

POLLINATORS HAVE BEEN IN THE NEWS LATELY BECAUSE OF THREATS LIKE **NEONICOTINOID PESTICIDES** AND **POPULATION COLLAPSE**. BUT IT'S NOT JUST INDIVIDUAL SPECIES IN DANGER – THE



STRUCTURE



OF PLANT-POLLINATOR NETWORKS IS IN DANGER TOO.

BUT WHAT IS A PLANT-POLLINATOR NETWORK? WHAT'S ITS STRUCTURE? AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?



A PLANT-POLLINATOR NETWORK



IS SIMPLY THE PLANTS IN A PARTICULAR PLACE, THEIR POLLINATORS,

AND THE INTERACTIONS, OR LINKS, BETWEEN THEM.



MOST NETWORKS HAVE A SIMILAR STRUCTURE, WITH LOTS OF LINKS, AND

SPECIALIST SPECIES

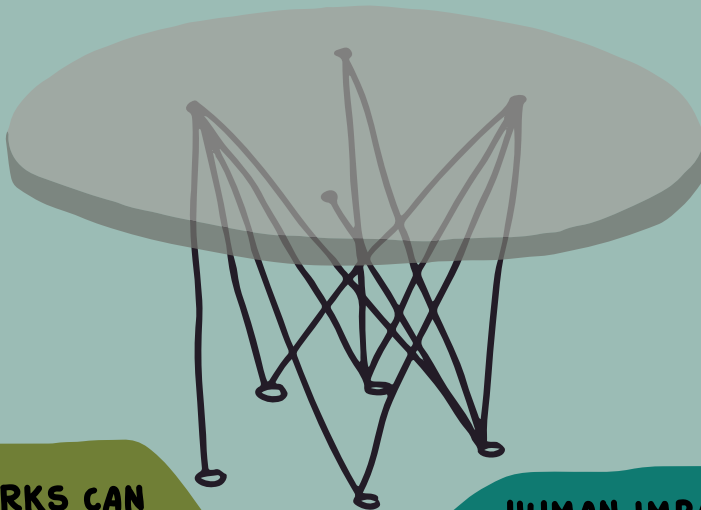
INTERACTING WITH

GENERALIST SPECIES.

THE **STRUCTURE** IS THE PATTERN ALL THE INTERACTIONS MAKE.

WHY IS STRUCTURE IMPORTANT?

A NETWORK IS LIKE THE LEGS OF A TABLE HOLDING UP A WHOLE COMMUNITY. ITS STRUCTURE DETERMINES HOW STABLE IT IS.



NETWORKS CAN SURVIVE THE LOSS OF SOME LINKS AND SPECIES, BUT NOT TOO MANY. IF A GENERALIST SPECIES DISAPPEARS, THE WHOLE COMMUNITY COULD COLLAPSE.

HUMAN IMPACTS LIKE PESTICIDE USE AND LAND DEVELOPMENT CAUSE CHANGES SO BIG AND FAST THAT THEY THREATEN EVEN THE STRONGEST NETWORKS IN NATURE.

ECOLOGISTS ARE STUDYING THE STRUCTURE OF PLANT-POLLINATOR NETWORKS BECAUSE UNDERSTANDING THEIR COMPLEXITY COULD PROVIDE THE KEY TO PROTECTING THEM.



YOU CAN HELP PROTECT THEM BY PLANTING A DIVERSE MIX OF NATIVE PLANTS IN YOUR GARDEN THAT FLOWER AT DIFFERENT TIMES.



LEARN MORE AT [HTTPS://XERCES.ORG/POLLINATOR-RESOURCE-CENTER](https://xerces.org/pollinator-resource-center).

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