



# Bee friendly Gardening guide

## Top tips - for all year round!

You don't need a big garden or lots of time to make a real difference to bees in your own outdoor spaces. Follow this bee friendly gardening guide, and you can help to provide food and shelter for bees and other pollinators all year round.



**Plant in blocks of at least three.** This makes it easier for bees to locate your plants and find their food.



**Don't be too tidy!** Leaving uncut grass, stems and stalks, and nooks and crannies around your garden provides shelter and nesting sites for bees and other pollinators.



**Look for flowers in which you can see the pollen and nectar yourself.** If you can see it, most pollinators probably can too. Many bedding plants are sterile and pretty useless for pollinators.



**Buy organically grown plants and seeds when you can.** Shop bought plants may have been treated with pesticides that affect bee's behaviour.

## Spring

In spring bumblebee queens and male solitary bees will emerge.

- Growing early blooming flowers such as crocuses will provide important food for these hungry bees when there is little else around for them to feed on.
- Clear a patch of bare ground ready for the summer months. Most solitary bees nest underground and will be searching for a sunny patch of bare sand or soil to nest in.
- You may hate dandelions but pollinators love them! Leave them alone as they pop up in your lawn and watch as flies, solitary bees and butterflies feed on them.



### GROW

Crocuses (bulb)  
Hardy geranium, cranesbill (perennial)



Not all bees collect pollen. Some have a parasitic lifestyle and are known as **cuckoo bees**. These bees have no pollen collecting apparatus, instead they search out the nests of their hosts and lay their eggs inside.

There are around **270** species of bee in the UK. The vast majority are **solitary bees**, which as the name suggests, live alone rather than in colonies like bumblebees or honeybees.



## Summer

**Summer is the busiest time for bees. Solitary bees will be searching for pollen and nectar to store in their nests, while bumblebee workers will be foraging to feed their ever-growing colonies.**

Make sure your garden is full of a variety of flowers of different shapes and sizes. Different bees have different length tongues so not all bees can feed on all flowers.

Borage, comfrey, viper's-bugloss and hyssop are all firm favourites amongst bumblebees.



Borage



Chives

Remember many edible plants are also great for bees and other pollinators. Try growing herbs, fruit and vegetables for your own benefit as well as the bees.

Grow strawberries, courgettes, tomatoes, apples or herbs such as mint and chives.

**GROW** Borage (annual)  
Comfrey (perennial)  
Viper's-bugloss (biennial)  
Hyssop (perennial)

Strawberry (perennial)  
Pea (annual)  
Courgette (annual)  
Tomato (annual)  
Herbs - mint & chives (perennials)

## Autumn

**In late summer bumblebee colonies produce males and new queens. Through the autumn they need to find food to survive.**

Late flowering plants provide nectar and pollen for these foraging bees.

Plant roses at this time of year, ready for the following growing season. Wild roses, such as dog rose, are a good source of nectar and pollen for bees and other pollinators.



Echinacea



Verbena

Although many 'bred' varieties of rose have too many, tightly bunched petals for insects to reach the pollen and nectar, they can still be useful for some bees.

Leafcutter bees build their nests by cutting neat, semi-circles from leaves, and rose leaves are their favourite.

**GROW** Ivy (shrub)  
Verbena (perennial)  
Echinacea (perennial)  
Sedum (perennial)

**PLANT** Dog Rose (shrub)



There are many other flying insects which resemble bees. Sometimes these are **deliberate mimics**, trying to fool their predators into thinking they can sting like a bee.

# Winter

**Although many bees naturally die at the beginning of winter, some bees can be around for almost the entire year.**

Buff-tailed bumblebees are even regularly recorded when temperatures are close to freezing and there's snow on the ground.

Try growing early and late blooming plants so they don't go hungry. Plants like mahonia, winter aconite and winter honeysuckle are perfect sources of food for these bees.

It's important not to disturb hibernating bees. A cool, north facing bank is the perfect spot for a queen bee to burrow into and hibernate, so leave these areas alone if you can.



Garden bumblebee

If you're dead-heading or cutting back over winter, leave some stalks standing tall. In summer solitary bees will lay their eggs in these hollow stalks, which will over-winter as pupa before emerging the following spring.



Winter aconite

**GROW** Mahonia (shrub)  
Winter aconite (bulb)  
Winter honeysuckle (shrub)

# Did you know?

**60% of bees and other pollinators are in decline.**



Half of our 25 bumblebee species are in decline.



Three of these bumblebee species have already gone extinct.



60% of moths and 71% of butterflies are in long term decline.

Bees face a wide range of threats, from toxic pesticides to climate change, however the most significant reason for their decline is the loss of wildflower-rich habitats.

## Bee Together

Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust is working to connect communities and landscapes to reverse the decline of our wildflower meadows and wild pollinators. We're bringing people together to take action through engagement, education and practical conservation work.

If you'd like to support our pollinators here's how you can get involved...

### LIVING BOUQUET

Give a Living Bouquet gift & help us restore an area of traditional wildflower meadow, one of the best habitats for bumblebees.  
[www.livingbouquet.co.uk](http://www.livingbouquet.co.uk)

### WILDFLOWER GIFTS

Buy something from our range of beautiful wildflower inspired gifts, including our meadow starter kit with wildflower seeds.  
[www.ydmt.org/shop](http://www.ydmt.org/shop)

