



# Be a Bee Advocate

## Dear Beesponsible® Advocates,

While North America is blessed with diverse wildlife and abundant natural resources, including more than 4,000 native-bee species, more than one-third of our nation's wildlife species are at risk of extinction in coming decades. This includes bees and pollinators. Bee decline threatens to deprive future generations of the wonder and beauty of bees and pollinators - and is an ominous sign of the worsening health of our ecosystems. This is a crisis we can solve, but only if we work together.

Bees need all of us to make our homes, businesses, schools and community spaces more bee-friendly by planting the healthy habitat they need to survive. That's why [Beesponsible®](#) has teamed up with the National Wildlife Federation to promote Beesponsible® actions and advocacy for bees.

Enclosed you'll find super simple tools – everything you need to ask your friends, family and local government to Beesponsible®. Together, we can ensure that future generations have the chance to enjoy America's diversity of bees.



### Rusty Patched Bumble Bee

The rusty patched bumble bee (*Bombus affinis*) recently became the first bee in the continental U.S. to be declared endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. A species that was once common is now limited to 0.1% of its range.



**Collin O'Mara**  
President and CEO  
National Wildlife  
Federation



**Jessica Cummings**  
Founder  
Beesponsible

## Bees and other Pollinators

The most well-known bee species is the European honey bee, which was introduced to North America and primarily exists as a domesticated species in hives managed by commercial agriculture and hobbyist beekeepers for their honey, beeswax, and pollination services. As a result, honey bees are important to our food supply and the agriculture economy.

Beyond the non-native honey bee, North America has over 4,000 species of native bees. They come in all sizes, from large carpenter and bumble bees, to tiny sweat, mason and leafcutter bees. Some have the black and yellow coloration we associate with bees, but many lack stripes or have shiny green, black or blue coloration. Bumble bees and some sweat bees form communal hives but most native bee species don't form hives for nesting or produce honey. Ninety percent of native bees are solitary nesters, laying eggs in tunnels in the ground, in hollow plant stems or decaying wood.

**Without healthy pollinator populations—bees in particular—our agricultural food production and natural ecosystems cannot function.**

Bees are pollinators that move from flower-to-flower while searching for protein-rich pollen or high-energy nectar to eat. Pollinators are essential to the food supply for people and for wildlife. As they visit flowers in search of food, they are dusted by pollen and move it to the next flower, fertilizing the plant and allowing it to reproduce and form seeds, berries, fruits and other plant foods that form the foundation of the food chain for other species—including humans.

In North America, bees, butterflies, moths and some species of beetles, wasps and flies are pollinators, along with hummingbirds and two bat species. Without healthy pollinator populations—bees in particular—our agricultural food production and natural ecosystems cannot function.

## Bees in Crisis

Bees have been declining, both commercially-managed honey bee colonies (with over 28 percent annual loss rate over a recent decade) and some native bees, including the once-common rusty patched bumble bee. Potential causes of these declines include habitat destruction, disease, agricultural and lawn and garden practices (including use of pesticides), honey bee management techniques, changes in land use, invasive species, climate change, or a combination of these stresses together. These are the top contributing factors to the decline of bees. By addressing these, we have the potential to reverse that trend:

### Habitat Loss

There are less places for bees to call home. Bees need native plant communities that supply the pollen and nectar they feed themselves and their young. Bees also need nesting habitat since most native bee species nest in underground tunnels, hollow plant stems or tunnels in decaying wood.



One third of all the food we eat is the direct result of animal pollinators.

### Pesticides

Use of insecticides and herbicides can kill habitat for pollinators. Use of insecticides can kill pollinators and herbicides destroy their habitat. Evidence is mounting that the widely used neonicotinoids insecticides are a significant problem.

### Disease

Increases in parasites and pathogens are affecting commercial honey bee hives and these diseases can be passed on to some native bee populations.

## 3 Steps to Be A Bee Advocate

We can help address these issues on a personal level by creating bee-friendly gardens and registering them as [Certified Wildlife Habitats](#) with the National Wildlife Federation. We must also get active “beyond our backyards” and Beesponsible® in our communities by taking actions to help reverse the alarming trend of bee decline. This section provides three easy steps to multiply your impact!



### 1 Tell a friend

Ask your friends to Beesponsible® on social media, here are some sample posts!

Save the Bees – Our honey bees and native bees are in trouble. Their populations are declining. You can make a difference in your own garden by partnering with @NWF and @Beesponsible. LEARN MORE: [www.beesponsible.com/do/beesponsible-living](http://www.beesponsible.com/do/beesponsible-living)

Ditch the chemicals in the garden this year! A pesticide-free garden is a healthy garden for you and your family and for the bees that rely on healthy plants and their pollen and nectar. Learn more at: [www.beesponsible.com/do/beesponsible-living](http://www.beesponsible.com/do/beesponsible-living)

Don't have a yard to plant for bees? You can still help bees! Consider putting a container garden on your balcony, roof or front porch. Join a community garden. Help a local school or library plant a garden. Learn more at: [www.beesponsible.com/do/beesponsible-living](http://www.beesponsible.com/do/beesponsible-living)

### 2 Ask your city council to pass a Beesponsible® Proclamation

Proclamations are a useful tool for a municipality to call public attention to the decline of bees and pollinators and to express a city's support to become more Beesponsible®. Mayors can issue proclamations at any time, but they are often effective when tied to specific local events (like the dedication of a new pollinator garden at city hall) or national days that celebrate sustainability, wildlife and pollinators (see chart).

While proclamations typically do not have major legal significance, they can help raise the visibility of an issue with the public and are an excellent policy tool for outlining future actions that a municipality might take to become more Beesponsible®. On page 5 you will find a template Beesponsible® proclamation that can be shared with your local leaders for consideration.

#### KEY DATES

**2nd Week in March** – National Wildlife Week  
[nwf.org/wildlifeweek](http://nwf.org/wildlifeweek)

**April** – Earth Month

**April 22nd** – Earth Day

**May** – Garden for Wildlife Month  
[nwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife/About/National-Initiatives/Gardening-Month](http://nwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife/About/National-Initiatives/Gardening-Month)

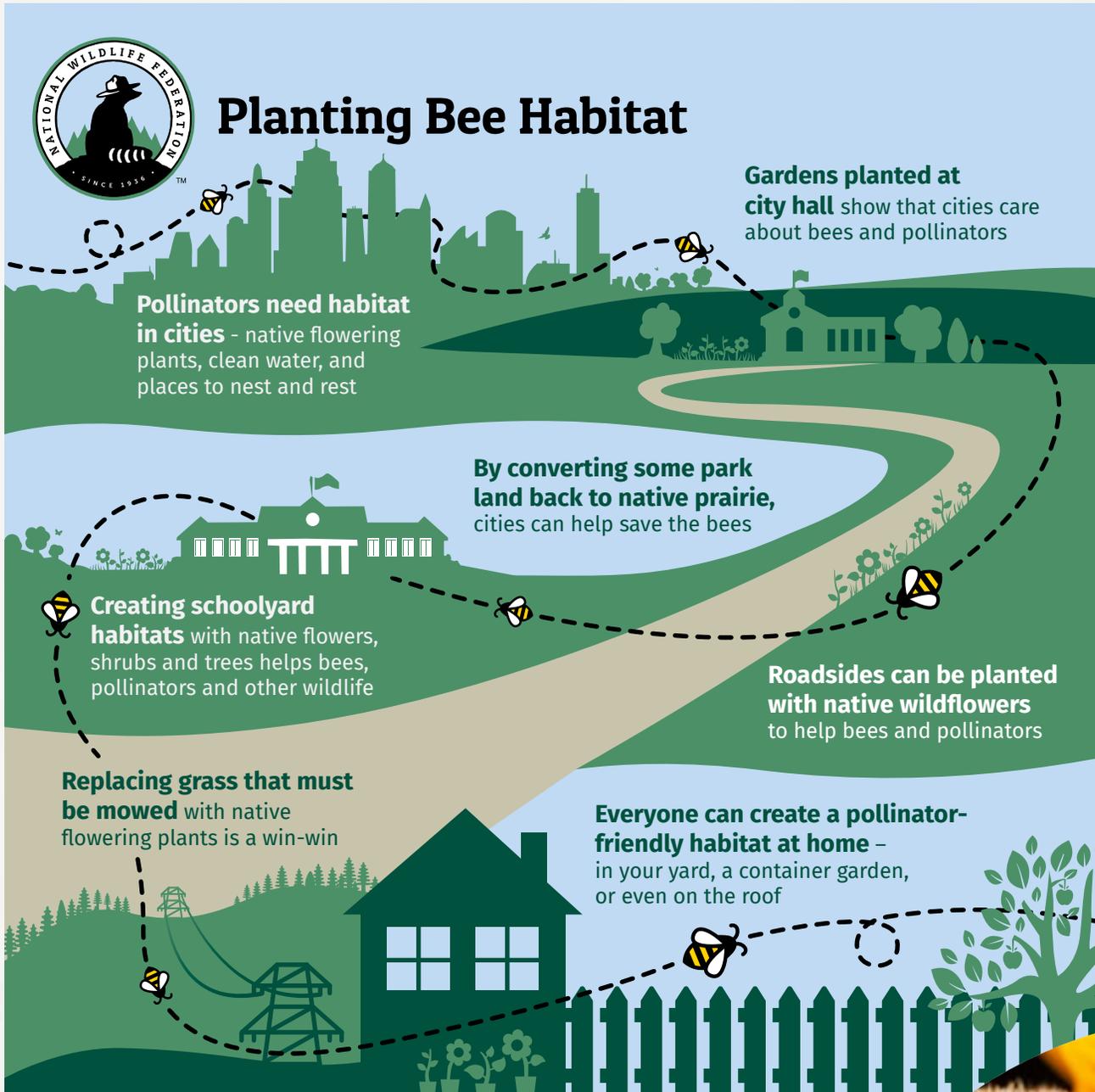
**June** – Great Outdoors Month  
[www.greatoutdoorsmonth.org](http://www.greatoutdoorsmonth.org)

**3rd Week in June** – Pollinator Week  
[pollinator.org/pollinator-week](http://pollinator.org/pollinator-week)

**3rd Saturday in August** – National Honeybee Day

### 3 Ask your city to plant bee habitat

Cities and towns own and manage buildings, parks and other properties. These properties have the potential to provide habitat for bees by incorporating flowering plants and trees into the landscape. You can reach out to your mayor, city council member, director of the parks department or other local officials and ask that they create habitat throughout the community. Show them this infographic:



#### PHOTO CREDITS

PAGE 1: GARDEN (BACKGROUND) - DAVID MIZEJEWSKI, BEE (CENTER) - BELINDA BRAUNSTEIN; SQUASH BEE (TOP RIGHT) - JACK SCHULTZ, RUSTY PATCHED BUMBLE (SIDEBAR) - MARTHA ROBERTS; PAGE 2: BEE ON BLUEBERRY BUSH - ISTOCK; PAGE 3: BEES - KATHY NOTEBOOM; PAGE 4: BEE - MARK BRINEGAR



# Proclamation Template

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Below is a template Beesponsible® proclamation that can be customized for your community:

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## Beesponsible® proclamation template

WHEREAS, North America is blessed with diverse wildlife and abundant natural resources, including more than 4,000 native-bee species, honey bees that are essential to our nation's agriculture and many other insect pollinators.

WHEREAS, Bees are our most important and efficient pollinators which are essential to the food supply for people and for wildlife.

WHEREAS, One third of all the food we eat is the direct result of animal pollinators and wildlife also rely on the natural food chains that cannot function without pollination.

WHEREAS, Insect pollinators are themselves important food sources for other wildlife including the countless birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians that eat the protein and fat-rich eggs, larvae, or adult forms of insect pollinators, or feed them to their young.

WHEREAS, One-third of our nation's wildlife species are at risk of extinction in coming decades like the rusty-patched bumble bee that recently became the first North American bee species in the continental U.S. added to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's endangered species list.

WHEREAS, cities, towns and counties have a critical role to play to help save bees and pollinators by creating pollinator habitat at parks, municipal buildings, road sides and throughout the community where our citizens live, work, learn, play and worship.

WHEREAS, I encourage other city officials across our great nation to take a stand with me so that our nation's bees and wildlife will once again flourish across the continent.

Now, therefore, I, **MAYOR NAME** of the **CITY NAME**, do hereby proclaim **DATE** as: "SAVE THE BEES DAY" in **CITY NAME**.