

# Norfolk Beekeepers

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## *Plant a Honey Bee Friendly Garden*

In the winter of 2006 the managed honey bee populations began to die out. Since then, approximately 40% of the honey bee colonies have died annually in the US. Virginia beekeepers have reported approximately 44% colony losses annually the last 5 years. Approximately 80 VA farm grown crops, about one-third of our natural food supply, rely on honey bees for pollination. Imagine peanut butter without jelly. If the honey bees disappear, so will the blueberries and the strawberries, along with many of the other foods that have become not only favorites, but staples of our diet. You can do your part to help restore the honey bee population with a bee friendly garden.

It isn't difficult to make your yard, garden or even patio space a haven for beneficial bees. You'll be helping these important insects, and bringing nature to your backdoor.

The greater the plant diversity, the more bees you will attract and support. Always try to select as many native plants as possible, and consult with nursery staff or other experts to find vegetation that will thrive in your specific conditions.

**Honey Bee Friendly Plants.** Attract and nourish honey bees with nectar producing plants. Wild flowers, including asters, goldenrod, sunflowers, even dandelions will provide food for the managed honeybee colony, and the native bee population as well. Plant flowering vegetables and fruits.

**Plant Long Blooming Flowers** or a variety of plants that will bloom at different times throughout the spring and fall. Honey bees need to eat until they retreat to their hives for the winter. Try to group at least ten bee plants in a bunch or grouping.

**Honey Bees Need Water:** Provide a pond, a fountain, or some other fresh water source. Not only do the bees need nectar, they need water daily just like you and I.

**Native bees will make their homes in sand.** Provide a space in your garden for native bees to make their home. Native bees do not live in hives, but in single living units underground. Leave a space in your garden un-mulched for them to gain access and set up housekeeping. A pile of undisturbed sand will work as well.

**No Pesticides or Herbicides:** Do not use, or limit pesticides and herbicides. Some of them are toxic to bees, and some aren't. Many of them will leave a toxic residue for days or weeks. It is better to introduce good bugs to provide natural protection against pests. Pick off undesirable insects with a gloved hand and throw them into a soapy (use dish detergent) pail of water. Weed by hand or with hand tools as much as possible.

### **Annuals**

Asters  
Calliopsis  
Clover  
Dandelions  
Marigolds  
Poppies  
Sunflowers  
Zinnias

### **Perennials**

Buttercups  
Clematis  
Cosmos  
Crocuses  
Dahlias  
Echinacea  
English Ivy  
Foxglove  
Geraniums  
Germander  
Globe Thistle  
Hollyhocks  
Hyacinth  
Rock Cress  
Roses  
Sedum  
Snowdrops  
Tansy  
Yellow Hyssop

### **Garden Plants**

Blackberries  
Cantaloupe  
Cucumbers  
Gourds  
Peppers  
Pumpkins  
Raspberries  
Squash  
Strawberries  
Watermelons  
Wild Garlic

### **Herbs**

Bee Balm  
Borage  
Catnip  
Coriander/Cilantro  
Fennel  
Lavender  
Mints  
Rosemary  
Sage  
Thyme

### **Shrubs**

Blueberry  
Butterfly Bush  
Button Bush  
Honeysuckle  
Indigo  
Privet

### **Trees**

Alder  
American Holly  
Basswood  
Black Gum  
Black Locust  
Buckeyes  
Catalpa  
Eastern Redbud  
Fruit Trees  
(especially Crabapples)  
Golden Rain Tree  
Hawthorns  
Hazels  
Linden  
Magnolia  
Maples  
Mountain Ash  
Sycamore  
Tulip  
Poplar  
Willows