

Rating pollinator habitat

Pollinators need space, food, water, and shelter for their populations to thrive. Pollinator habitat can be a natural prairie or meadow or it could be an urban garden with flowering plants cultivated for pollinators. No matter the location, type, or size of the habitat, the flowering plants must provide nutrition and nesting space.

Spaces that are good for pollinators contain different types of plant species to ensure that bloom times range from early spring to late fall. This is to make sure that flowers will be available for pollination throughout their season of activity.

Also, the type of flowers and nesting sites available to pollinators must be considered, as they vary with vegetation type. For example, bees prefer a wide range of plants, some that might only provide pollen, while others provide pollen and nectar. Flower size, shape, and structure matter. Some native bees are quite large and have a preference for big flowers, while others may favour bell-shaped flowers over flat ones. Also, planting in masses rather than single plants is more likely to attract pollinators.

Habitats that are large and connected are much better than small patchy ones.

Habitats face anthropogenic stressors, such as intensive agriculture, monoculture, the use of chemical pesticides, and alteration or destruction of native habitat. An increase in these activities leaves pollinators more susceptible to diseases and pests.

Some tips for using the assessment tool effectively

- Take a moment to read over the checklist to find out what factors are measured and the scoring process
- Be sure to enter all data; do not omit some figures because they seem “off” – this information could be more valuable than you think
- Add any notes, explanations, or documentation you think could supplement a reader’s understanding of your habitat assessment



Habitat assessment form

Date (YYYY/MM/DD): _____ Air temp at start (°C): _____
Wind speed at start (km/h): _____ Observer(s): _____
Location: _____ Start time: _____ End time: _____

1. Percentage of site dominated by wildflowers:

- 1–15% 10 points
- 16–30% 15 points
- 31–45% 20 points
- 46–60% 25 points
- > 61% 30 points

TOTAL points = _____

2. Percentage of site dominated by native species cover:

- 1–25% 5 points
- 26–50% 10 points
- 51–75% 15 points
- 75–100% 20 points

TOTAL points = _____

3. Seasons with at least 1 blooming species (check/add all that apply):

- Spring 15 points
- Summer 5 points
- Fall 5 points

TOTAL points = _____

4. Habitat resource within 300 m (check/add all that apply):

- Undisturbed native grasses for nesting 7.5 points
- Undisturbed trees and shrubs for nesting 7.5 points
- Clean, flowing, perennial water sources 5 points

TOTAL points = _____

5. Percentage of area where pesticides are applied:

- 1–25% -20 points
- 26–50% -25 points
- 51–75% -30 points
- 76–100% -35 points

TOTAL points = _____

6. Additional components than influence habitat:

- Clear pollinator protection plan in place 5 points
- Within 250 m of urban development -5 points

TOTAL points = _____

GRAND TOTAL = _____