

# Gardening Tips – *attracting bees*

## PLANTS

- 🐝 Bees gather both nectar and pollen from plants. When you are selecting plants for your garden, choose ones that are attractive to bees. Take a moment to do a little internet research for recommended bee plants in your area. A great resource for information can be the Xerces Society or the horticulturalist at your local plant nursery.
- 🐝 Just like us, bees need food anytime they are active, mostly from spring through fall. It is nice to select a plant with a long blooming season or a group of plants that together will offer flowers from spring through fall. Check plant labels or talk to someone at your local nursery for help with this.
- 🐝 If you have the space, it's great to use 10 or more bee plants as a grouping in your garden. If you don't have the space for that many plants, simply plant the number that you can manage. The bees will still appreciate it!

## MAINTENANCE

- 🐝 Honey bees also require water when they are foraging in your garden. Providing water can be as simple as putting a thin layer of water in a shallow dish or leaving that drippy garden faucet to form little puddles. Alternatively, a conscientious gardener can simply be tolerant of bees taking a sip of water from their birdbath, gutter or swimming pool.
- 🐝 If pest insect control is necessary, take the time to select insect-specific insecticides. By using caution in their selection and application, you can avoid accidentally harming the bees that visit your garden. Another pest control option is to promote good bugs (called 'beneficial insects') in your garden – bugs that will happily eat the bad bugs chomping on your plants. A comprehensive resource for information is <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/>.
- 🐝 If using herbicides in your garden, use the application amount and application procedure outlined on the product label. Incorrect use of herbicides may damage the flowers that bees depend on for food. Hand-weeding or using a thick layer of mulch can also suppress weeds.
- 🐝 Leave flowers on your plant until the blooms are gone, then you're welcome to deadhead or prune. This way, the bees will make the most of each flower.

## NATIVE BEES

- 🐝 Select plants native to your state. Bees native to where you are will be most attracted to these plants.
- 🐝 Native bees don't live in hives. They can make their homes in solitary underground dwellings. Instead of covering your entire garden with mulch, leave some bare spaces so that these bees can make their homes. If you'd like, a pile of sand that is left undisturbed may also be used by ground-dwelling bees.

