



# Enhancing the Golf Course and the Environment

Pollinating insects are a vital part of our ecosystem. They are responsible for the successful pollination of many food crops as well as a wide range of plants that serve as food sources for birds and animals.



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## What is Operation Pollinator®?

Operation Pollinator® provides golf course superintendents with the tools and information to successfully establish and manage attractive wildflower resources that are crucial for bees and other pollinating insects. It also aims to enhance the visual appearance of the course and the overall playing experience. Golf courses around the country are well-placed to establish and preserve habitats and make a positive impact on the environment.



### Establishing biodiverse pollinator plots can:

- › Play a key role in reviving native bees and other pollinating insects
- › Introduce native wildflowers to your course for pollinators
- › Generate pride for your course and the community
- › Enhance visual appearance of the course and overall golfing experience when full establishment is achieved
- › Create positive publicity for your club and the industry
- › Build awareness of environmental stewardship efforts

## Where can it fit on the course?

The process starts with a site visit involving the golf course superintendent and other key stakeholders such as horticulturists, management or bushcare volunteers where potential sites are selected for the program. In most instances, the areas selected will be visible and prominent but out of play so will not affect golfers or the game.

## Attractive proposition

The use of indigenous species (i.e. from the local area) is important, but there are situations where native species (i.e. Australian) will be added to the list of recommended plant species to add more flowering variety. Indigenous plants are ideal as they adapt to the local climatic conditions and can persist for longer without needing to be re-established. However, access to a year-round supply of high-quality nectar and pollen resources is vital for pollinators hence the need to add native species from outside the local area. The aim is to get a variety of colours and structures as well as grasses and bare ground in the plots with careful consideration to minimal maintenance and water-use once established. It is also vital to provide nest sites for the pollinators, which could be bee hotels, dead wood, leaf litter patches, and small areas of bare sandy ground.



# More on pollinators

When mentioning pollinators, people often think of the European honeybee and are apprehensive about encouraging bee activity due to potential safety issues. However, Australia has more than 1,700 native bee species, and out of that, only 2% can sting. Most are too small to deliver an effective sting, and Australian native bees are not aggressive.

It is important to remember bees are not the only pollinators. Birds and many other pollinators, including butterflies, moths, beetles, flies, and native insects, also contribute to pollination; these beneficial insects are a key part of the natural food chain and often feed on pest insects.

## Partnering with Environmental Golf Solutions

An initial pilot program with three golf courses commenced in 2022 working with Kate Torgerson from Environmental Golf Solutions. Operation Pollinator will provide practical training for superintendents to establish new habitat areas covering:

- › Site selection including evaluation of options and objectives
- › Plant choice and sourcing
- › Site preparation and establishment techniques
- › Management options including integrating with existing processes



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Scan or click QR code for more information and to see how the pilot program is progressing.

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