Pollinators of THE BATTERY

The vibrant gardens of The Battery attract an abundance of pollinators throughout the warm season, including some you may not expect! Use this guide to identify and learn more about some of our most common flower pollinators, and check out our Butterflies of The Battery guide to see even more pollinator examples. Please remember to follow all social distancing guidelines while at The Battery. We hope you enjoy your visit!

Bees

Sweat Bees
Agapostemon spp.

Sweat bees are native to the Americas, and are recognizable by their metallic green color. All species of *Agapostemon* dig tunnel nests in bare patches of ground, where they lay their eggs.

Western Honey Bee
Apis mellifera

The honey bee was likely first domesticated in Egypt more than 5,000 years ago, and has since spread across the globe. Honey bees collect flower nectar to convert to honey for long-term storage, and pollen to feed to their young.

Common Eastern Bumble Bee
Bombus impatiens

Bumble bees are social bees, living in colonies that include a Queen, worker bees, and male bees. Bumble bee colonies live in underground nests that house more than 450 individuals.

Spurred Ceratina
Ceratina calcarata

Spurred ceratinas are solitary bees. Rather than dig underground nests or build hives, they lay their eggs in hollow plant stems, leaving pollen inside for the larvae to eat once they hatch.

Flat-tailed Leaf-cutter Bee
Megachile mendica

Leaf-cutter bees will use their strong mandibles to cut out sections of leaves to line the egg cells in their nests. They build these nests in the hollow centers of plant stems.

Eastern Carpenter Bee
Xylocopa virginica

Eastern carpenter bees are similar in size to bumble bees, but their abdomens are smooth and glossy rather than hairy. They carve tunnel nests out of wood, and each generation only lives for one year.

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Wasps, Beetles, Flies, and others

European Paper Wasp
Polistes dominula

The paper wasp not only pollinates flowers; it also eats bugs like aphids that damage agricultural crops, and in some areas it feeds on fruit crops themselves. Paper wasps earn their name by building nests out of wood fibers and saliva.

Great Black Digger Wasp
Sphex pensylvanicus

As a solitary wasp, the great black digger wasp does not display the kind of aggressive behavior common in yellowjackets or other wasps that nest in colonies. This wasp paralyzes grasshoppers to feed to its larvae.

Flower Longhorn Beetles
Lepturinae subfamily

More than 1300 species make up the subfamily *Lepturinae*, and all feed on pollen and nectar as their primary food sources as adults. They are likely not as effective at pollination as bees, which have more hairs to catch pollen grains.

European Drone Fly
Eristalis tenax

The drone fly demonstrates an incredible example of *biomimicry*: though *E. tenax* cannot sting, evolution has led the species to look similar to the stinging honey bee, thereby discouraging predation.

Blow Flies
Calliphoridae family

Some plants depend on flies, rather than bees, for pollination. The pawpaw tree, a native fruit tree of North America, produces flowers that smell slightly rotten in order to attract blow fly pollinators.

Margined Calligrapher
Toxomerus marginatus

The margined calligrapher is a member of the family *Syrphidae*, also called hoverflies. These flies will hover in place around flowers before descending to feed on the nectar and pollen within.

Hairy Flower Scarabs
Trichiotinus spp.

The eight species of *Trichiotinus* beetles are all native to North America, and eat flower pollen as a primary food source. Pollen grains will stick to the many hairs on their bodies and travel with the beetles to different flowers.

Common House Mosquito
Culex pipiens

The primary food source for adult mosquitos is nectar—the females only draw blood when preparing to lay eggs. Many adult mosquitos on their search for nectar will pollinate small green, white, and yellow flowers.

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