

BEE-FRIENDLY LANDSCAPES

Create a safe habitat for bees and other insects in your lawn and garden.



Bees and other pollinating insects help plants and gardens grow and are essential to a healthy ecosystem. Providing proper habitats for bees and insects year-round is essential. Here, we suggest various ways you can improve your lawns and gardens to benefit local insect communities, including native bees.

Plant Native Plants

Native plants are ones that have naturally evolved in a particular region, and often they have a symbiotic relationship with local insects, including native bees. Adding native plants to your garden will help the bees and insects thrive. We recommend planting a variety of flowers in your garden to maintain continuous blooms throughout the season (April–October). See our “Flowers for Bees” handout or online pdf.

Rethink Your Lawn

The standard lawn may be visually appealing, but it offers little to no value to wildlife. Consider replacing some of your grass with native plants, shrubs, or trees, or adding clover, self-heal, or thyme to your lawn—not only will these flowers feed the bees, they also require less mowing.

Reduce Pesticide Use

As a gardener or homeowner, you can support pollinators by limiting the use of pesticides around your home and garden. Insecticides are specifically designed to kill insect pests but can negatively impact beneficial insects, such as bees, too. When purchasing plants from local nurseries, try to only purchase “bee-safe” plants that have not been treated by potentially harmful pesticides.

Leave the Leaves

Many insects, including various bees, butterflies, and moths, depend on you not tidying up your garden in the fall. By leaving hollow stems, leaf litter, and brush piles, you are helping to protect insects as they overwinter. Delaying garden cleanups until spring is one of the most important decisions a gardener can make when it comes to protecting pollinators. We suggest waiting until temperatures remain $>50^{\circ}\text{F}$ (at night) for one week.

Source: University of Rhode Island Bee Lab



Check out the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation for additional resources.

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