

# Bugs & Blights

Sharon J. Collman | WSU Snohomish County Extension



*Crocus provides early pollen for bumblebees*



## the Landscape Professional's Role in Bringing Back Pollinators

**What is in it for you? The answer...** Sales of flowering plants, bee nest boxes, designs, landscapes that provide habitat, cover and water for pollinators. As a benefit, we are assured a continued abundance of food and fiber.

The conversion of native landscapes to crops, roofs and cement, the invasions of exotic species, alien diseases and parasites, the misuse of pesticides, and disturbances in climate have all been implicated in significant losses of native bees, flies, butterflies, moths and beetles. These insects pollinate native plants and many of our agricultural and home crops. What the nursery and landscape industry can do is sell a mix of native and garden plants that provide nectar and pollen (especially for very early and late season blooms); emphasize disease and insect resistant plants; remove invasive species from plant lists; provide nesting sites; reduce impermeable surfaces; provide information to ensure proper pesticide use, only when needed and only to target plants. (More: Xerces Society Guide: Attracting Native Pollinators. [www.xerces.org/books/](http://www.xerces.org/books/))

Solitary nesting bees have no nest to defend, so most of the native bees do not, or are reluctant to, sting. Butterflies provide extra beauty and interest; many flies and beetle pollinators are natural enemies of garden pests or part of the recycling process of breaking down deadwood.

On Right, from top to bottom: 1. Lorquin's Admiral on Hebe. 2. Ahhh! Gardens that look like a nursery. 3. A variety of nest boxes for mason and leaf-cutter bees, aphid hunters and bumblebees. 4. A harmless flower fly forages among flowers - Its larvae are voracious aphid predators. 5. Solitary bee nests in a patch of compacted soil.

Photos provided by Sharon Collman.