

New planting guide creates a 'buzz' in Blue Mountains orchards

August 30 2021



Bilpin Orchard. Credit: Dr Amy Gilpin

Western Sydney University researchers have been working with the When Bee Foundation to produce a new pollinator-friendly planting guide to support horticultural producers in the Blue Mountains region.

"Powerful pollinators: Encouraging insect pollinators in [farm](#) landscapes" will assist growers in the Bilpin region to select [native plants](#) that attract insect pollinators to their properties, including bees,

butterflies and moths, to increase crop fertilization and yield.

The research team, comprising Professor Sally Power, Dr. Amy Gilpin and Professor James Cook from Western Sydney University's Hawkesbury Institute for the Environment, hope the guide raises awareness for pollinators as an essential component of agricultural production and healthy, biodiverse landscapes.

"Protecting and enhancing pollinator resources on farms will help support a diverse range of pollinators," said Dr. Gilpin.

The guide provides an introduction to the role of insect pollinators on farms, along with information on how to choose native [plants](#) that will support a diverse range of pollinators throughout the year.

Focused on the Bilpin area, where the team has been undertaking Hort Frontiers-funded research into apple and cherry pollination over the past four years, the recommended plants are indigenous to the region and suitable for its climate and soils.

"Without [insect pollinators](#), the quantity and diversity of food and flowers grown in gardens would be severely restricted. Many of the fruits and vegetables we eat, from gardens and farms, depend on insects for pollination," added Professor Power.

In addition to identifying 34 [native plant species](#) growing around Bilpin and an additional 21 from the broader Blue Mountains area, the guide suggests several measures growers can take to support pollinators on their properties including:

- Create pollination reservoirs
- Construct insect real estate
- Get to know your local flora

- Reduce chemical use.

More information: Powerful pollinators: Encouraging insect pollinators in farm landscapes. [www.wheenbeefoundation.org.au/... p-Blue-Mountains.pdf](http://www.wheenbeefoundation.org.au/...p-Blue-Mountains.pdf)

Provided by Western Sydney University

Citation: New planting guide creates a 'buzz' in Blue Mountains orchards (2021, August 30) retrieved 23 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2021-08-blue-mountains-orchards.html>

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