

# Missionary Oblates - JPIC -



Monarch butterfly on native  
New England asters



Pollinator habitat at Oblate  
Ecological Learning Center.  
Learn more about pollinator  
conservation at:  
<https://www.xerces.org/>



Fr. Jack Lau, OMI scattering  
seeds in the Pollinator Garden,  
at Oblate Ecological Learning  
Center, Godfrey, IL

## Creation Care

**ACTIONS TO SUPPORT LOCAL POLLINATOR**

**BIODIVERSITY**



## GLOBAL GOAL: PROTECT 30% OF LAND & WATER BY 2030

At the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP 15) in 2022, countries agreed to return 30% of land and 30% of the oceans to nature. Seizing this momentum, in June 2023, Irish Bishops called for conservation of nearly a third of church property to become havens for pollinators and biodiversity. The bishops' initiative responds to:

- Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical "Laudato Si, on Care for Our Common Home,"
- the impending loss of biodiversity and
- agreements made at COP15 in December 2022.

Integrity of Creation as an integral part of evangelization was re-affirmed at the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate's 37th General Chapter in September 2022.

The OMI Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation has adapted some ideas from the Irish Bishops *Faith Communities Actions to Help Pollinators* publication and compiled them as possible actions for people to take.



"We have been made aware of our inadequate efforts for the care of the environment. We are thus challenged to commit ourselves more fully to prioritize ecological conversion as a fundamental part of our lives and an integral part of our evangelization."

(Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate *Pilgrims of Hope in Communion*, 11.1)



# SUGGESTED POLLINATOR ACTIONS

## Why pollinators and biodiversity are important

Virtually all of the world's seed plants need to be pollinated. Pollination is an essential ecological survival function that:

- Reproduces and produces enough seeds for dispersal and propagation.
- Maintains genetic diversity within a population.
- Develops adequate fruits to entice seed dispersers.

For some species, the relationship between plant and pollinator can be so interconnected that the disappearance of one can signal the extinction of the other. *(US Department of Agriculture)*

**Examples of pollinators:** bees, bats, butterflies, birds, beetles, flies, moths, etc. Biodiversity is variety of life forms and species on earth. Ecosystems in regions of the world have species of plants, animals and insects with their own unique biodiversity. Pollination is one of the most important ways to maintain and promote biodiversity and life on Earth. The loss of individual species can be detrimental to other members of the ecosystem.



### POLLINATOR ACTION



**FIND LEADERS**

Elect and mandate an ecological or environmental group within your congregation to take responsibility for implementing pollinator-friendly actions. This group should include persons who care for the grounds on a regular basis.

### POLLINATOR ACTION



### CUT GRASS AS NORMAL BUT LET THE DANDELIONS BLOOM!

Identify areas that will be mown under existing regimes, but aim to carry out the first grass cut of the year in April after the first flush of Dandelions, but before they set seed. While perhaps not the most loved of God's creatures, Dandelions are a vital food source for bees in spring!



## POLLINATOR ACTION

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## POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY PLANTING

Traditionally garden planting has been with trees, shrubs or flowers that don't happen to be good sources of pollen or nectar and do not provide food for bees and other insects. These that are most common in the U.S. are: (e.g., boxwood, burning bush, hydrangeas, yew bushes). There are many other plants that are equivalent in cost and can look similarly attractive but will also support our pollinators. To find a list of pollinator-friendly plants for your region of the country, visit the National Park Service's Pollinator Planting Guides by Eco-region: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/pollinators/ecoregional-planting-guide-cards.htm>

Areas where it might apply: Church and rectory grounds, cemeteries, retreat center and shrine grounds.

## POLLINATOR ACTION

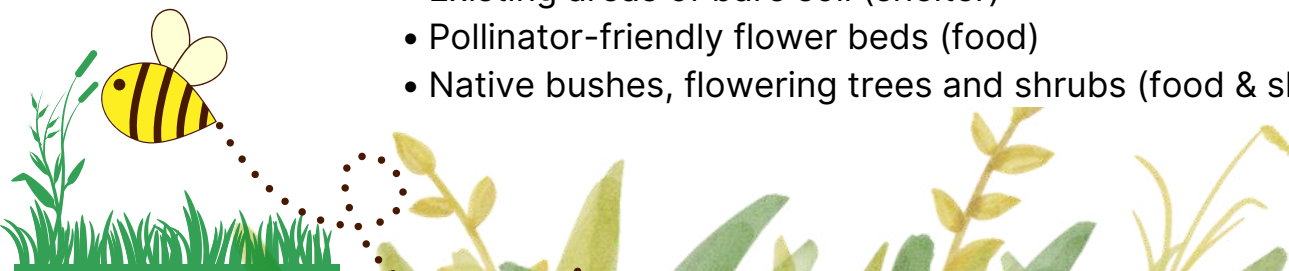
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## IDENTIFY & PROTECT EXISTING SOURCES OF FOOD AND SHELTER FOR POLLINATORS

Most faith communities will already have some areas that are very good for pollinators. The most important thing you can do is to recognize and protect these. You should avoid spending time and money replacing something that is already good. Areas where it might apply: lands managed by faith communities.

### Examples of existing areas that are already important to pollinators might be

- Graveyards that are not highly manicured (food & shelter)
- Walls with cavities (shelter)
- Small wild areas with bramble (food)
- Grassy meadows (food & shelter)
- Existing areas of bare soil (shelter)
- Pollinator-friendly flower beds (food)
- Native bushes, flowering trees and shrubs (food & shelter)



POLLINATOR  
ACTION



**PROVIDE NESTING AREAS FOR BUMBLEBEES**

Bumblebees nest in clumps of grass.

- Leave small areas of long grass uncut until late autumn.
- Bumblebee colonies die off in October/November (when mated queens go into hibernation to overwinter) so it is okay to cut or manage these areas in late autumn/winter.

POLLINATOR  
ACTION



**ELIMINATE USE OF PESTICIDES AND HERBICIDES  
IN AS MANY AREAS AS POSSIBLE**

Eliminate the use of herbicides and pesticides in as many areas as possible. If you use a landscaping company, find out if they use products to manage weeds, disease, or insects. If they do, ask them to discuss this with you before making applications.

Educate groundskeepers on pesticide-free landscaping techniques and alternatives. Sierra Club is the largest grassroots environmental advocacy organization in the nation. Visit their website for helpful resources:

<https://www.sierraclub.org/maryland/pesticides-free-alternatives>

POLLINATOR  
ACTION



**CARING FOR OUR COMMON HOME**

Integrate the importance of caring for our common home into prayer/worship. Suggestions: during the Season of Creation (September 1 – October 4

<https://seasonofcreation.org/>) Observe Earth Day Sunday in your Church: <https://www.creationjustice.org/earth-day-sunday-in-your-church.html>



## POLLINATOR ACTION



## SPREAD THE WORD TO MANY GROUPS OF PEOPLE ACROSS SOCIAL PLATFORMS



Help spread the message to parishioners, retreatants, employees, and other communities. Do this education through bulletins, websites, Facebook pages and other social platforms.

## POLLINATOR ACTION



## PLANT NATIVE TREES

Plant native trees and remove invasive species. Remove invasive Bradford pears and plant dwarf oaks, black gum, tulip poplar, serviceberry bushes. All of these serve pollinators.

## LAUDATO SI CLOSING PRAYER FOR OUR EARTH

"Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light." Amen.





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