Pollinator partners

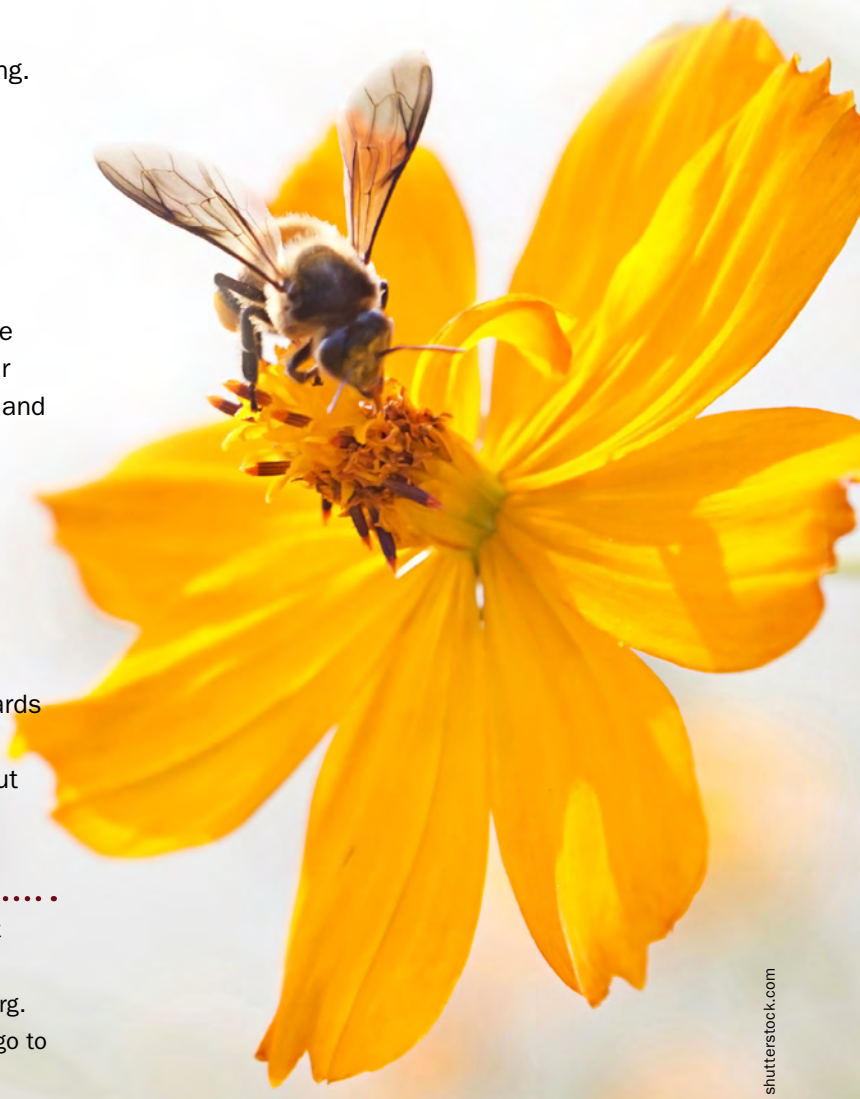
What a treat to take a hike on a nice fall day in Wyoming.

An abundance of beautiful wildflowers rewards our wintertime patience and with a closer look, you'll notice a variety of insect species and other animals visiting the flowers.

It has been reported that more than 75 percent of flowering plants, including those that feed us, rely on animal pollinators. Pollinators help move pollen around the reproductive parts of a flower, helping plants produce their seeds. In return, pollinators are fed by the nectar, pollen, and even parts of the flower. This system is amazing and very interesting to observe.

Take the photo quiz (following page) to see if you can match the pollinator to its plant pal.

You can learn more about planting for pollinators in *Promoting Pollinators on your Place – A Wyoming Guide* (bit.ly/promoting-pollinators) and don't forget to check out the resource section (bit.ly/backyard-resources) of Barnyards and Backyards website for help with sourcing native seed and planting tips. For the young ones in your life, check out Pollinator Pals (bit.ly/pollinator-pals).



Thiti Sukapan, shutterstock.com

Jacelyn Downey is an educator with Audubon Rockies and spent much of her COVID-19 quarantine time observing and identifying plants and their pollinators via iNaturalist. Join in at inaturalist.org. To learn more about Audubon Rockies plants for birds program, go to https://rockies.audubon.org/habitat-hero.

Pollinators

Davide Bonora, shutterstock.com

1. Beetle—Tends to like easily accessible, bowl-shaped flowers with lots of pollen. (Photo: Longhorned flower beetle)

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2. Bee—Bright white, yellow, and blue flowers with sticky pollen and a sweet scent will attract bees. (Photo: Sweat bee)

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3. Moth—Often active at night, have long, nectar-slurping tongues (proboscis) and are attracted to heavily perfumed and dull-colored or pale flowers. (Photo: Hawkmoth)

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4. Fly—Most are drawn to putrid smelling flowers that are dingy, patchy, or brown, but bee-mimics tend to favor flowers similar to those bees prefer. (Photo: Bee fly)

Jacelyn Downey, Audubon Rockies

5. Hummingbird—Likes bright red, orange, and pink funnel-shaped flowers packed with nectar to fuel their endless appetites. (Photo: Broad-tailed hummingbird)

Jacelyn Downey, Audubon Rockies

6. Butterfly—Attracted to brightly colored, tube-shaped flowers with a deep well of nectar that can be accessed by their long tongue (proboscis). (Photo: Painted lady)

Match the pollinator with the plant:

1._____ 2._____ 3._____ 4._____ 5._____ 6._____

Plants

Dominic Gentilcore, shutterstock.com

A. Tufted evening primrose—As the name suggests, this flower opens in the evening.

Dominic Gentilcore, shutterstock.com

B. Plains prickly pear—Always a treat to catch a cactus during its bloom, especially for pollinators.

masianya, shutterstock.com

C. Pasqueflower—This flower blooms early in the season and can be a huge help to our pollinator visitors in early spring.

Marty Nelson, shutterstock.com

D. Scarlet gilia—This brightly colored flower blooms June through August providing migrating pollinators a tasty treat.

Ghislain118, www.fleurs-des-montagnes.net, CC BY-SA

E. Kelsey's phlox—These flowers offer an attractive and easily accessible landing pad for pollinators.

Marek Walica, shutterstock.com

F. Black-eyed Susan—This crowd pleaser is easy to find, easy to grow, and pollinated by many.

How did you do?

1. BEETLE—B. PLAINS PRICKLY PEAR. 2. BEE—C. PASQUEFLOWER. 3. MOTH—A. TUFTED EVENING PRIMROSE. 4. FLY—F. BLACK-EYED SUSAN. 5. HUMMINGBIRD—D. SCARLET GILIA. 6. BUTTERFLY—E. KELSEY'S PHLOX