

Building pollinator sanctuaries

by S. K. Basu

Globally, there is an increasing threat to insect pollinators like bees, moths and butterflies, and certain species of flies and beetles that are responsible for cross-pollination of over 80 percent of globally important crops.

Recently, an organisation called Farming Smarter in Canada launched an experiment to conserve pollinators such as honey bees and native bees. By using a combination of locally grown annual and perennial crops and wildflowers with varying flowering periods, the project is establishing Pollinator Sanctuaries to attract insect pollinators. So far, the experiment has shown excellent results. This demonstrates that a mixture of annual and perennial crops with varying flowering periods can extend the bee foraging cycles beyond the conventional season. Such multiple-crop-based Pollinator Sanctuaries can help establish small local ecosystems, conserve insect pollinators, serve as grazing pastures and help in soil reclamation, etc.

This method can serve as a model of low-cost conservation for countries like Bangladesh.