

Flowers For Your Bees

Our bees' only food is pollen and nectar from flowering plants and trees. As they collect their food they pollinate the plants, allowing them to reproduce. Bees need flowers for food and flowers need bees for pollination!

We are often asked, 'which plants should I grow to encourage bees to visit my garden?'. Basically, to attract the bees, you need to grow plants and trees that offer them food; look on line, ask at your local garden centre or check out our suggestions list below. You can especially help the bees by choosing plants that flower early Spring, June and October. At these times, food for bees to collect is usually scarce and you can help by growing flowering plants and trees that will 'fill the gap'.

Which flowers do bees like best?

It is worth remembering that bees have preferences. Bees like purple, yellow and white flowers best, especially if they are growing in clumps in a sheltered, sunny spot. They also need single flowers - double-headed varieties often have their nectar and pollen producing abilities bred out. Don't forget the all important native plants such as dandelion, heather, dead nettles, clover, willow, hazel, holly, privet and ivy. Bees will appreciate you leaving these alone, until they have finished flowering, as they offer copious amounts of nectar and pollen in times of need.



Pesticides

To attract bees you need to stop using pesticides (ban them throughout the garden).

Lawns

Allow the lawn to grow longer than usual and cherish the flowering 'weeds' such as dandelion and clover that grow there. Did you know that bumble bees like the red clover flowers and honey bees the white ones? Idea - how about planting a wildflower meadow instead of your usual lawn turf?



Herbs

Flowering herbs are important for bees. Plant sage, mint, thyme, lavender, rosemary, mace, etc.

Trees and hedges

For effective foraging, bees need masses of flowers in one place. Large shrubs or small trees are a great source of food.

Five fully grown trees would provide about the same amount of pollen and nectar as one acre of meadow. Really good choices would be winter and early spring flowering trees such as wild cherries, willow and hazel. Don't forget hedge plants such as blackthorn and hawthorn, too. Trees and hedges offer masses of food to bees. Some give nectar and pollen, some, such as willow, just pollen. What they all offer is a lot of food in one spot!



PLANTING LISTS

(share this with mum, dad and grandparents!)

This list contains just suggestions - can you add to it? Watch bees in your garden - which plants do they go for?

Early Spring flowering

Bluebell
Bugle
Crab apple
Daffodil
Flowering cherry
Flowering currant
Forget-me-not
Hawthorn
Pulmonaria
Rhododendron
Rosemary
Thrift
Viburnum



Early Summer flowering

Aquilegia
Astilbe
Campanula
Comfrey
Delphinium
Everlasting sweet pea
Hardy geranium
Lavender
Potentilla
Snapdragon
Teasel
Thyme
Verbascum



Late Summer flowering

Angelica
Aster
Buddleia
Cardoon
Cornflower
Single flowered dahlia
Eryngium
Fuchsia
Globe thistle
Heather
Penstemon
Scabious
Sedum
Verbena

