

Is YOUR Solar Farm Pollinator-Friendly or Pollinator-Killing?

Fact and resources for creating safe pollinator habitats at solar installations

Pollinators Are in Trouble. Dramatic losses of Monarch butterflies, bumblebees, massive honeybee and wild bee die-offs and declines in birds who eat insects continue. Pesticides are a major cause of mortality for these crucial species.

- Since 2006, we lose 1/3 or more of the U.S. honeybee population annually
- Maryland lost 50% of honeybees in 2020-23, state's highest losses on record
- Public concern for saving our bees, birds and insect pollinators continues to be very high



Pollinator-SAFE Solar Installations Are a Win-Win

Your solar facility can be welcomed into communities both as a solution to the climate crisis and to the pollinator die-off crisis.

Ground mounted solar power arrays create the perfect opportunity to provide much needed safe pollinator habitat, that is perennial flowering plants that produce pollen and nectar to feed honeybees, native wild bees, butterflies, and host plants for caterpillars that become butterflies. The spaces between the panels are then dedicated to something highly useful, the flowers beautify the solar installations making them more desirable to communities, and established pollinator plantings/meadows require less maintenance than turf.

Maryland Smart on Pesticides Pollinator-SAFE Scorecard is Pollinator Protective

Maryland solar farms can qualify as “pollinator-friendly” projects by amassing points on a scorecard designed to maximize plantings for pollinators. While using a scorecard is a good idea to protect this threatened population, the current Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) scorecard has a fatal flaw that the Smart on Pesticides Coalition (SOPC) has brought to the attention of DNR: **it allows projects to achieve a pollinator-friendly score even when the site is treated with pesticides that will kill those pollinators!** ***In essence, the banquet for bees becomes a killing field.***

The Smart on Pesticides **Pollinator-SAFE Solar Installation Scorecard ensures your installation is protective** by making one very critical adjustment to the current DNR scorecard. The points deducted for *synthetic chemical* Pesticide Use have been increased by 50 points, in order to ensure the site is pollinator-safe. Instead, we can recommend safe organic, bio-rational or non-toxic pesticides or mechanical controls.

SMART on
PESTICIDES
maryland

Smart on Pesticides is a coalition of 114 organizations and businesses.

Plant, Maintain and Promote a Pollinator-SAFE Solar Garden

Using the Smart on Pesticides Pollinator-SAFE Solar Installation Scorecard will qualify you for both the State designation and the Smart on Pesticides Pollinator-SAFE designation—ensuring your solar installation is *truly* a safe haven for our threatened and declining bees, birds, and butterflies.

Chemical-free is best for bees! Qualify and SOPC will promote your project!

Turn the page for helpful Resources to make your solar farm a beautiful safe haven for bees, bird and butterflies >

For more information on creating a healthy haven for pollinators at your solar installation, contact: Maryland Pesticide Education Network, 410-849-3939, raindrop@mdpestnet.org

RESOURCES for Pollinator-SAFE Habitats for Solar Farms

SAFE Landscape Companies for Design, Installation, and Maintenance

These landscaping companies offer comprehensive services to create *pesticide-free* Pollinator-SAFE habitats for solar installations:

- Empire Landscaping*, Lynette Scaffidi 301-509-8483; Sarah Herlihy, 301-775-8651, empirelandscapellc.com, lscaffidi@empirelandscapellc.com; sherlihy@empirelandscapellc.com
- ARM Group, LLC*, Michelle Cohen, 717-533-8600, armgroup.net, mcohen@armgroup.net,
- KW Landscaping, Kevin Wengernuk, 410-729-0646, kwlandscaping.com, kevin@kwlandscaping.com

If you choose another landscaping company, be sure they will comply with the Pollinator-SAFE Habitat practices and sign the Pollinator-SAFE Agreement (linked at the bottom of page).

* DNR approved Pollinator-Friendly Site Inspectors

SAFE Seed Suppliers

Seed can be treated with pesticides that will harm pollinators. These companies provide organic wildflower mixes for our region that are pesticide-free organic seed mixes:

- FedCo – Beneficial Mix, Flower Mix, fedoseeds.com
- Harris Seeds – Wildflower NE Mix, harriseseeds.com
- Johnny's Selected Seeds, Beneficial Insect Attractant Mix, johnnyseeds.com
- Peaceful Valley – Perennial & Regional Wildflower Mix, groworganic.com
- Chesapeake Valley Seed – Peren. & Regional Wildflower Mixes, chesapeakevalleyseed.com

Avoid Synthetic Chemical Pesticides

Avoid Neonicotinoids: Imidacloprid, Clothianidin, Thiamethoxam, Acetamiprid, Dinotefuran, Sulfoxaflor. See [Neonic Products List](#)

Avoid Glyphosate, see [Glyphosate Products List](#)

For safer alternatives: solar@mdpestnet.org

RESOURCES for LANDSCAPERS

Organic Site Preparation for Pollinator Habitats at Solar Installations

- Organic Site Preparation for Wildflower Establishment - [Download](#)
- Organic Site Preparation Methods: A Comparative Overview - [Download](#)
- Estimated Costs to Establish Wildflower Plantings Using Solarization - [Download](#)

Safer Herbicide Applications

- Weed Terminator 2, <https://www.contactorganics.com/products-2/>
- Grow Organics offers many [safe herbicides](#) at groworganic.com

Selecting Plants for Pollinators

- Mid-Atlantic Pollinator Plant List – Concise - [Download](#)
- Selecting Plants for Pollinators – [Western Md & Central & Shore](#)
- Attracting Pollinators Using Native Plants - [Download](#)

Alternative Site Maintenance Methods

- Solar Grazing – Sheep on Solar Facilities, Am. Solar Grazing Association, solargrazing.org
- Agrivoltaics report – Farming & Solar Synergies - [Download](#)
- Robot Rumbas – for low mowing areas, AIR Landcare, contactair.today

HERBICIDE USE WARNING

We recommend **glyphosate-free site preparation**. If glyphosate is used, **must wait at least 60 days** after application, **before planting** wildflower mixes to reduce harm to pollinators.



Maryland lost over 50% of its honeybees 2020-2021. Dramatic losses are impacting wild pollinators and birds, too.

Why Pollinators Need SAFE Habitat

- Bees, Birds & Beneficials – How they are threatened - [Download](#)
- Pollinator Factsheet – Beneficials species needing protection - [Download](#)

"Even small doses of pesticides can impair key functions bees need to survive. And in the field, bees often encounter multiple exposures of one or more pesticides." – [Bees & Pesticides: Science Update](#)

[DOWNLOAD](#) the Pollinator-SAFE SCORECARD

[DOWNLOAD](#) the Pollinator-SAFE AGREEMENTS

[for Solar Installations](#) | [for Landscaping Companies](#)