

MUSCOOT MONTHLY

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THE BUZZ ABOUT POLLINATORS: NATURE'S ESSENTIAL WORKERS

As the warm summer days settle in, flowers are in bloom and gardens are alive with color—but behind this beauty is a vital group of unsung heroes: pollinators. From bees and butterflies to hummingbirds and even bats, these creatures play an essential role in our ecosystems and food supply.

Pollinators transfer pollen from one flower to another, helping plants reproduce. This simple yet crucial process affects over 75% of flowering plants and around 35% of global food crops. Without pollinators, we wouldn't enjoy many of the fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds that make up a healthy diet—including apples, blueberries, almonds, and squash.

But pollinators are facing serious challenges. Habitat loss, pesticide use, climate change, and disease are contributing to declining populations.

Honeybees, for example, have seen dramatic reductions in recent years, and native bee species are also under threat. The good news? We can help.

Creating pollinator-friendly spaces is one of the easiest and most impactful things individuals can do. Planting a variety of native flowering plants, avoiding chemical pesticides, and providing water sources can create a safe haven for pollinators in your own backyard. Even a few pots of flowers on a balcony can make a difference.

Here at the farm, we are doing our part by planting pollinator friendly plants in the herb garden and our new native garden located by the environmental learning center. Native plants provide exactly the right kind of nectar, pollen, and bloom timing that local pollinators (like bees, butterflies, moths and hummingbirds) rely on.

By protecting pollinators, we're supporting a healthy

environment and a stable food supply. So next time you see a bee buzzing around, give it a silent thank you – it's doing important work that benefits us all. – Mindy Quintero, Curator

HOW MUSCOOT BEATS THE HEAT

When the heat cranks up, we kick into high gear to make sure all our animals stay cool, comfy, and happy. This summer's heat has already been intense, but we've got a solid plan to beat it!

Every animal on the farm has access to shady shelters where they can escape the sun. Inside those shelters, fans are running around the clock to keep the air moving and the temps down. Water is key! Along with their usual 50-100 gallons of water, we add 5-50 gallons of electrolytes to help keep everyone hydrated and energized.

Our chickens are having the most fun! On hot days, they get frozen treats like watermelon, corn, and strawberries along with ice cubes in their waterers. Providing frozen treats is cooling, tasty, and keeps them entertained too. Grooming also plays a crucial role. We regularly brush our horses, donkeys, and cattle to ensure they've fully shed their winter coats. Removing excess hair allows their bodies to regulate temperature more effectively and stay cool.

We're always keeping a close eye on all our animals to make sure they're handling the heat okay. With a mix of shade, fans, icy snacks, pools, and lots of love, we're doing everything we can to help them stay cool until the temperatures finally chill out. – Jen Campbell, Educator/Camp Director

Muscoot Farm is turning 50 this year! Please consider making a donation towards The Friends of Muscoot Farm to contribute towards the care of our animals, historic preservation, and public programming as we celebrate this big year.

Donations can be made via Venmo @FriendsofMuscoot or our website.

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