: Randy Ciurlino, DDA*

Electronic copies of the pictures are available: anne.fitzgerald@state.de.us

STATE OF DELAWARE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR



STATEMENT
IN RECOGNITION OF
NATIONAL POLLINATOR WEEK

Whereas, approximately 75 percent of the world's flowering plant species rely on pollinators to complete their life cycle and start seeds and fruit production; and

Whereas, our food supply and that of animals', which supply us with meat and dairy products, is largely dependent on pollinators successfully transferring pollen from one plant to another; and

Whereas, approximately 130 of the crop plants grown in the U.S. are pollinated by bees; and

Whereas, pollination by insects, birds and other animals is essential for maintaining the structure and function of a wide range of natural communities in Delaware and throughout North America; and

Whereas, many of our native pollinators, both large and small, including bees, butterflies and various insects, birds, and bats, are all threatened by human activities, habitat loss, invasive species, and disease; and

Whereas, there are many simple, low cost pollinator-friendly practices that can be utilized by homeowners, farmers and land managers to protect our food and fiber supply, as well as our quality of life.

*Now, Therefore, We, Ruth Ann Minner, Governor,
and John C. Carney, Jr., Lieutenant Governor,
do hereby declare June 24 – 30, 2007*

POLLINATOR WEEK

in the State of Delaware, recognizing the importance of pollinators to our agricultural industry and to our quality of life, while urging Delawareans to better understand how invaluable these creatures are to our way of life, while resolving to protect them and their habitats for future generations to come.



Ruth Ann Minner
Ruth Ann Minner
Governor

John C. Carney, Jr.
John C. Carney, Jr.
Lieutenant Governor

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