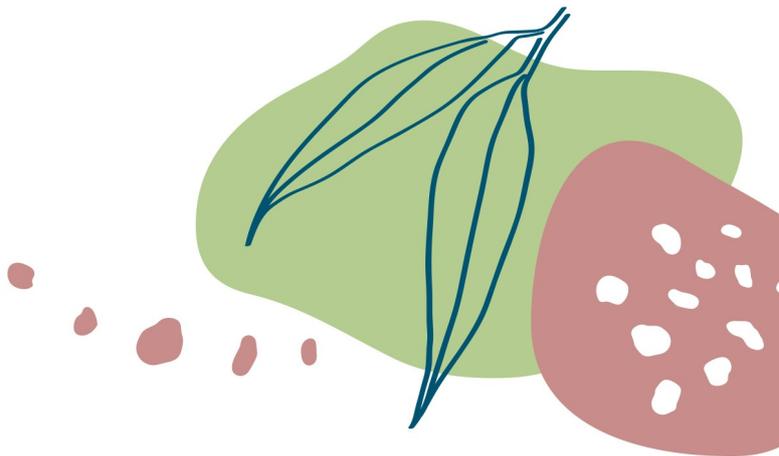


Media Release



15 November 2021

VALUING THE IMPORTANCE OF POLLINATORS ON FARM

Farmers know that much of agricultural production, and the food we eat, is made possible by the pollination services provided by insects.

While important cereals like wheat, oats and rice are wind pollinated, crops like canola, fruit and nut trees and most vegetable crops rely on insect pollination.

While the familiar honeybee gets most of the glory, and is responsible for pollinations of about 35% of food production in Australia, native pollinators – insects and birds - play an important, and often unappreciated, role in completing the work.

Glenelg Hopkins CMA Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator, and amateur beekeeper, Richard Murphy, said worldwide insect species are in decline and farmers can play a key role in supporting their retention in our environment.

“Pollinators are amongst the insects in decline. As well as placing food production at risk, insects are the foundation of terrestrial food webs and ecosystems,” he said.

“There is worldwide concern that insects are the ‘canary-in-the-coal-mine’ indicating greater dangers lie ahead for terrestrial ecosystems. With many native plants fully dependent on native pollinators, reduced population numbers impacting on these species create a negative feedback loop.”

“Australia is fortunate not yet to experience ‘colony-collapse’ that has decimated honeybee populations in North America and Europe, however, the threat persists as the cause, and reasons for our escape, remain uncertain - apart from our geographical isolation,” Richard said.

“Landholders can support insects through on-farm activities which might previously not be considered pro-insect”.

“Many landowners are planting biodiverse shelter belts and conservation areas to attract bird and insects, and to provide shade for farm animals,” he said.

“Multispecies forage crops, as well as benefiting from growing more feed on the farm and providing animals with a diverse diet, also increases habitat and food sources for pollinators and other beneficial insects.”

Native pollinators are best supported by choosing flowering plants of local provenance. To help farmers select plants that best suit their local area the When Bee Foundation produces [Pollinator Planting Guides](#) for 8 different regions of Victoria, including a [‘Guide for Victoria’s Western Districts’](#).

These can be downloaded from the When Bee Foundation website: www.whenbeefoundation.org.au

“Habitat loss is the main cause of native pollinators decline and replanting vegetation of local provenance is key to population recovery. To ensure you can get the species you want, order from your nursery well in advance,” Richard said.

“Landcare networks can be a great source of assistance to farmers wanting to undertake revegetation projects.

“Not only are Landcare groups great sources of information on what grows best in your area, as a Landcare group member you can become part of a grant application that can help fund tree planting and other activities to improve and protect your farm environment.”

To learn more, contact Richard Murphy at the Glenelg Hopkins CMA on 0407 516 532 or your local Landcare group.

The Glenelg Hopkins CMA Sustainable Agriculture project is funded through the Australian Government’s National Landcare Program.

ENDS



Caption: Common Brown Butterfly on Banksia. Photo: Lisette Mill, Basalt to Bay Landcare



Caption: Bees loving tillage radish flowers. Photo. Jade Killoran.