Non-Bee Pollinators of Driftless: They’re Important Too!

By Annalise Meyer and Julia Lassner

Did you know... Non-bee pollinators are less effective in transferring pollen than honey bees, but they make up for it by visiting more flowers!

Did you know... Honey bees account for 38% of crop pollinator visits, and more visits from non-bee pollinators result in higher crop yields!

Let’s get to know some of our native non-bee pollinators!

❖ White-Lined Sphinx Moths pollinate as they drink nectar with a proboscis as long as its body. They are attracted to fragrant flowers such as larkspur and native thistles.

❖ Monarch butterflies use their proboscis to drink nectar from a variety of wildflowers and transfer pollen in the process.

❖ The flower fly, Eristalis dimidiate, pollinates as it hovers over small, flat flowers, and hairs on its body pick up pollen.

❖ Paper Wasps visit many different flowers. Pollen sticks to their body and is transferred to different flowers, facilitated in some wasps by fine hairs covering their bodies.

❖ Another flower fly, Helophilus fasciatus, feeds on and pollinates flowers such as daisies, Queen Anne’s Lace, lavender, and mint.

❖ Non-bee pollinators are more adaptable to changing environments and weather!

❖ Non-bee pollinators visit different parts of a flower, are active during different parts of the season and day and can travel longer distances for pollination!

Did you know... Beetles are thought to be among the first pollinators!

❖ The flower beetle, Mordellaria undulata, is known as a “mess and soil” pollinator because they eat flower petals and defecate within the flower. They collect pollen on their bodies and legs and spread it to goldenrods, spirea, and pond lilies.

References:


