

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Post Offices 'Abuzz' Over Protect Pollinators Forever Stamps

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RICHMOND, VA — The U.S. Postal Service will pay tribute tomorrow to the beauty and importance of pollinators with stamps depicting two of our continent's most iconic, the monarch butterfly and the western honeybee, each shown industriously pollinating a variety of plants native to North America.

The [Protect Pollinators Forever stamps](#) will be dedicated at noon tomorrow at the [American Philatelic Society National Summer Convention Stamp Show](#) in Richmond, VA. Share the news on social media using the hashtags [#ProtectPollinators](#) and [#PollinatorStamps](#).

"Bees, butterflies and other pollinators sustain our ecosystem and are a vital natural resource," said U.S. Postal Service Judicial Officer Gary Shapiro, who will dedicate the stamps. "They are being threatened and we must protect them."

Scheduled to join Judge Shapiro in the dedication are [American Philatelic Society](#) President [Mick Zais](#); [The Pollinator Partnership](#) President & CEO [Val Dolcini](#); and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Assistant Regional Director for External Affairs, Midwest Region, Charles Traxler. U.S. Postal Service Director, Stamp Services Mary-Anne Penner will serve as master of ceremonies.

“We’d like to thank the U.S. Postal Service, not only for supporting StampShow Richmond, but for bringing stamps that are sure to be a hit with collectors,” said Zais.



From left, the stamps feature a monarch and a coneflower (photo by [Karen Mayford](#)); a monarch and a zinnia (photo by Bonnie Sue Rauch); and a monarch and a goldenrod (photo by Justin Fowler);



From left: a western honeybee and a golden ragwort (photo by [George D. Lepp](#)); and a western honeybee and a New England aster (photo by [Michael Durham](#)).

A bee buzzing around the patio might provoke anxiety, while a butterfly fluttering over the lawn inspires childlike wonder. But both of these insects are simply going about their business, providing the vital ecological service of pollination.

As with their fellow pollinators — other insects, birds and bats — they are rewarded with sweet nectar as they shuttle pollen from blossom to blossom. The plants are rewarded too. They can then produce the seeds that bring their next generation. Humans also benefit. We can thank insect pollinators for about a third of the food that we eat, particularly many of the fruits and vegetables that add colorful variety and important nutrients to our diet.

Monarch butterflies (*Danaus plexippus*) and western honeybees (*Apis mellifera*), also called European honeybees, are two of North America's most iconic pollinators. Both travel far and wide. Monarchs can flutter thousands of miles in one of nature's most wondrous migrations, a multigenerational round-trip that can cross southern Canada, the north-south breadth of the contiguous United States, and deep into Mexico, where they rest for the winter before returning north.

While western honeybees do not naturally migrate such distances, beekeepers truck their hives on long-haul migrations, accommodating agricultural growing seasons around the nation. These bees are far and away the continent's most vital pollinators, servicing almond, citrus, peach, apple and cherry tree blossoms, plus the blossoms of berries, melons, cucumbers, onions and pumpkins, to name just a few. Surpluses of honey, created from nectar by honeybees as a nonperishable food source for their hives, is yet another benefit to humans.

In this modern world, these pollinators need mindful human intervention in order to thrive. The hives of western honeybees have lately been raided by parasitic mites and plagued by Colony Collapse Disorder, a mysterious condition which disorients bees and causes them to abandon their hives. While monarch

butterflies, utterly dependent on milkweed plants throughout their range and specific mountain forests in Mexico, face collapsing populations as these habitats disappear to accommodate farming, urban development and illegal logging.

Throughout North America, efforts to halt logging, study the effects of agricultural herbicides and pesticides, and plant long swaths of flowers along stretches of highway and other such rights-of-way offer promise. On a grassroots level, individuals and groups can help provide for pollinators by planting locally appropriate flowers — a win-win for people and pollinators alike.

The Protect Pollinators stamps are being issued as Forever stamps. Forever stamps are always equal in value to the current First-Class Mail one-ounce price.

Ordering First-Day-of-Issue Postmarks

Customers have 60 days to obtain first-day-of-issue postmarks by mail. They may purchase new stamps at United States Post Office locations, at the Postal Store usps.com/shop or by calling 800-782-6724. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes to themselves or others and place them in larger envelopes addressed to:

FDOI – Protect Pollinators Stamps
USPS Stamp Fulfillment Services
8300 NE Underground Drive, Suite 300
Kansas City, MO 64144-9900

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for postmarks up to a quantity of 50. For more than 50, customers are charged 5 cents each. All orders must be postmarked by Oct. 3, 2017.

Ordering First-Day Covers

The Postal Service also offers first-day covers for new stamps and stationery items postmarked with the official first-day-of-issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly *USA Philatelic* catalog, online at usps.com/shop or by calling 800-782-6724. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-782-6724 or writing to:

U.S. Postal Service
Catalog Request
PO Box 219014
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

Philatelic Products

Philatelic products for this stamp issue are as follows:

- 475206, Press Sheet with Die-cut, \$88.20.
- 475210, Digital Color Postmark Keepsake (set of 5), \$18.95.
- 475216, First-Day Cover (set of 5), \$4.65.
- 475221, Digital Color Postmark (set of 5), \$8.20.
- 475224, Framed Art, \$29.95.
- 475229, Activity Book, \$14.95.
- 475230, Ceremony Program, \$6.95.
- 475233, Panel, \$10.95.

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