

The Need for Natives & Pollinators

Gratitude, it's the bees knees. For what are you most grateful? Your family? Certainly. Your health? Of course. Your heartbeat? Undoubtedly. Bees? Wait...what?! If you're asking yourself why bees would be included in such a list, I have one question for you. *Why not?*

While starting your day, what was the first thing in your cup? Coffee? Thank a bee. When your sweet tooth starts to tug, what is your go-to snack? Anything chocolate? Thank a bee. Enjoying the latest round of food trends?

THE VALUE OF POLLINATORS

Did you know that 75 percent of the world's food crops depend at least in part on pollination? In the U.S. alone, bees and other insects produce \$40 billion worth of products annually via the process of pollination.

Join me in a moment of self-reflection for what we as an industry are advocating for, fueling, and hopefully perpetuating well into the future — a movement in the direction of greater awareness of why plants are so important to life on our planet. Improving pollinator health, the habitats they rely upon for survival, and a deeper human connection — or reconnection — fosters the well-being of our environment. For this, I am grateful!

CONSUMERS CARE

Ninety-four percent of Americans agree that promoting pollinator health should be a conservation priority. According to The National Recreation and Park Association, baby boomers are the biggest advocates of promoting pollinator health (96 percent) followed closely by Gen Xers (95 percent) and millennials (91 percent). With these statistics, I'm very optimistic that iGen will follow suit!

The recently published Residential Landscape Architecture Trends Survey conducted by the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) revealed that both active living elements and sustainability remain of utmost importance. Rather consistent with previous year's findings, the top three landscape and garden elements will continue to be projects that include **native plants**, **low-maintenance landscapes** and **rain gardens**.

Top 10 project types with the expected highest consumer demand:

- Native plants – 83.3 percent
- Native/adapted drought-tolerant plants – 83 percent
- Low-maintenance landscapes – 80 percent
- Flexible use space (for yoga classes, movie night, etc.) – 74.2 percent
- Drip/water-efficient irrigation – 72.4 percent
- Permeable paving – 74 percent
- Rain gardens – 71.2 percent
- Reduced lawn area – 70.8 percent
- Food/vegetable gardens (including orchards, vineyards, etc.) – 70.5 percent
- Charging stations (mobile devices) – 70 percent

We have a tremendous opportunity at our fingertips. Demand for native plants and pollinator species is coming from all market segments. From energetic grassroots organizations hosting native plant sales and symposia, to the more over-arching efforts outlined in the National Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and Other Pollinators (bit.ly/2DrKdSm).

A COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

In keeping with North Creek's mission and values, every effort is made to grow our plants in the safest and most sustainable manner possible. Our nursery is rooted in the triple bottom line: **People, Planet, Profit**. Our approach is to **stop, think and connect**. How do our daily operating procedures affect our team? How do our growing practices and collective actions affect our direct and indirect customers and the environments our plugs go on to create? How are our growing practices sustaining our organizational health? We see it as our collective responsibility to protect the health of our people and the health of our planet.

It's been a long road, and many positive strides have been made along the way. It takes knowledge, research and tremendous discipline when making a strategic decision to incorporate integrated pest management using a biological approach. The use of pesticides in growing practices has always been a sensitive subject, and a topic gaining consumer awareness and concern. Our product mix provides food and habitat for wildlife while protecting people and the environment. It has become a priority for our business over the past 30 years.

How is your plant palette poised to keep native plants, pollinator health and the health of our environment at the forefront of market demand?

DON'T FORGET...

June 18 to 24 marks the much-anticipated return of Pollinator Week. This national effort, created by the U.S. Senate, aims to raise awareness about pollinators and promote conservation of pollinator habitats. Over the past decade, this event has grown into a global celebration. How does your organization support and tie into Pollinator Week?

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Looking for a launch pad? Join the Pollinator Action Team:
www.pollinator.org

Build Your Native Plant Retail Program with American Beauties Native Plants:
www.abnativeplants.com

Bee Counted in the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge:
pollinator.org/mpgcm/register

Educate your Customers:
"100 Plants to Feed the Bees" by The Xerces Society
xerces.org [gpn](#)



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