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Don't 'sweat' that bee! Pollinator garden at **Morgan County Fairgrounds open for visitors**

Master Gardener Press Release

MARTINSVILLE-Acancelled Morgan County Fair and the COVID-19 virus did not stop the county Master Gardeners from planting their annual demonstration garden. This year's theme is pollinators to show people the variety of plants that can be used to attract different pollinators.

The Master Gardeners welcome visitors to the "demo" garden located just behind the fair office during hours the fairgrounds are open. There are 12 beds planted and signs with information about the 69 herbs, flowers, & vegetables planted. All of the plants are labeled.

Here are comments from three volunteer Master Gardeners in Morgan County who have worked on the project.

What's most important for the public to know about pollinators?

Randy Thomas, Camby, demonstration garden cochair: "We can't live without them. According to the United States Forestry Service, 80 percent of all plants worldwide require pollination by animals. Imagine 10 different vegetables on your kitchen table today. If it weren't for pollinators, eight of those may not exist in the future. That would make for a boring dinner menu."

What do pollinators do for the garden?

Randy Thomas: "Ants, bats, bees, birds and many other animals travel from plant to plant looking for, among other things, food and shelter. Pollen from one plant clings to their body parts, and when they move to another plant, some of the pollen is deposited on that plant. Pollination just took place.

"Without pollinators in the garden, our vegetables and



Kyler Smith waters flowers as he helps the Master Gardeners. (Submitted photo)



Dill grows in the garden at the Morgan County Fairgrounds. (Submitted photo)

the same, and it's possible the garden wouldn't produce anything. Pollinators ensure proper pollination, and this in turn causes the plant to produce more, bigger, and delicious fruits and vegetables."

What do you think is most misunderstood about pollinators?

Deb Gearing, Martinsville,

fruits wouldn't look or taste demonstration garden cochair: "When many people think of pollinators, they think of honeybees. Honeybees are important although their education for the community numbers are declining, and on behalf of Purdue Univerthey represent a small portion of our native pollinators. from Purdue Extension of-Bats, beetles, hummingbirds, mason bees, bumblebees, phone the Morgan County's flies, moths, and butterflies extension office for more inall help pollinate our plants."



Lindsay Smith waters flowers as an intern for the Master Gardeners. (Submitted photo)

Mooresville resident Rosalie Hine, president, Morgan **County Master Gardeners:** "Many people think that all insects are bad. Spraying poisons to rid them has a chain reaction effect. You lose pollinators and many other insects, and the birds that feed on those insects go into decline. For example, hummingbirds act as pollinators, but the majority of their diet is insects. If you kill insects, the humming birds don't have enough diversity in their food sources and will decline."

Follow the Morgan County Master Gardeners on Facebook for more information about the demonstration garden and the local group's activities. For more information on successful gardening in Indiana, visit the Purdue University garden resources page.

Master Gardeners take a 35-hour training course and incur 35 hours of volunteer service initially. Many members volunteer even more than that. The primary goal is sity extension. Learn more fice for Morgan County. Teleformation: 765-342-1012.

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