



POLLINATOR PARTNERSHIP

Protect their lives. Preserve ours.

Expand Your Impact!

**Project Wingspan: Agriculture
Training and Support**

March 24, 2026

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About me

Maddie Dong

Communications Coordinator, Pollinator Partnership

What I do:

- Science communication
- Multimedia storytelling
- Website management

What I love:

- Native plants
- Wildlife observation
- Community engagement

Roadmap:

1. Importance of Communication and Outreach
2. Tips for Effective Communication
3. Challenges and Barriers
4. Use of Social Media
5. Storytelling
6. Examples of community outreach



Goal: Use your knowledge as Certified Pollinator Stewards to effectively communicate pollinator topics to diverse audiences.

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Why is pollinator outreach important?

- Allows others to learn about your pollinator conservation efforts
- Inspires others to act
- Raises awareness about issues important to you
- Builds trust within your community

Communication Tricks


1. Practice your elevator pitch
2. Know your audience
3. Gateway bugs
4. Avoid doom and gloom
5. Use a Call to Action
6. Base your messaging in science
7. Emphasize “Small Action, Big Difference”





#1 Practice Your Elevator Pitch!

- Who are the pollinators?
- Why are pollinators important?
- What problems are they facing?
- How can we help!



Pollinators are a diverse group of animals including bees, birds, and butterflies that pollinate many of our food crops and keep the landscape colorful and healthy with blooming flowers. They are unfortunately facing many factors that impact them including climate change and habitat loss. One of the best ways we can help them is by providing them with native habitat so they have an abundance of pollen and nectar to feed on.

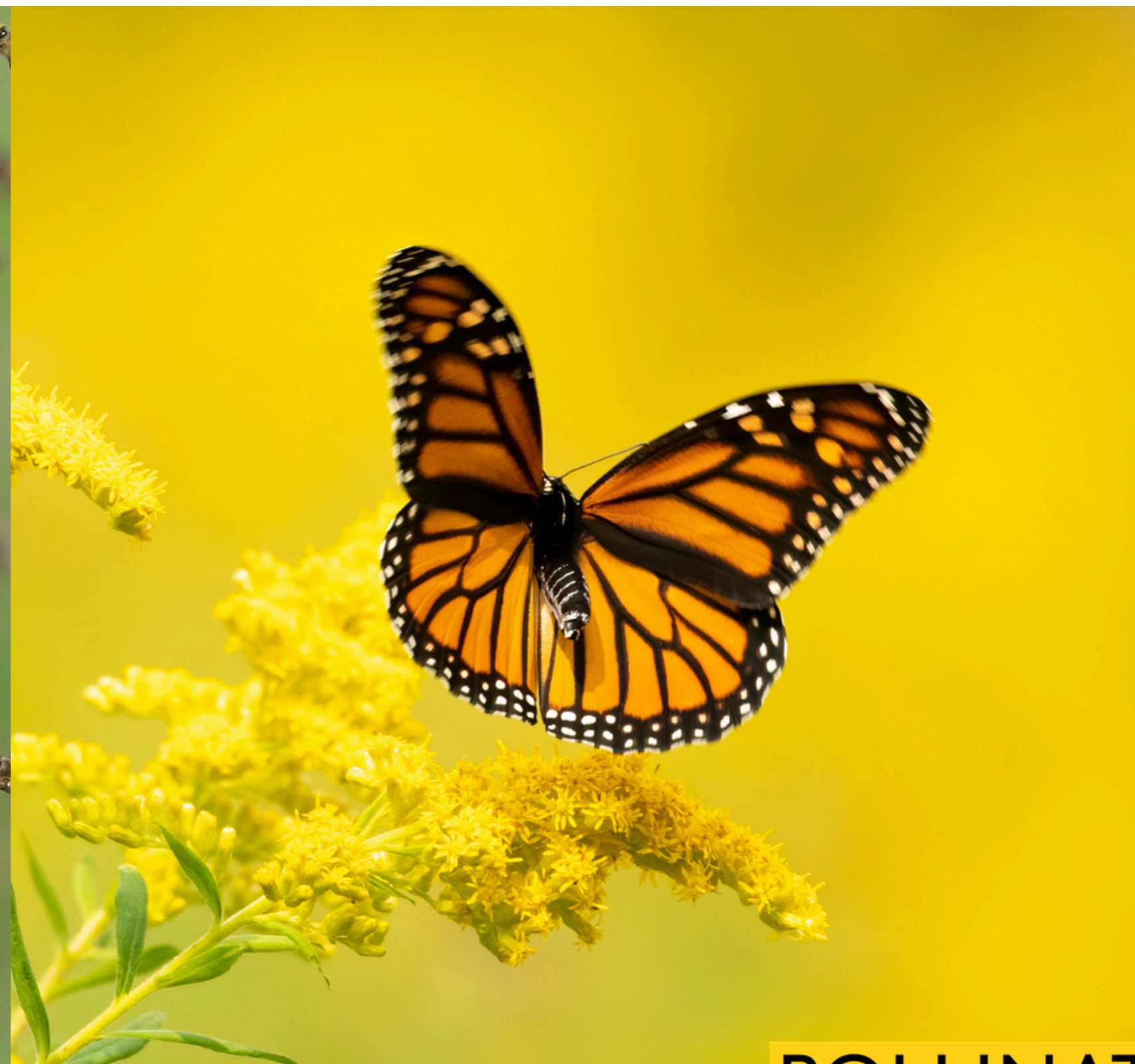
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2. Know your audience

- Understand the demographics, needs, interests, and motivations to effectively communicate and engage with them.
- Assess the level of knowledge they already have.
- ★ Knowing your audience helps build trust.



#3 Gateway Bugs



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To most people, the word "pollinator" suggests bees. And though most of the world's nearly 20,000 species of bees are champion pollinators, many other animals make the reproduction of flowering plants possible. The flower offers the animal a floral reward—usually nectar or pollen—and the animal inadvertently moves the pollen within a flower or from flower to flower. This often unseen and generally underappreciated ecosystem service is responsible for the reproduction of nearly 80% of all flowering plants and brings us an estimated 1 out of every 3 bites of food we consume. You live in A World of Pollinators. Conserve and celebrate them!



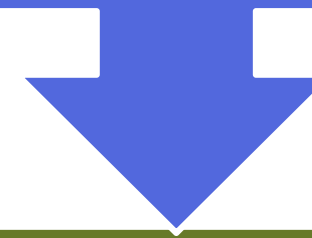
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#4 Avoid Doom and Gloom Messaging

- Invoke enthusiasm and optimism rather than guilt and fear
- Celebrate success and prioritize communicating the benefits of your actions (to both pollinators and people!)
- Acknowledge areas for improvement
- Not every pollinator is affected by threats in the same way
- Avoid over-generalizations

#5 Include a “Call to Action”

A call to action takes the negative scenario and motivates someone to do something about it in a positive way



Conclude with asking your audience to follow through with an action:



Examples

Making a donation

Volunteering with a specific organization

Contributing to a community science project

Sharing a resource

#6 Messaging Based in Science

- Stay specific and avoid over-generalization when possible.
- Visit an organization's website for information and facts about pollinators that is accessible, easy to read, and share with others.
- Read the latest research articles to stay up to date on pollinator science and trends.
- Attend webinars or workshops held by organizations to learn more about the conservation issues you are interested in.



Photo: Amber Barnes

#7 Small Action, Big Difference

Recommend a wide range of actions people can take to get involved with pollinator conservation:

- Planting a **pollinator garden** using native plants
- **Leaving the leaves** in the fall for nesting bumble bees and wildlife
- Participating in **community science** such as uploading pollinator and plant pictures to iNaturalist
- Sharing **educational posts** about pollinators on social media
- Making a **donation**
- Supporting your local **farmers market**
- Reduce, reuse, recycle!



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Challenges to Successful Outreach

1. Low public awareness of pollinators beyond bees
2. Misconceptions and fear surrounding bees
3. Competing priorities
4. Limited access to native plants
5. One-size-fits-all messaging that doesn't reflect local or cultural contexts
6. Impact takes time: The meadow you sow in the winter doesn't become a thriving pollinator habitat right away!



Example: Tropi-STOP

Tropilaelaps
A Growing Threat to Honey Bees

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

? What is Tropilaelaps [Tro-pil-lay-laps]?

Tropilaelaps (or Tropi) mites are a growing concern for beekeepers in North America. There are four recognized species of Tropilaelaps, which are all originally parasites of Asian honey bees. Among these mites, Tropilaelaps mercedesae is the primary concern for beekeepers in North America because it has successfully switched hosts to parasitize the western honey bee and has expanded its geographical range. Its native range is in South and Southeast Asia, corresponding to its original host's range (giant honey bees, Apis dorsata and Apis laboriosa). When the western honey bee (European honey bee, Apis mellifera) was brought into Asia for honey production, Tropilaelaps quickly switched hosts and became a major pest of the western honey bee. It was believed that Tropilaelaps mites could not survive in areas where winter brood breaks occur due to cold weather, but it has become established in some areas where winter brood breaks are assumed to occur. **So far, Tropilaelaps are not known to be in North America.**

! Impact on Honey Bees

The life cycle of Tropilaelaps mites is similar to that of Varroa mites; they reproduce in capped brood cells in the colony, and feed primarily on the hemolymph of honey bee brood. Both mites vector viruses, such as deformed wing virus (DWV). While Varroa mites can feed on adult bees, it is believed the mouthparts of Tropilaelaps cannot penetrate the exoskeleton of an adult bee. As a result, Tropilaelaps mites cannot survive on adult bees for more than 2-3 days and require constant access to brood to feed and reproduce.

Having a shorter reproductive cycle than Varroa, Tropilaelaps mites can quickly overcome a colony if left unmanaged when brood is available. At high infestations, visual damage resembles that from Varroa: uncapped and cannibalized brood, dead and decaying larvae, adult bees with deformed wings, and weakened adult bee population.

tropistop.com

pollinator.org/tropistop

Topic: *Tropilaelaps* mites, a honey bee pest that is likely to make its way to North America and negatively impact honey bee colonies.

Outreach goal: Educate and prepare beekeepers for a potential pest.

Challenge: Conveying a sense of urgency without causing panic.

What I Found Helpful: Framing this pest as something we will tackle together. Focus on empowerment i.e. you have dealt with honey bee pests before, we can do it again. Provide ample resources and contact information to apiary inspectors and state plant regulatory officials.

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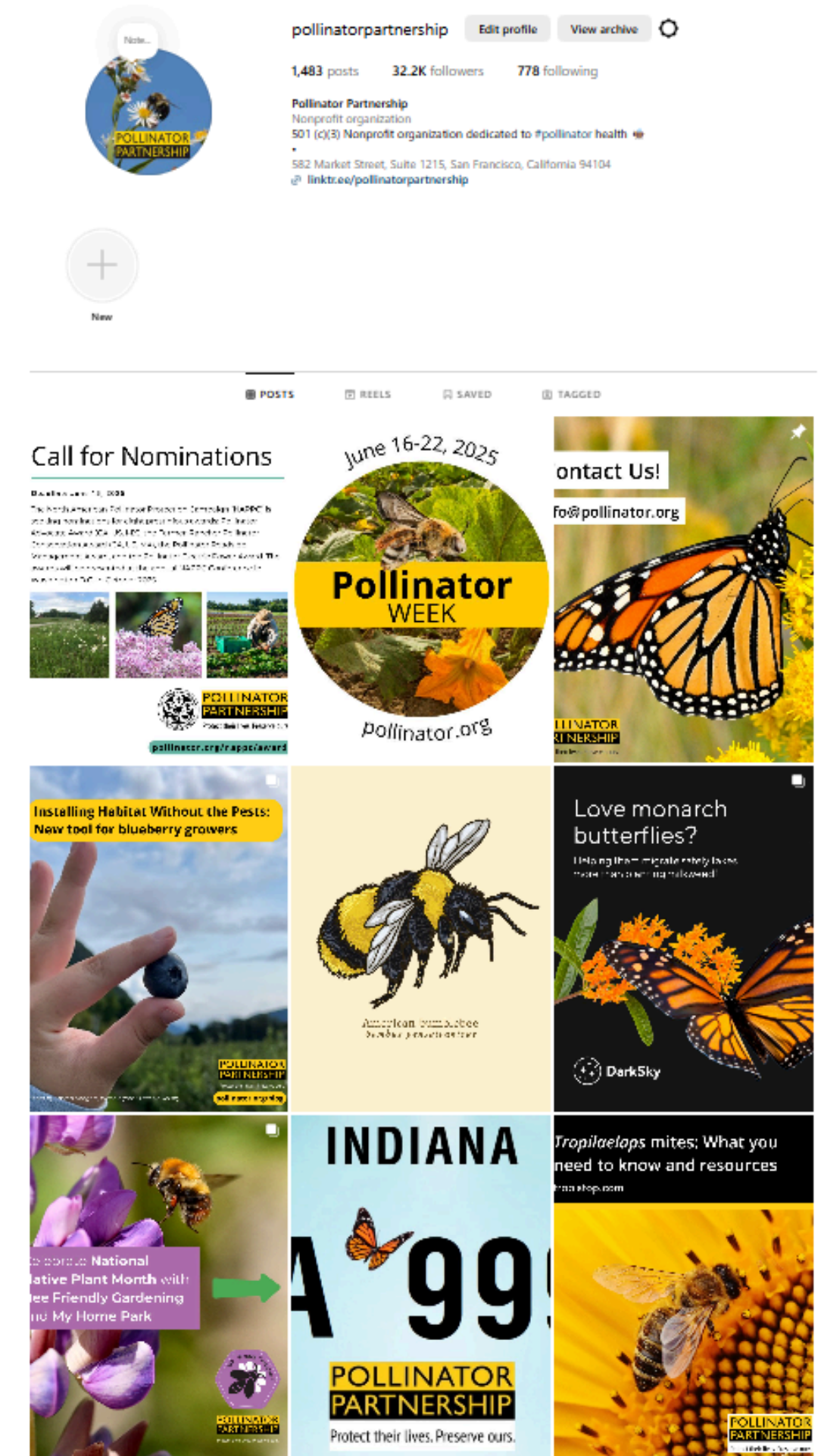
Where and when can I use these tips?

- Online website or social media
- Fairs or community events, neighborhood meetings
- Planting/weeding days
- Garden/Farm tours
- Pollinator Week



Social Media

- Creating and posting on social media accounts including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or LinkedIn is a great way to increase your reach to new individuals and audiences.
- Tip: Use high-res images and communicate what you are doing to benefit your local community.
- Makes it easy to collaborate with other individuals also interested in pollinator conservation.
- Allows you to easily share your pollinator knowledge with others and ways to get involved.

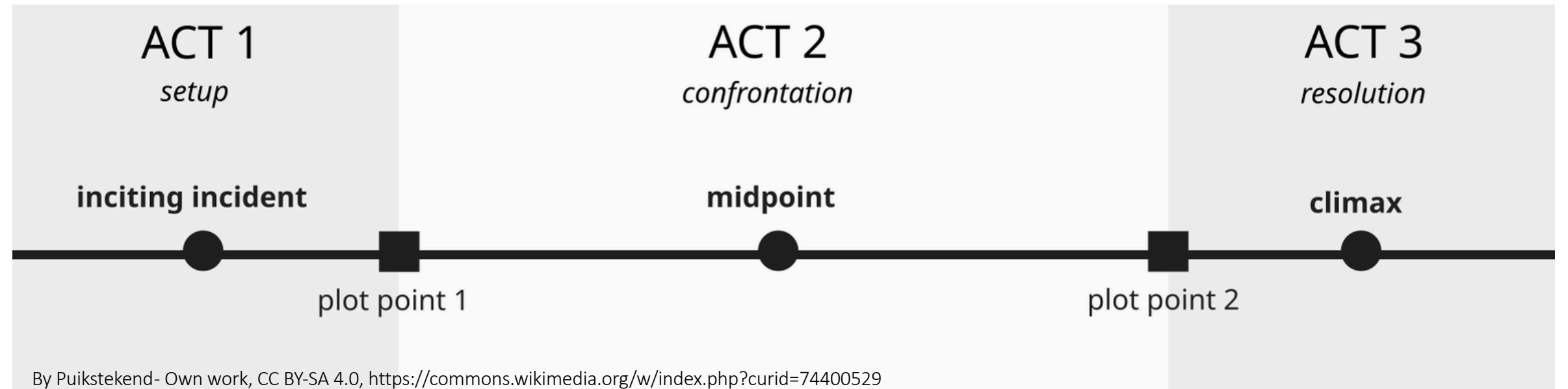


Importance of Storytelling



- Increases empathy towards others (people **and** pollinators!)
- Bridges the gap between unknown and familiar topics.

Photo: Peter Moore, Institute for Applied Ecology



- 1** Fender's blue butterfly (*Icaricia icarioides fenderi*) is a species endemic to the Willamette Valley, OR.
- 2** This species of butterfly was thought to be extinct but was later rediscovered by scientist Paul Hammond on an uncommon plant called Kincaid's lupine. Once common to the Willamette Valley region, their population remains threatened due to loss of prairie habitat.
- 3** The rediscovery of Fender's blue butterfly has led to successful habitat conservation efforts. Planting its larval host plant Kincaid's lupine and restoring historic fire regimes in OR's prairie landscapes.

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Outreach Events

- Engaging way for the public to learn about the conservation work taking place, and how to get involved.
- Creates friendly discussion about pollinators.
- Ask your audience what they know.
- Provide handouts/brochures/quick resources.

Find local events through your city's website, neighborhood forums, or social media.



Garden and Habitat Signs

- Makes pollinator habitat visible and understood
- Educates visitors year-round
- Quick to read at a glance

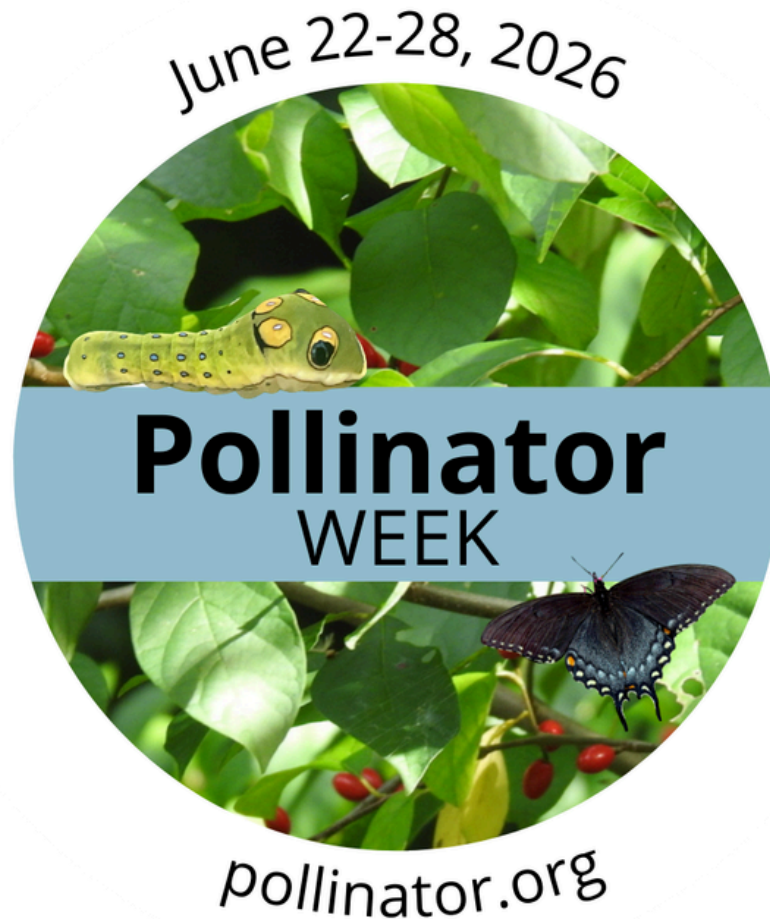


Participate in National Pollinator Week!

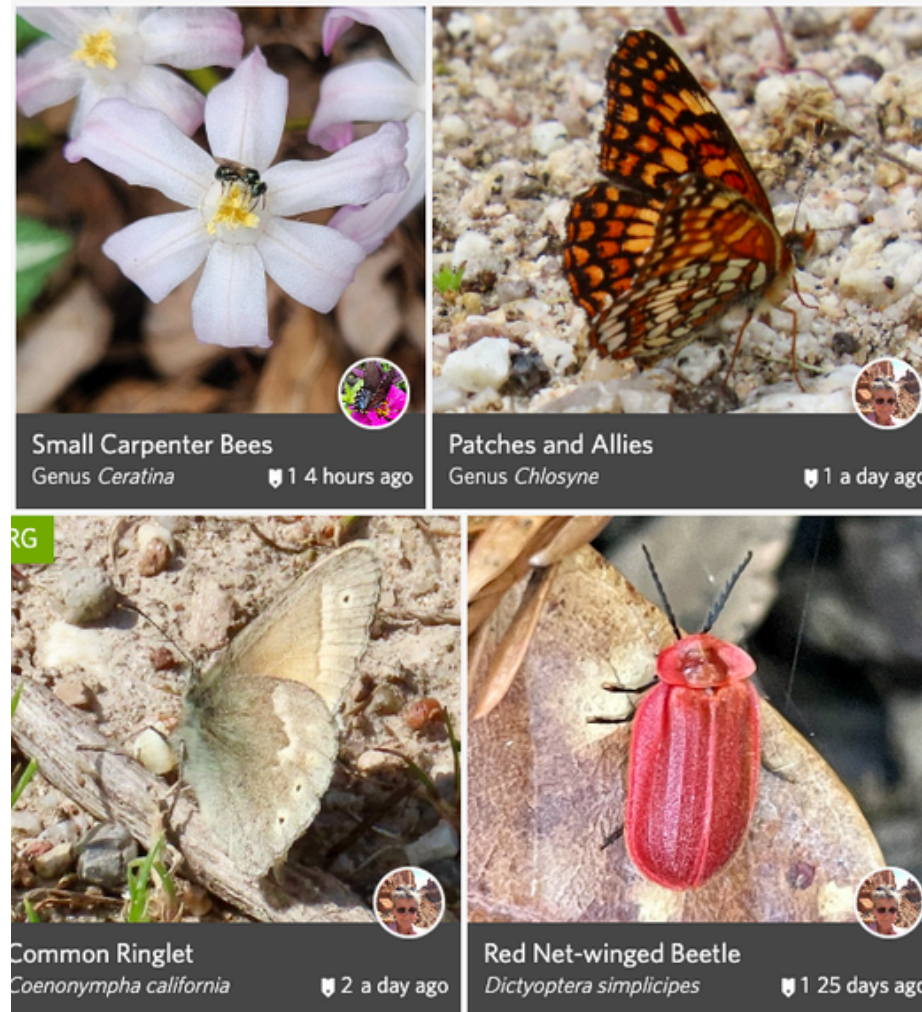
June 22-28, 2026



pollinator.org/pollinator-week



Pollinator Week Bioblitz



In 2025, we recorded
6,077 total observations
965 species

483 identifiers
248 observers

That's you!



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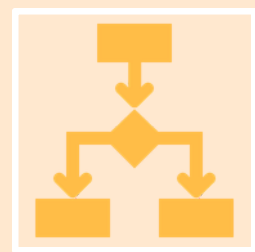
Key Takeaways



Certified Pollinator Stewards play a crucial role in disseminating pollinator knowledge grounded in science.



Effective communication includes knowing your audience, avoiding doom and gloom messaging, making a clear call to action, and providing realistic examples of positive change.



Meet people where they are at! Acknowledge gaps, address misconceptions with empathy, and build understanding in a way that empowers them to take action.



Continue the conversation by providing accessible and shareable resources to your audience.



Thank You!

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