wild about *Pollinators*

This illustration shows native pollinators from all over Canada interacting with their environment and foraging among cultivated and native plants at various times of the year. Some are favourites, others are less known or feared, but all are extremely important.

Pollinators are animals that transfer pollen from one flower to another, mainly while drinking nectar and gathering pollen. They are critical for flowering plants to develop fruit with viable seeds that we (and wildlife) can eat.

From blueberries to cocoa beans, pollinators worldwide are responsible for some of the yummiest foods. It is estimated that their services contribute over a billion dollars annually to the Canadian economy. Equally important, they help to keep ecosystems healthy by maintaining a diversity of plants and keeping various insect populations in check.

Many of our pollinators are in decline. Challenges include habitat loss and degradation, pesticide use, various agricultural practices, infection, disease, climate change and introduced species.

You can help! Share the wonders of these remarkable creatures with friends and neighbours. Grow regionally native plants that flower from spring to fall. Provide a shallow water dish with perching stones in your yard. Leave an undisturbed area of plants and fallen leaves in your garden and open areas of soil for nesting, mud-puddling, sheltering and overwintering. Maintain your outdoor spaces in an earth-friendly way, and remember to be patient with caterpillars that are eating their way to butterfly-hood.

A *Rufous hummingbird* ***(Selasphorus rufus)***
Native to most of British Columbia, southern Yukon and western Alberta.
Flies and spiders are a source of protein and fat for hummingbirds, like this male rufous hummingbird shown near the wild columbine whose flowers provide carbohydrates.

B *Ruby-throated hummingbird* ***(Archilochus colubris)***
Native from Alberta to Nova Scotia.
Like this male ruby-throated at a Canada lily, hummingbirds drink nectar from tubular flowers. Their nests are typically made of soft plant material on the inside and lichen, moss and tree bark on the outside, held together with spider webs.

C *Silvery blue butterfly* ***(Glaucopsyche lygdamus)***
Native to all provinces and territories.
This insect is "mud-puddling" to get nutrients from damp earth. As caterpillars, they provide ants with a sweet liquid secreted from their skin. The ants, in turn, protect the caterpillars from predators and parasites.

D *Canadian tiger swallowtail* ***(Papilio canadensis)***
Native to Yukon and British Columbia to Newfoundland.
Butterflies, like this yellow and black swallowtail, drink with their proboscises – long, thin, coiled mouthparts common to butterflies and moths. As caterpillars, they feed on leaves of cherry, willow and ash trees, among others.

E *Monarch butterfly* ***(Danaus plexippus)***
Native from British Columbia to Newfoundland.
Adult monarchs feed on all sorts of flowers, but they only lay their eggs on milkweed. This swamp milkweed is one of 14 species native to Canada, including common milkweed. If you look closely, you will spot a monarch caterpillar and chrysalis (cocoon) nearby.

F *Hummingbird clearwing moth* ***(Hemaris thysbe)***
Native throughout most of Canada.
Often mistaken for hummingbirds, these neat moths pollinate a variety of flowers, like this native bee balm. As fully grown caterpillars, they burrow in the leaf litter to make a cocoon, emerging soon after or waiting until the following spring.

G *Paper wasp* ***(Polistes sp.)***
Native species are found across Canada.
Paper wasps, hornets and yellow jackets are often feared because they can be defensive when their nest is threatened, and can inflict many painful stings. However, they are not always aggressive. Watch for them calmly sipping nectar from flowers, like this paper wasp on a wild purple aster.

H *Green sweat bee* ***(Agapostemon sp.)***
Native species are found across southern Canada.
These bees are beautifully coloured, like this green sweat bee on a native sunflower. Due to their appearance and colour, these fast-flying creatures are sometimes mistaken for flies or wasps.

I *Mason bee* ***(Osmia sp.)***
Native species are found across Canada.
Mason bees are important pollinators to fruit tree crops, such as apples. They nest alone in long, narrow spaces like hollow plant stems. They lay several eggs, each in its own chamber, with walls made from mud or chewed leaves.

J *Bumblebee* ***(Bombus sp.)***
Native species are found across Canada (even on Ellesmere Island!).
Of all of Canada's bees, the most recognizable is the large, fuzzy bumblebee. They are important for pollinating some popular food crops, like tomatoes and strawberries.

K *Polyester bee* ***(Colletes sp.)***
Native species are found across Canada.
Polyester bees line their nests with a cellophane-like secretion using their unique two-lobe tipped tongue. This secretion helps protect the developing bees from fungal disease and acts as a waterproof barrier.

L *Mining bee* ***(Andrena sp.)***
Native species are found across Canada.
These bees are among the first to become active in spring and look for early blooming plants like red maple. Don't worry if you notice these bees nesting in your lawn; their stinger isn't strong enough to puncture human skin.

M *Hover fly* ***(Syrphus sp.)***
Native species are found across Canada.
The adult hover fly consumes nectar or pollen from plants like wild roses to fuel their energy needs, while their larvae prey on aphids. The adults are easy to spot with their yellow and black stripes that mimic the warning colours of wasps and bees.

N *Checkered beetle* ***(Trichodes sp.)***
Native species are found across Canada.
While adult checkered beetles feed on pollen from plants like sunflowers, most beetles in this family have predacious larvae that develop in bee, grasshopper and wood-boring-insect nests.

Can you spot ...

- The bee drinking water?
- The tree whose leaf is on the Canadian flag?
- Three butterflies?
- The seven types of pollinators found in Canada?

Visit **WildAboutGardening.org** for answers, fun interactive games, neat facts and much more!

CANADIAN WILDLIFE FEDERATION

CanadianWildlifeFederation.ca/pollinators | **1.800.563.9453**
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