



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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New Mexico Department of Agriculture partners with City of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County on pollinator-friendly projects

LAS CRUCES – Do you hear that buzzing sound? Before you swat away that bee, consider all the plants that rely on pollinators to reproduce. New Mexico has its fair share of pollinators, as well as pollinator-friendly plants.

To increase awareness about the benefit of pollinators, the New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA) has partnered with the City of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County to launch the following pollinator-friendly projects:

- **City of Albuquerque’s ABQ BioPark Wildflower Area and Open Air Shelter at Tingley Beach:** This project will improve native pollinator habitat at Tingley Beach, and by association, the Middle Rio Grande Bosque. It will create new educational opportunities for audiences of all ages to learn about and protect pollinators, such as bees, butterflies, hummingbirds and bats. The new exhibit will serve to empower guests to plant and/or certify their own pollinator gardens, practice pollinator-safe pest management, encourage others in the community to adopt pollinator-friendly practices and encourage citizen science projects through programs like iNaturalist that log and monitor wild pollinator populations.
- **City of Albuquerque Parks & Recreation’s Xeric Park and Quigley Park:** This project includes the development of pollinator-friendly areas at Xeric Park and Quigley Park. The City of Albuquerque and NMDA will collaborate to identify pollinator-friendly annual and perennial plants that will provide flowing plants in various seasons. Educational signs, websites and social media will be used to promote homeowner use of these plants.
- **Bernalillo County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Department:** New pollinator-friendly areas and full, diverse exhibits will be developed at the Hubbell Open Space, South Valley Multi-Purpose Center and Bachechi Open Space. The county will collaborate with NMDA to identify pollinator-friendly plants for various seasons. Educational signs will be installed to promote the use

of these plants in homeowners' yards and gardens. The Gutiérrez-Hubbell House has historical significance, as the adobe structure dates back to the 1860s and is on the National Register of Historic Places. The land encompasses a historic structure, gardens, walking trails and cultivated farm plots.

Matthew Peterson, Botanic Garden & Heritage Farm Manager, said such partnerships will greatly enhance the diversity of plants necessary to support pollinators that play such a vital role for the ecosystem.

“The City of Albuquerque BioPark is grateful for the partnership with the New Mexico Department of Agriculture to create demonstrative pollinator habitats at Tingley Beach that will provide the visiting public an opportunity to learn what they can do to help support pollinators both in their community and at home,” said Peterson.

Dave Simon, Director of City of Albuquerque Parks and Recreation, emphasized the critical role pollinators play.

“Pollinators are facing serious trouble across the globe,” said Simon. “From bees to bats and everything in between, these creatures play a critical role in creating healthy habitats for wildlife and humans alike, and we need to protect them. With the help of the New Mexico Department of Agriculture, we are doing our part to make Albuquerque a pollinator-friendly city.”

Mari Simbaña, Open Space Supervisor, Bernalillo County Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Department, said this project will supplement existing educational resources.

“The pollinator habitat enhancements will further the goal of Bernalillo County Open Space to steward our natural resources and, equally vital, provide educational resources to the public,” said Simbaña. “Through the partnership with NMDA, we can increase the capacity to serve the local community by continuing to offer hands-on opportunities to learn how to beautify and care for both public and residential spaces.”

Project initiation is just in time for National Pollinator Week June 21-27. New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham signed a proclamation in April declaring June 21-27 as New Mexico Pollinator Week. The proclamation indicates that pollinators are essential partners of farmers and ranchers in producing much of our food supply.

New Mexico Secretary of Agriculture Jeff Witte said it's important to inform the public about pollinator-friendly plants.

“Pollinators are extremely beneficial to the agriculture industry, and our team at NMDA cares about increasing outreach in order to educate New Mexicans about what types of plants are ideal for these insects,” said Witte. “Part of our mission is to work cooperatively with public and private sectors, and this type of project collaboration is the perfect example.”

Among many other responsibilities, the NMDA Entomology and Nursery Industries Section licenses nurseries and apiaries in the state, and the NMDA Pesticide Compliance Section certifies and licenses pesticide applicators in the state. As part of its outreach, licensing and continuing education efforts, the NMDA Pesticide Compliance Section emphasizes the importance of pollinators. In addition to the projects listed above, the NMDA team created posters that include information about pollinator-friendly plants to display at nurseries across the state.

Following are a few pollinator and pollinator-friendly plant resources:

- United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service's "Pollinator Plant Recommendations for New Mexico" technical notes: https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_PLANTMATERIALS/publications/nmpmctn12632.pdf
- New Mexico State University (NMSU) Cooperative Extension Services "Ready, Set, GROW!" webinars: <https://aces.nmsu.edu/desertblooms/ready-set-grow.html>
- NMSU College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES) "Backyard Beneficial Insects in New Mexico" publication: https://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/_h/H172/welcome.html#2
- NMSU ACES "Pocket Guide to the Native Bees of New Mexico" publication: <https://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/bees/welcome.html>
- NMSU ACES Integrated Pest and Pollinator Management Center: <https://aces.nmsu.edu/ipm/>
- Pollinator Partnership: Pollinator.org

For more information about NMDA's pollinator-friendly projects, please contact Stephen Baca, NMDA Agricultural and Environmental Services Assistant Division Director at sbaca@nmda.nmsu.edu or 575-646-3207.

The New Mexico Department of Agriculture benefits the public by promoting the viability and advancement of New Mexico agriculture and affiliated industries. The agency promotes a fair marketplace, food protection, marketing, and economic development; supports the beneficial use and conservation of natural resources; and works cooperatively with the public and private sectors. For grant cycles beginning in 2019, the agency has administered over \$1.5 million in funds to support agriculture initiatives in the state through the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program and Healthy Soil Program combined.

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Cutline: Members of most of the United States-native bee families are found in New Mexico, including the *Micranthophora* sp. bee. To increase awareness and outreach about the benefit of pollinators, the New Mexico Department of Agriculture has partnered with the City of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County to launch several pollinator-friendly projects. (Photo by Miranda Kersten, New Mexico State University)



Cutline: Frosted mint is a pollinator-friendly shrub recommended for New Mexico's unique climate. To increase awareness and outreach about the benefit of pollinators, the New Mexico Department of Agriculture has partnered with the City of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County to launch several pollinator-friendly projects. (Photo by Patrick J. Alexander, USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database)



Cutline: The Rocky Mountain beeplant is a pollinator-friendly summer flower recommended for New Mexico's unique climate. To increase awareness and outreach about the benefit of pollinators, the New Mexico Department of Agriculture has partnered with the City of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County to launch several pollinator-friendly projects. (Photo by Mary Ellen (Mel) Harte, Bugwood.org)