3. KEEP IT UP

For pollinators, access to a year-round supply of high-quality nectar and pollen resources is vital.

Floral plantings should contain a selection of plant species that:

- flower successively,
- flower over extended periods and
- overlap in the timing of flowering

to ensure year-round resource supply.

Long-lived floral plantings that persist for several years can additionally enhance local nesting and overwintering opportunities, supporting the persistence of local pollinator populations.

4. STAY LOCAL

Focusing on local species for pollinator-friendly floral plantings means that they are more likely to provide suitable flowers and resources for local pollinators. Plants that are normally found in the area are also better adapted to the local climatic conditions and can persist for longer without needing to be re-established.

More Information:
http://bit.ly/2gM358m

Lena Alice Schmidt
l.alice.schmidt@gmail.com

This work was supported by the "Healthy bee populations for sustainable pollination in horticulture" programme (funded by the Horticulture Frontiers Pollination Fund), an AgriFutures' Honey Bee Small Grant and an E.A. Southee Scholarship to Promote Excellence in Agriculture or Agriculture-related Research.

MORE THAN JUST THE BEE'S KNEES

Four ways to create a floral banquet to encourage pollinators to your orchard

Insects provide important pollination services for many food crops and wild plants. It's not just bees - other insects such as flies, beetles, butterflies, hoverflies and wasps can also transfer pollen as they forage.

FLORAL PLANTINGS

You can establish florally diverse habitat to provision pollinators with vital nectar and pollen resources. Pollinator-friendly plantings can also benefit on-farm biodiversity, including insect species for pest-control. Floral strips fit in well with typical orchard layouts and processes and may be comprised of the following plant genera:

Calotis, Chrysocephalum, Craspedia, Dianella, Geranium, Goodenia, Plectranthus, Rhodanthe, Senecio, Senna, Vittadinia and Wahlenbergia

Where possible, it is helpful to also retain and restore native bushland, including trees and shrubs such as:

Banksia, Callistemon, Eucalyptus, Grevillea, Melaleuca and Pultenea

Ornamental plants can also act as useful resource for pollinators.

Always check with local nurseries, Landcare or Bushcare groups which plant species are local to the region.

1. A BALANCED DIET

A balanced diet ensures pollinator development, health and longevity:

- nectar sugars cover energy requirements;
- pollen proteins and amino acids support development.

Different plant species provide nectar and pollen with varying nutritional properties. Insects also use a range of other products, such as oils and resins, for nest construction.

Having a variety of flowering plant species on-farm helps cater for the needs of a wide range of pollinators, across different life stages, year-round.

2. DIVERSITY IS KEY

To support a broad range of pollinators, when establishing floral plantings select plant species with different:

- flower colours,
- flower shapes and
- flower sizes.

Different pollinators prefer different kinds of flowers. The more diverse the flowers, the more pollinators they will attract.

A wide suite of plant species is also more likely to be complementary in terms of their nutritional properties and flowering times, which is important for filling resource gaps.