

### Early Bloomers For Emerging Bees

Some bees, including many wild varieties, emerge from their hives as early as January if the temperature on sunny days rises to 55° F. As their food supply in the hive dwindles, solitary wild bees and honey bees may be just clinging to life.

Bees take in carbohydrates from floral nectar and protein from floral pollen. Providing flowers that overlap winter and spring provides critical support for pollinators.

In addition to plants, shrubs and trees are important for late winter and early spring,



Rusty Patched Bumblebee – once common in Midwest and Northeast U.S. is now endangered.

Photo from Xerces Society

While some winter-flowering plants do grow wild, not all pollinators live near them and this makes them important additions to gardens. Establishing them in clusters make them easier to discover and access.

Native plants selected to support pollinators are definitely part of the solution. Even small amounts of habitat are beneficial as these are small creatures.

Additional information can be found at:

- “Winter-blooming plants help bees overwinter in your yard”  
[https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/home/winter-blooming-plants-help-bees-overwinter-in-your-yard/2017/10/17/985f3a64-b340-11e7-9b93-b97043e57a22\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.1a783a5a8ca1](https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/home/winter-blooming-plants-help-bees-overwinter-in-your-yard/2017/10/17/985f3a64-b340-11e7-9b93-b97043e57a22_story.html?utm_term=.1a783a5a8ca1)
- The Xerces Society list of bee-friendly plants has lists for specific areas (e.g., Mid-Atlantic):  
<http://xerces.org/pollinator-conservation/plant-lists>
- The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center lists can be tailored to suit regional and personal criteria:  
<https://www.wildflower.org/collections/>