

## What are pollinators?

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Natural Resource Conservation Volunteers

Our community is called *Comunidad Indígena Monte Grande de Sierra Fría* - commonly referred to as *Comunidad de Monte Grande*. The community owns a communal area called Monte Grande that is part of the Sierra Fría National Protected Area. Community members live in the town of Jesús María which is about 3-4 hours by road to Monte Grande. The community utilizes a core group of people termed vigilantes to carry out conservation activities in the communal area. Apart from the vigilantes, the majority of members rarely if at all travel to the communal area. In this regard, the majority of members are not involved in conservation work. As a result, the President of the community expressed the need to build awareness of biodiversity conservation and other environmental issues among the community members in *Jesús María*. The community leadership is concerned about the growing disconnect of its members, especially the young people, with the communal area and conservation issues in general. To this end, the President requested that we design and implement biodiversity conservation education for the members in *Jesús María*.

The community owns a building in *Jesús María* that it uses for its offices and monthly General Assembly meetings. In front of the office was an area overgrown with weeds and had a lot of trash. People used to just dump trash from their homes in that area. Because that area had become very unsightly, the President and we agreed that we should clean it up. One day while talking with the husband of the Community President, Mr. Porfirio, the topic of pollinators came up. There were lots of hummingbirds visiting one



tree at the residential property of the Community President. I referred to the hummingbirds as pollinators. Mr. Porfirio asked me, "What are pollinators?" That question gave me an idea to host an educational activity on pollinators. I figured that if Mr. Porfirio did not know much about pollinators then it might apply to other members of the community as well. I discussed the matter with the Community President who fully supported the idea and went further to suggest that we should clear the unsightly area and use it for a pollinator garden. We then discussed the plans with the community at a General Assembly meeting. The community was excited about the idea, and indeed expressed the need to learn more about pollinators.

We put up two posters in the Community Salon, one describing native pollinators and native plants for Central Mexico and the other describing steps of how to create a pollinator garden. In October, we then worked with various community members over three weekends to clear the area, till, and apply organic manure. Then after the General Assembly of November, all community members and their families, young and old, male and female, working together planted native pollinator plants in the cleared area in front of their building. In early December, we saw bees and various butterflies, including Monarch butterflies, visiting the plants in the community pollinator garden. We were also fortunate in that the plants were donated to the community by the *Secretaría de Sustentabilidad, Medio Ambiente of Aguascalientes*.

