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HOW TO TURN YOUR YARD INTO A BEE PARADISE

The two easiest steps you can take to make your space bee friendly are; planting flowers that will provide the bees with food and supplying them with a water source.

Bees need flowers to collect nectar and pollen from throughout the growing season. Your garden plan should include plants, shrubs and trees that will bloom at different times, keeping your yard in bloom from early spring until frost. Plant “drifts” of a single type of flower, this makes it easier for the bees to locate the blooms and you’ll enjoy the beautiful masses of flowers too.

Here is a list of some great plants that bees love, broken down by bloom season and the type of plant.

Spring:Early flowers are very important to the newly active hive, the girls are hungry!!

**Perennials:**

Crocus, Daffodil, Hyacinth, Tulip, Allium, Broom, Penstemon, Salvia, Heliotrope, Foxglove, Primrose, Peony, Scabiosa, Iris, Dianthus

**Shrubs:**

Nine bark, Forsythia, Lilac, Daphne, Viburnum, Pussy Willow, Cistene Plum, Nanking Cherry, Blueberry, Cotoneaster, Pyracantha, Magnolia, Barberry

**Trees:**

Maple, Crabapple, Plum, Peach, Apple, Redbud, Apricot, Cherry, Hawthorn, Honey Locust, Black locust, Pear

Summer:Now the colony is growing and they need more and more food to swell the ranks

**Perennials:**

Thyme, Sedum, Ice Plant , Butterfly Weed, Dahlia, Blanket Flower, Veronica, Day lily, Oriental lily, Delphinium, Clematis, Honeysuckle, Wisteria, Gladiola, Hibiscus, Mint, Coneflower, Bee Balm, Hyssop, Lavender, Coreopsis, Russian Sage, Astilbe, Coral Bells, Yarrow, Goldenrod, Anemone, Maximillian Sunflower

**Annuals:** Squash, Tomato, Pepper, Basil, Borage, Sunflower, Zinnia, Eggplant, Watermelon, Cantaloupe, Bean, Cucumber, Dill, Tomatillo, Cosmos

**Shrubs:** Rose, Butterfly Bush, Mock Orange, Spirea, Potentilla, Rose of Sharon, Hydrangea

**Trees:** Linden, Golden Rain Tree, Pagoda Tree, Buckeye, Horse Chestnut, Catalpa

**Fall:** The long day of summer are gone, many of the plants that fed your bees through the summer are no longer blooming but many can be kept in flower by removing spent blossoms throughout the season. Keeping your plants well watered can help many of the blooming right through to frost. Plant Asters and Mums to extend the blooming season in your yard.

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Water for the Bees: Bee colonies need water throughout the year; they use the water to cool their hive on hot summer days and to dilute stored honey so they can eat it. There are many ways you can provide water for bees in your yard but if you’re not ready to install a koi pond or water garden there are some simple things you can do. One very simple option is to fill a bird bath, shallow tray or flower pot saucer with rocks or marbles. Fill this tray with water so the rocks stick up above the water level. Bees need to have an easy place to land to drink the water; they are not graceful flyers and can drown if there is no place for them to stand. These watering stations can be placed in your flower beds, if you can elevate them at least 2-3 inches off the ground. Available water will even help attract other beneficial insects to your garden like lady bugs and green lace wings that will control aphids and mites on your flowers without the use of pesticides.