

Gardening for Bees (and other valuable insects)

A guide to creating safe habitat for beneficial insects in your lawns and gardens.

Providing proper habitat for insects year-round is essential to conserving nature in your area. Even the smallest of spaces can have a profound impact on bees and other pollinators & beneficial insects. Here we suggest various ways you can improve your lawns and gardens to benefit local insect communities.

Plant Native Plants

Insects have coevolved alongside plants for over 100 million years, which means that some insects have close relationships with specific plant species. By planting flowers native to your region, you can help support native bee populations. We recommend selecting a variety of flowers in your garden to maintain continuous blooms throughout the season (April-October). See our "Floral Recommendations for Bees."

Rethink Your Lawn

It's time that we rethink our lawns and create a space with purpose, beauty, and value. The standard lawn offers little to no value to wildlife, pollutes ecosystems, requires excessive water use, and costs a lot of money to maintain. A bee-friendly lawn reduces the need for mowing and incorporates more flowers (such as clover, self-heal, and thyme) to feed the bees. Consider mowing less frequently or reducing the area of turf by planting native flowers, shrubs, or trees.

Reduce Pesticide Use

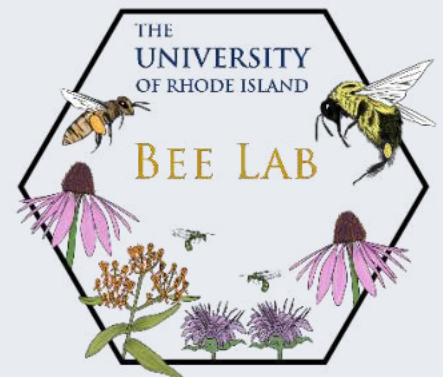
As a gardener or homeowner, you can support pollinators by limiting the use of pesticides around your home and garden. Insecticides are specifically designed to kill insect pests but can negatively impact beneficial insects, such as bees, too. When purchasing plants from local nurseries, try to only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

Leave the Leaves

Protect insects year-round by ensuring that they have a place to safely overwinter in your garden! Many insects, including various bees, butterflies, and moths, depend on you **not** tidying up your garden. By leaving hollow stems, leaf litter, and brush piles, you are helping to protect insects as they overwinter. Delaying garden cleanups is one of the most important decisions a gardener can make when it comes to protecting pollinators. We suggest waiting until temperatures remain >50° F (at night) for one week.



We recommend checking out the **Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation** for additional resources.



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