

This guide is intended for growers and applicators supporting pollinators and pollination services in field-grown watermelon production systems. Watermelon producers have the ability to support pollinator health.

## WATERMELON POLLINATION

For successful watermelon production, pollinators must facilitate pollen transfer. Honey bees are one example of efficient, easily managed pollinators. They spend an average of 6.8 seconds visiting a female flower, suggesting individual flowers are rich in resources<sup>29</sup>. Fruitful fertilization requires at least 1,000 pollen grains across the flower's three stigma lobes, necessitating a minimum of 8 honey bee visits per flower<sup>29,30</sup>. The recommended honey bee stocking rate is 0.2-5 hives/acre. Bumble bees, another efficiently managed pollinator, have the recommended stocking rate of 0.5-3 colonies/acre. Where wild bees are abundant, stocking managed bees may be unnecessary or reduced<sup>4,34,35,36</sup>.

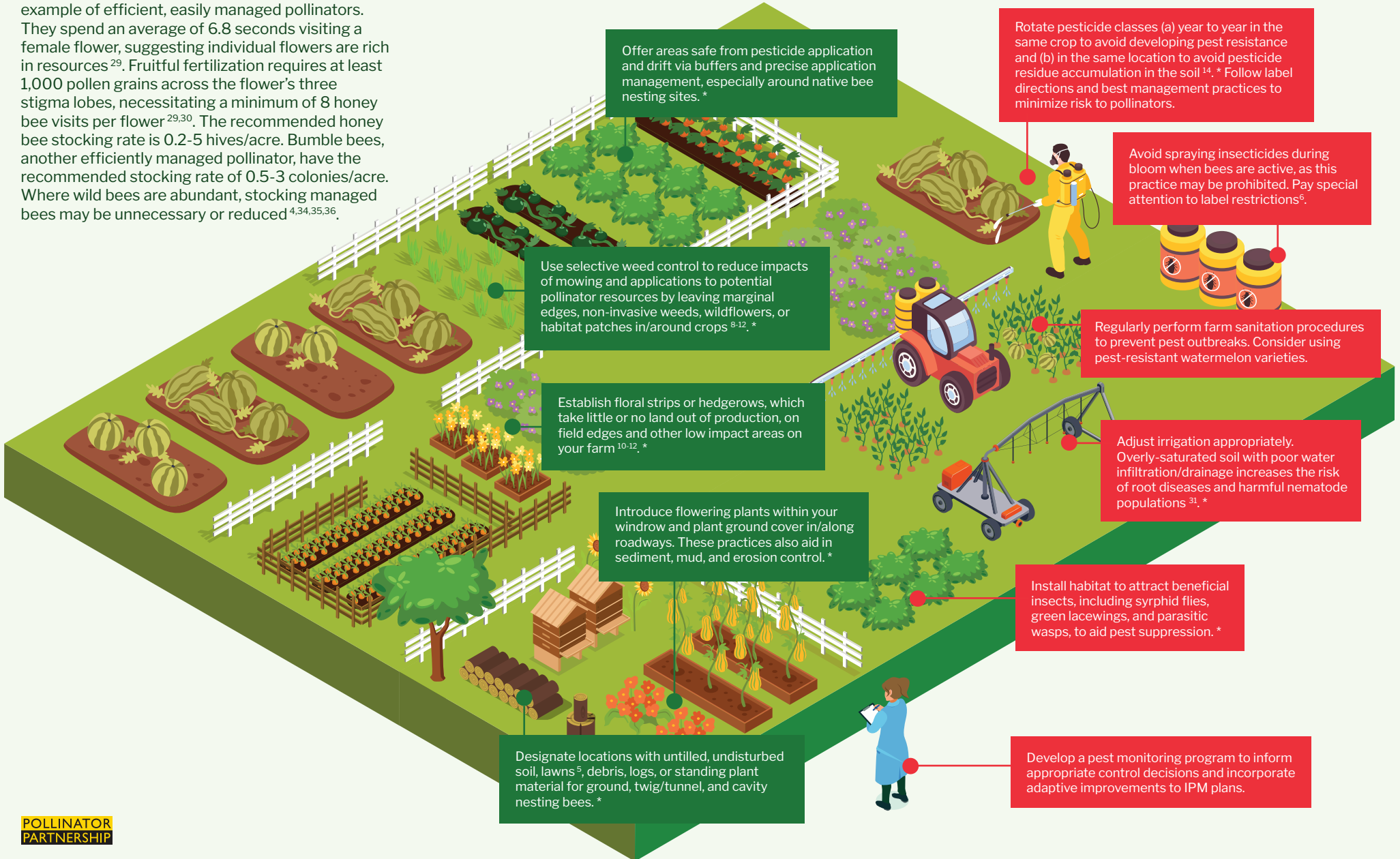
# ON-FARM ACTION GUIDE

## Habitat and forage

Establishing habitat provisions on your farm is crucial for supporting pollinators<sup>7-10</sup>. Consider these elements when incorporating pollinator habitat into your farming operation:

## Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

IPM invests in long-term, preventative practices through ecosystem function. Below is a list of strategies you can use to manage pests and mitigate risks to pollinators:



\* This strategy aligns with regenerative agricultural practices.



## KEY ACTIONS FOR WATERMELON PRODUCTION

The following actions are essential for sustaining suitable pollinator habitats:

- Offer flowering diversity with continuous bloom spanning the growing season. \*
- Provide sites for nesting pollinator species. \*
- Develop a thorough IPM program to reduce pesticide use.
- Maintain good communication with beekeepers regarding pesticide applications.

For references and additional resources, scan here



SCAN ME

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# AGRICULTURE SUPPORTING POLLINATORS: **WATERMELON PRODUCTION**

**POLLINATOR PARTNERSHIP**

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Practices for use at all scales of production.