

MORE BEES, PLEASE!

By Jane and Ray McGowen

How doth the little busy bee
Improve each shining hour,
And gather honey all the day
From every opening flower!
-Isaac Watts

We were recently asked for our recommendation about keeping bees out of a garden. Being stung by a bee can be painful particularly if one is allergic, and we understand the fear of it. Bees are very clever, and can sense the hormone that a human gives off when feeling scared. If bees feel their hive is threatened, they will definitely attack with a sting.

However, if a beehive is not anywhere close to your garden, bees will leave you alone if they are given space and allowed to do what they do best – pollinate. Bees are some of our favorite garden insects, and we do whatever we can to attract them. When bees are flying among our flowers and bushes, we are very happy and feel as though we are helping the environment.

One of the foremost contributions of bees (and other pollinators as well) is maintaining the earth's terrestrial ecosystem through pollination. Eighty percent of approximately 1,400 crop plants grown around the world require pollination, which includes 150 food crops in the USA alone. More than half of the world's fats and oils (canola, sunflower, etc.) come from pollinated plants. One third of the world's food production depends solely on bees, which in simple terms is every third mouthful of food the world eats.

It cannot be stressed enough how important bees are to the earth and to our ecosystem. Please try not to think of ways to keep them away from your garden. Instead, consider how to attract them and provide an environment that will help them thrive.

An easy way to begin is to add more color to your garden landscape!

Happy Gardening!

PLANTS THAT ATTRACT BEES:

Bee Balm	Cosmos
Black-Eyed Susan	Coneflower
Blanket Flower	Geranium
Bluebeard	Lavender
Butterfly Bush	Roses

Catmint
Chives

Salvia
Snowdrops

10 INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT BEES:

1. Bees are noisy because they beat their wings 11,400 times in one minute.
2. There are over 20,000 different species of bees, found on every continent except Antarctica.
3. A male bee is called a drone; all worker bees are female.
4. Only female bees can sting; male bees do not have a stinger.
5. Honey bees can fly a distance of up to 6 miles, and as fast as 15 miles per hour.
6. A honey bee visits 50 to 100 flowers during a collection trip for pollen or nectar.
7. To produce a kilogram (2.2 pounds) of honey, bees will fly the equivalent of three times around the world in air miles.
8. A populous bee colony may contain 40,000 to 60,000 bees.
9. Eating honey makes us smarter! Honey contains an antioxidant that improves brain function.
10. To encourage more bees in your garden, grow more plants with color!

PHOTOS:





