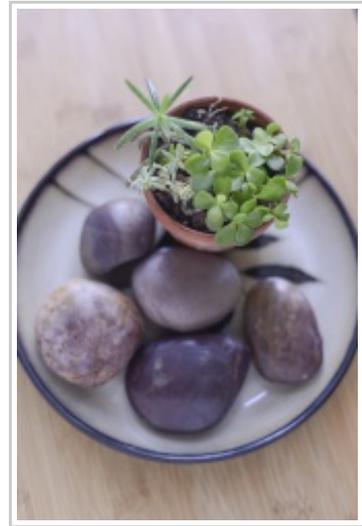


Bee Garden

Everyone is a-buzz about protecting bees these days. While bees can be pesky on a walk or at a picnic, they actually have a big part to play in how plants grow, including many kinds that we rely on for food. Fortunately, there's a way for the whole family to help, and it's right in your own backyard! Create a bee garden to help shelter bees in your area.



What You Need:

- Plants (suggestions below)
- Potting soil
- Shovel
- Natural, organic fertilizers
- Log, birdhouse, or bat house
- Pond, birdbath, or shallow plate with rocks and water

What You Do:

1. Explain to your child that many bee species are in decline, mainly because of habitat loss. Remind him that there's good news: He can help by creating a bee garden in his own yard!
2. A first step is to choose plants that attract bees. It helps to choose plants or flowers that bloom at different times of year, giving bees access to pollen in various seasons. Here are some ideas:
 - **Spring:** blueberry, columbine, crabapple, crocus, foxglove, heather, primrose, wild lupine, willow
 - **Summer:** blackberry, catnip, chives, dahlia, raspberry, lavender, sunflower, wild bergamot
 - **Fall:** aster, blue lobelia, coneflower, cornflower, cosmos, goldenrod, pumpkin, sedum, squash
3. Make sure that plants you choose grow in your region. Plants native to your area are best for bees. If none of the listed plants are right for your area, you can find more suggestions online.
4. After planting the bee-friendly items, limit the use of pesticides and fertilizers. Explain to your child that these products can poison bees. Natural, organic fertilizers are preferable. Some supposedly bee-friendly plants can sometimes contain pesticides, so check your shopping list against lists at <http://www.foe.org/beeaction> to make sure you're not buying harmful plants.
5. Next, make sure there are shelters to protect bees from wind, rain and cold. Trees provide natural shelters; you can also put logs or old tree stumps in sunny areas. Piles of sand can make good nesting areas. Hollow, dried-out sunflower stems, birdhouses, or bat houses also work.
6. Bees sip water, so provide a water source in a pond or bird bath. You can even use a shallow bowl or plate at ground level with some rocks that peek above the water line — bees use rocks as “landing pads.” Add fresh water daily.
7. Enjoy the bee-aautiful yard!