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**TENNESSEE POLLINATOR EFFORTS RECOGNIZED BY INTERNATIONAL NON-PROFIT**

TDOT & Working Group Awarded *Pollinator Roadside Management Award*

The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) has been awarded the *Pollinator Roadside Management Award* for 2023 by the North American Pollinator Partnership Campaign. The award is given to agencies who are leading the field in pollinator-friendly roadside practices.

“Pollinators are vitally important to Tennessee’s agriculture and are critically threatened,” explained Commissioner Butch Eley. “TDOT is proud of the work we’ve done, and the work of our partners, in bringing about better management of roadsides and helping the public to be more informed.”

TDOT was recognized, alongside the Partners for Pollinators Working Group, for its continuing improvement of Tennessee’s roadside maintenance practices. Additionally, TDOT and the Working Group were lauded for their public education efforts and pursuit of partnerships to make an ecological impact. TDOT’s Pollinator Habitat Program and the Partners for Pollinators Working Group is a partnership between four state agencies (Transportation, Environment & Conservation, Agriculture, and the Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency) as well as several Tennessee universities and nonprofit partners.

The North American Pollinator Partnership Campaign is a 501(c)3 organization and is the largest non-profit in the world dedicated to the protection and promotion of pollinators and their ecosystems. Read more about the campaign, as well as 2023 award recipients, at <https://www.pollinator.org/>.

**2023 *PROJECT MILKWEED* ORDERS COMPLETED**

Popular Resource to Return in June 2024

TDOT completed fulfillment of milkweed seed orders for the inaugural year of *Project Milkweed*. A total of 779,601 Red Milkweed and Common Milkweed seed packets were distributed statewide as of December 27, 2023, fulfilling orders placed by 130,903 Tennesseans.

*Project Milkweed* was launched in June 2023 as a mail-order resource aimed at restoring landscapes and preserving habitats for monarch butterflies and other pollinator species in Tennessee. *Project Milkweed* will return in June 2024 with another 250,000 milkweed seed packets available free for Tennesseans upon request. For more information about *Project Milkweed*, including species information and planting tips, please visit: <https://tnpollinators.org/milkweed/>.