



A BEE-FRIENDLY GARDEN IS A PESTICIDE-FREE GARDEN

A FACTSHEET FROM MIDWEST PESTICIDE ACTION CENTER

*"The writing is on the wall. We have to do something to ensure pollination for future generations."
- Peter Neuman, research scientist at the Swiss Bee Research Facility*



Beekeepers, scientists, farmers, and nature lovers have been documenting the steady decline of the global bee population since 1998. Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), an epidemic affecting the honeybee that causes worker bees to abruptly disappear, can account for some of the decline. Worker bees make up the majority

of a honeybee colony, so when they disappear, an entire colony can be wiped out. Other killers include viruses, habitat destruction, and the stress of migratory bee practices. Strong links have also been made between the use of pesticides (in particular a class of pesticides called neonicotinoids) and the overall decline in pollinators.

Creating a bee-friendly garden is one way we can all help reverse this trend. Check out the back of this fact sheet for tips on how to create healthy environments for pollinators to thrive.



Bee Facts

 Bees are fuzzy, flying insects that are important for plant and food production. Plants provide bees' food in the form of nectar and pollen. In return, bees help plants reproduce.

 Bees pollinate about 70% of the world's food crops including cucumbers, carrots, apples, onions, almonds, and pears. Without bees, food production would decline leading to food insecurity.

 90% of all flowering plants need bees and other pollinators to survive.

 There are more than 500 species of native bees in Illinois.

 Most bees don't live in hives; many live in small holes in the ground and others burrow into dead wood.

 Bumble bees are one of the few native bees that live in a colony.

 Bees are not aggressive by nature and will not sting unless they feel threatened by an outsider.



A BEE-FRIENDLY GARDEN IS A PESTICIDE-FREE GARDEN (cont.)

FOUR EASY WAYS TO MAKE YOUR GARDEN BEE-FRIENDLY

- 1. Plant bee-friendly plants in your garden or yard.** Native plants are the bee's best friend. Native plants are a diverse group of flowers and other plants that can be a sustainable food source, especially if chosen for varying bloom times. Some great choices are bee balm, foxglove, and goldenrod.
- 2. Plant groupings of the same plant.** Bees love mass plantings of the same plant as well as dense plantings of different plants. They like abundant food sources close together.
- 3. Protect your bee's habitat.** Leave dead branches or other wood materials on the ground as nesting sites for bees. In areas likely to house bees, protect bee nests by not turning the soil.
- 4. Keep your own bees!** Check your local ordinances, as many cities are now allowing homeowners to keep hives. In addition to the wonderful honey that you will harvest, you will be encouraging and maintaining a local cozy place for bees to flourish.

SHARE YOUR LOVE OF BEES WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

Help the bee population by spreading awareness about this issue to others in your community. Join a local bee co-op, or check online for other local resources. The bees need us to help protect them – they are counting on us!

SOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT BEES AND WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP:

backyardbeekeepers.com/facts.html
honeybeesonline.com/
queenofthesun.com/get-involved/
il.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/plants/npg/
xerces.org/pollinators-great-lakes-region/

Avoid The Following:



Don't use pesticides in your garden or yard.

Pesticides play a major role in the decline of bee populations. Pesticides can get into the pollen and nectar and can be carried back to the hive where they affect all the bees in the colony. Be aware that many commonly used lawn and garden products contain pesticides. For example, "weed and feed" is a type of product commonly used for lawn care that combines pesticides and fertilizers. Be sure to check labels and only use pesticide-free products.



Don't pull all of the weeds out of your garden.

Not all weeds are bad weeds. Weeds such as dandelions are actually great sources of pollen for bees and other pollinators. Consider letting the weeds bloom first before removing them so that the bees can use the pollen.

Midwest Grows Green accomplishes large scale behavior change by sharing pesticide and fertilizer information at critical places where lawns and landscapes influence our lives.

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