

## Giving Tuesday: Here's how you can save bees and butterflies on the brink

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### Context:

There are 30% fewer butterflies than 20 years ago, according to the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation. Five U.S. butterfly species have gone extinct since 1950, and dozens more are on the verge of extinction. Pollinators provide one out of every three bites of our food. Climate change, habitat loss and pesticide use are pushing pollinator populations down. Non-profits like Xerces and Pollinator Partnership work with farmers, companies, private citizens and governments to educate the public. They spread the word about pesticides' impact on pollinators and encourage more eco-friendly approaches to pest control.



### Dive Deeper:

- On Giving Tuesday, consider supporting pollinators, which are essential for our food supply, as they contribute to one in three bites we eat. Sadly, many pollinator species like butterflies and bees are facing serious declines, with some butterfly species already extinct since 1950.
- According to Scott Black from the Xerces Society, there's been a significant drop in butterfly populations, with a 30% decrease in their presence over the last two decades. The monarch butterfly, in particular, has seen a staggering 90% decline since the 1990s.

- Bees are also struggling, with over a quarter of North American bumblebees at risk of extinction. The alarming decline of both bees and butterflies is around 1 to 2% each year, raising concerns about our future food supply.
- Climate change, habitat loss, and pesticide use are the main culprits behind these declines. Black warns that these three threats are pushing pollinator populations toward a tipping point, but there are ways we can help.
- Everyone can make a difference, regardless of the size of their space. Whether you have a small yard or manage a larger area, planting native flowers can significantly benefit pollinators. Organizations like the Xerces Society and Pollinator Partnership offer guidance on how to create pollinator-friendly spaces.
- Simple actions like leaving fallen leaves, cutting flower heads but leaving stems, and allowing some bare ground can provide essential nesting sites for native bees and butterflies. A little bit of untidiness in your garden can create a welcoming habitat for these creatures.
- Supporting pollinator-friendly farming practices by purchasing sustainably grown food can also make a difference. Look for the 'Bee Better Certified' seal on products, and consider buying organic to reduce pesticide use, which harms pollinators. Your choices can help drive demand for bee-friendly farming.