KNOX
People Planting Programs

March 4, 2016

To Whom it May Concern,

Pollinators play an essential role in food production.....many crops could not be produced and many more would have diminished production if pollinators were not in the mix. Since Connecticut agriculture is a 4.6 billion dollar industry pollinator protection should be a top priority for our state.

That being said, our pollinators are in trouble.....bees, butterflies, beetles and flys are all in decline due to habitat loss, pesticides and diseases. Each of these threats exacerbates the environmental stresses like climate change that they are enduring.

Pesticides and habitat loss negatively affect pollinators in the following ways;

- Lethal Effects - These pesticides are acutely toxic to bees and other pollinators and will result in death. Carbamates, organophosphates, synthetic pyrethoids, chlorinated cyclodienes and especially neonicotinoids.
- Sublethal Effects - Pesticide levels that do not kill bees and other pollinators but have effect on performance that inhibit tasks such as olfactory learning, foraging, and reproduction which affects their survival.
- Synergistic Effects - Pesticides can be more toxic when used in combination than alone.
- Food Availability - Herbicides used in farm fields and along roadways and forests tend to reduce the number of flowering plants that produce the food pollinators need to survive. This also has effects throughout the food chain, as reduced pollination leads to reduced fruit on which birds and other wildlife need to survive.

Neonicotinoids should be taken off the market immediately and the effect that this pesticide has on pollinators should be studied and tested. Studies have already shown that these pesticides are having a negative effect on pollinator populations and they are still being widely used.

Pesticides of all types should be more carefully used and the amounts used should be greatly reduced and monitored. Pesticides that are used kill not only the target that is targeted but they also kill many non target organisms as well. If pesticides have a negative effect on pollinators they need to be taken off the market for further study.

Habitat preservation should also be strongly considered.....Pollinator populations would be stronger with the preservation and restoration of habitats that provide food and shelter for these creatures that are so essential to our food production. Herbicides that are used in agricultural fields to kill weeds wash into surrounding wild areas and kill plants that provide pollinators with food. Weeds can be effectively controlled in other less toxic ways.

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Connecticut residents love their lawns which in total area is more acreage than our farms encompass. To keep these lawns green homeowners are also using pesticides that harm pollinators.....as in agriculture there are less toxic ways to take care of our lawns.

Homeowners could help by planting a pollinator garden on their property and reducing or eliminating the use of harmful pesticides.

Knox, Inc is in full support of a bill that would address the negative effects that neonicotinoids are having on our pollinators.....We are also in full support of funding that would preserve, create, enhance and protect pollinator habitats.

We created and manage a network of community gardens in Hartford that encompass over 20 acres. Our 400+ gardeners raise nearly 200 tons of food in these gardens without the use of harmful pesticides.....so we are dedicated to working to protect our pollinators that work in partnership with us to provide food.

Ron Pitz
Executive Director
Knox, Inc.

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