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How to Create the Ultimate Bee Garden

Bees play a major role in the ability of humans to feed themselves. In fact, honeybees are responsible for as much as one-third of the food that people consume. This is because bees are pollinators: They aid plant fertilization by spreading pollen from one plant to the next. Without this effort, many plants would die off due to an inability to reproduce. Examples of foods that rely on bees for cross-pollination include, but are not limited to, blueberries, apples, almonds, carrots, and broccoli. In addition, honeybees also produce honey. Unfortunately, honeybees and other types of bees are disappearing due to a number of factors, such as disease and insufficient habitats. People can help to stop the decline of the bee population by creating bee-friendly gardens.

What is a Bee Garden?

A bee garden is a garden that is designed to attract bees. The purpose of this type of garden is to assist in the conservation and reproduction of bees by creating a type of habitat for them. This is done through the careful selection of plants, including trees, shrubs, and flowers that provide a source of nectar and pollen. Bee gardens also include a water source and some form of nesting shelter suitable for native bees.

Best Bee Garden Plants

There are several things to consider when choosing the best plants for your garden. Although there are different types of bees, there are several things that are standard and universally attractive to them. Color is one of these things. In general, bees are attracted to flowers that are yellow, blue, white, or purple. Additionally, most native bees will be attracted to wildflowers and native plants, as they produce greater amounts of pollen and nectar. A person who is planning a bee garden will want to select a host of varying plant species and plant them grouped by type, color, and shape. The best type of plant should have flowers that are single-blossom and not double-blossom. The flowers that are chosen should also bloom during the daytime hours as opposed to night blooming.

Flowers That Will Attract Bees

When planting flowers, also plant groups of flowers that will bloom at various seasons throughout the year. Specific flowers that bloom in the fall months include asters, zinnias, and goldenrod. In the summer, snapdragon and bee balm are examples of flowers that bloom during these warmer months. For springtime blooms, gardeners may want to consider plants such as hyacinth, calendula, crocus, and wild lilac. Other flowers that are native include black-eyed Susans, asters, Shasta daisies, cosmos, primrose, and purple coneflower. Some flowers may grow better depending on region. For that reason, it is important to check with a nursery for helping choosing what specific plants will work best for bee gardens in any given region.

How to Provide Water

It may come as a surprise to some, but bees do require water. This is why a bee garden must provide a source of water if the intent is to attract bees. A bird bath in the garden can serve as a place for bees to regularly get the water that they need. A bee bath can easily be created even if a bird bath is not present. To create a bath for bees, place decorative rocks or stones on the bottom of a shallow bowl. Clean water should then be poured into the container until it is filled. Replace the water regularly to ensure that the dish is full and free of debris.

How to Provide Shelter

Native or wild bees differ from honeybees, which live in hives. Shelter for native bees often comes in the form of logs or other forms of dead wood. Some native bees choose to create nests in the sand or in burrows that other animals have abandoned. These same bees often feed in areas where they can find a proper nesting place or shelter. For this reason, making a nest is a smart step when creating a bee garden. A simple way to create a shelter or nest for bees is to drill holes that are between three and five inches deep into wooden blocks. The holes should be roughly one inch apart and of various sizes. Once the holes have been drilled, mount the block horizontally in a location that has some protection from the rain and wind but that is relatively warm. When mounting the shelter, place it three to six inches off of the ground. For bees that prefer shelter that is in the ground, a spot in the yard may be kept clear of grass or vegetation.

[Making a Bee-Friendly Garden \(https://beespotter.org/topics/beegarden/\)](https://beespotter.org/topics/beegarden/)

[Blooming Plants \(https://www.avasflowers.net/categories/plants/blooming-plants\)](https://www.avasflowers.net/categories/plants/blooming-plants/)

[How to Make a Bee House \(https://www.diynetwork.com/how-to/outdoors/gardening/the-basics-of-bees\)](https://www.diynetwork.com/how-to/outdoors/gardening/the-basics-of-bees/)

[How to Build a Bee House \(https://www.nwf.org/Error-Page?item=how-to-help/garden-for-wildlife/gardening-tips/build-a-bee-house&user=extranet\Anonymous&site=website\)](https://www.nwf.org/Error-Page?item=how-to-help/garden-for-wildlife/gardening-tips/build-a-bee-house&user=extranet\Anonymous&site=website)

[Attracting Honey and Native Bees to Your Garden \(https://ucanr.edu/sites/MarinMG/files/120973.pdf\)](https://ucanr.edu/sites/MarinMG/files/120973.pdf) (PDF)

[Conserving Wild Bees in Pennsylvania \(https://extension.psu.edu/conserving-wild-bees-in-pennsylvania\)](https://extension.psu.edu/conserving-wild-bees-in-pennsylvania) (PDF)

[Plant a Honeybee-Friendly Garden \(https://aces.nmsu.edu/county/valencia/documents/bee-friendly-garden-list.pdf\)](https://aces.nmsu.edu/county/valencia/documents/bee-friendly-garden-list.pdf) (PDF)