



The Buzz

The BeeArc Trust: Community Inspired By The Honeybee

10 Easy Ways to Help Bees

Thank you to Friends of the Earth for this guide to how we can all do our bit to help bees.

Create a haven for bees and pollinators and give nature a helping hand. From growing the right plants to avoiding pesticides, try these easy tips.

Bees are in trouble, with around 13 of the UK's bee species now extinct and 35 others under threat of extinction. Unfortunately, our countryside isn't currently up to the task of helping them. Some areas have become more like industrial units, with huge fields of single crops replacing the hedgerows and the variety of plants bees need to thrive. This is why bees need our help, now more than ever.

Our gardens and windowsills are vital fast-food takeaways for bees and other beneficial bugs. As well as serving up a varied menu of plants, they provide the shelter and nesting places bees need.

With the simple tips below, you can make your green patch (whether it's a windowsill or garden) a bee paradise.

1. Set up a bee garden right away

You don't have to be an expert or have sprawling grounds to encourage wildlife. Small spaces can be great – and gardening is about trying things out.

There's no need to wait for the perfect sunny Sunday. Just start at any time and you can get a lot done even in fragments of time. If you don't have a garden, check whether your windowsill has enough space for a plant pot or search online to find out if your neighbourhood has a community garden you can use.

2. How does a bee garden grow? Choose bee-friendly plants

Many plants are bee-friendly, from herbs to larger shrubs and trees.

Start by planting something simple to suit your space, time and interests. Read our seasonal guide to plants for bees and other pollinators.

Pots on a patio, herbs in a planter or even a hanging basket can get you going and help bees.

Trees, shrubs and larger plants will provide height in your borders. A cherry or birch tree can form a backdrop to "layers" of plants of different height and size closer to the front of the border.



Low-growing heathers and crocuses in the front will provide colour and help feed bees in the barren months.

3. Plant through the seasons to provide year-round bee habitat

Like you, bees need food and shelter all year round, so think about planting through the seasons. Which plants will flower and provide the nectar (carbohydrates) and pollen (protein) bees need?

Remember that late winter is the time to sow seeds for spring and summer plants. Autumn-planted bulbs will burst forth in spring.

When the soil warms in the spring, try growing sunflowers that will rise through the year and feed bees and birds alike.

TIP: Leave flowers to turn to seeds in autumn and winter and let the birds feast on them. And leave the stump and roots in the ground to return nutrients to the soil.



**YOU ARE WARMLY WELCOMED TO
BEEARC EXHIBITION AND INFORMATION
DAY**

**WEDNESDAY 21st FEBRUARY 2024
1PM - 7PM
GOATHLAND VILLAGE HALL**

**Please come along and share with us our
vision of Sustainable Community Inspired by the
Honeybee**

We look forward to seeing you!

Continued from front page.

4. Ask for advice on the best plants for bees

Get some inspiration from your neighbours.

Peek over the garden fence or at your neighbours' window boxes to see which plants are doing well, and which ones the bees like to visit.

If you like the look of any of them ask your neighbour what they are or take a picture and have a look online.

While at the garden centre, have a look to see which plants bees are visiting there.

5. Plant a mix of bee-friendly seeds and grow plants, fruit and veg

Bees need different plants for food throughout the seasons, from trees and shrubs to bulbs and grasses.

Small trees like hazel and holly help bees at different times of the year. Ivy is a top food in autumn – try not to cut it back until after flowering.

Do you prefer to grow fruit or vegetables? Bees will love both. You can even mix them up – there is no need to keep things formal and separate unless you want to.

If you fancy growing your own, the bees will help pollinate your veg – try French, runner and broad beans, aubergines, onions and peppers. They'll do the same for fruit – from apples, pears and plums to blackberries, strawberries and raspberries.

The greater the variety of plant life, the greater the variety of bugs and birds they will support.

6. Give bees shelter by letting the grass grow

Cutting the grass less often gives pollinators shelter and a place to feed

If you have a lawn, give your mower (and back) a rest by letting some of it grow longer. When you do mow, cutting less often and less closely will help give pollinators places to feed and shelter among the grass.

TIP: Raise the notches on the mower to lift the cutting blade a few centimetres.

Read more about creating a mini wildflower meadow.

Another cheap way to provide habitat is with a small wood pile in a corner where bugs can nest and feed. This micro-habitat will decay over time and give a natural look. Use logs or sawn off tree branches but avoid treated wood. Even a small heap of pruned branches and twigs will give shelter and can be placed out of sight at the back of a border.

7. Save the bees and put away the pesticides

One thing to put away is the "bug gun". Bee-harming pesticides and herbicides are implicated in bee decline. It's tempting to resort to buying a can of spray, but dealing with real pests like aphids is as easy as stripping them off with gloved hands.

8. Use peat-free compost to save wildlife habitat

Help keep our threatened peat bogs intact by using the many good alternatives that now exist.

Public concern about the loss of these unique natural habitats did persuade the government to phase out the sale of peat in garden centres by 2020. But peat is still available for amateur gardeners to buy. Until a full ban is issued, it's up to consumers to make the right choice and avoid peat compost.

9. Grow from seed to create great bee habitats

Growing from seed is growing in popularity, especially vegetables. It is a cheap way to get the full experience of tending through to maturity and is the ideal method for creating pollinator-friendly habitats such as wildflower meadows.

Look for heritage and naturally "open-pollinated" seeds which help keep the diverse genetic make-up of what is being grown – contributing to greater biodiversity.

10. Welcome beneficial insects in your garden

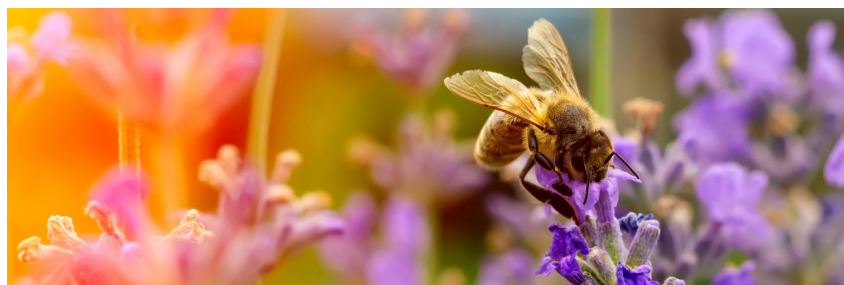
Some insects such as beetles eat pests – so treat them as allies, not enemies

Beneficial insects such as hoverflies, beetles and ladybirds hunt aphids and other pests – so treat them as allies not enemies. We can have great gardens and help bees and other nature at the same time.

Letting bees be your guide and ally will help transform your patch, control pests naturally and get your plants and crops pollinated for free. That's more than a fair trade.

Help make our gardens safe for bees

There are lots of things you can do to help – from growing bee-friendly plants to creating bee hotels.



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Goathland Nature Notes

As we look forward to Spring, it's such a delight to see the first snowdrops and crocuses of the year coming into bloom. Bees of all kinds love crocuses, and mild weather may entice bees out to forage. Hedgehogs, dormice and bats are still in hibernation, but if there is a spell of warmer weather they may be lulled into a sense of early Spring. Also, if the weather is very cold, a hibernating animal may leave its hibernaculum to avoid freezing to death and to search for food. It can be very beneficial to continue putting food out in your garden throughout cold weather for hedgehogs, which may be out foraging. It's also a time when many keen gardeners are tidying up, but heaps of leaves and twigs can make ideal hibernation homes for hedgehogs, as can a bonfire pile, so please check before lighting.

We often glimpse barn owls at dusk or dawn, gliding above the ground, searching for prey. It is thought that their survival is closely linked to their food supply, in particular, voles, but freezing and flood conditions make hunting difficult and can impact severely on these beautiful birds. Winter deciduous trees are in bud, waiting for the right time to burst into leaf, one of the first is the elder, so look out for its reddish-purple buds which open to reveal ferny leaves.

Amphibians like the common frog rely on temperature as their cue to awake from hibernation and start breeding, so we look forward to seeing frogspawn as Winter moves into Spring. At this time of year, as we watch and wait for the glimmerings of new life, the words of Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu seem very apt "Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished."



Our thanks to Karen Ritson for the photos on this page and the catkins on the front page.

Winter to Spring Word Search

X R V A X Y T F N D L H E T G Y Y Q P B
 G S U D O P E L S E T Y A L R A K E J L
 L K X D S X H H E U W D E T G N B N E S
 D W H V F Q J K I Y W B O A S O Y S K J
 G A O U M V M D L T P W O Z Z R T D G H
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 I U E A S H K A E M L M M F N A O C I W
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 E X C U I M D O A V B Z V J S V F L E R
 K Q F Y C U K V T S F P L E D N M P R G
 A D A F F O D I L S N R V Z S W O E N S
 W G T C S S I C A B K O B E H C Q R A L
 A G N P T E B H K G B T W M X T M I T S
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 C D V R R U F L X C L S Z J R X Y A R L
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Words To Find:

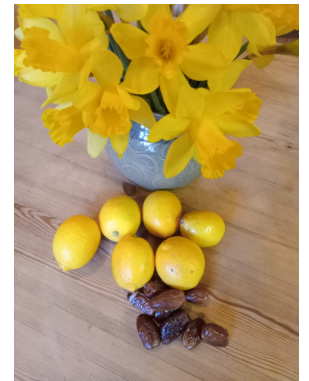
CROCUSES SNOWDROPS DAFFODILS SHOOTS
 WELLIES HATS GLOVES FROST THAW BUDDING
 RAINBOW PUDDLES FIREPLACE VALENTINE
 HIBERNATE NEWBORN AWAKENING GROWTH MELT
 RENEW

Lemon Energy Balls

At this time of year, we can all do with a little treat and energy boost, so we'd like to thank Compassion In World Farming for this delicious recipe by Zanna Van Dijk. It's gluten free, dairy free, egg free & vegan, takes 10 minutes to make, no cooking and can keep for up to a week in the fridge!

Ingredients:

- 12 large pitted dates
- 35g walnuts (you can use other nuts if you prefer)
- 2 tbsp unsweetened desiccated coconut
- 2 tbsp chia seeds
- Grated zest of 1 lemon



Method:

1. It is super simple, just put all the ingredients into a food processor or blender & blend until they form a thick paste.
2. Use your hands to mould the mixture into 4-6 equal sized balls. Enjoy!



What is Propolis?

Thanks to James Fearnley, founder of the BeeArc, for this information on Propolis, from his book "Bee Propolis- Natural Healing from the Hive." James is an internationally recognised expert on propolis and it's use as a therapeutic substance.

What is Propolis?

Honey bees collect resins from plants and trees and process it to produce a sticky substance which is known as propolis, from the Greek "Defender of the City." It is rich in flavonoids, terpenoids, phenolics and their esters, and contains more than 500 identified chemical compounds.

It has been shown to have antibiotic, anti-inflammatory, antifungal, anti-oxidant, anti-viral & anti-allergic properties and is used to promote the health of the hive in addition to its role as a building material within the hive, strengthening the comb and filling in cracks and crevices.

This amazing substance has also been shown to have beneficial effects in humans.

Propolis from Different Areas

Propolis is composed principally of resin and wax. Its colour can vary enormously. In temperate climates it ranges from a light yellow or brown to a dark brown colour, often with a reddish hue. Propolis produced in tropical climates can range from the light brown-green of Brazilian propolis to the black and dark red of some Cuban varieties. Propolis tends to become darker the longer it is in the hive. Fresh propolis appears as a red tinge on the new white comb constructed by the bees. The colour of propolis also varies according to the trees and plants harvested, as well as the types of bees gathering it. Propolis collected by black bees tends to be darker in colour.

The Importance of Resins

One thing is certain—resins derived from one source or another, form a major ingredient, around 50 per cent, of propolis. From the outset, the bees are collecting a material which the plant world already relies on to maintain its health and integrity.

We know resins have an important role to play in the immune defence systems of trees and plants. We have all seen how, if a tree is damaged or cut, the resins pour out in order to seal up the 'wound', to stop the tree bleeding. Many of these resins themselves have a hallowed place in natural medicines. We are told that two out of the three gifts taken by the Wise Men to the infant Jesus at his birth were tree resins—frankincense and myrrh. Frankincense and myrrh have well-documented anti-inflammatory properties and are used to treat a variety of health problems, including rheumatism and arthritis, as well as for bronchial and respiratory complaints. Other resins, including poplar bud resin, benzoin and pine resin, have figured in their own right as part of the natural medicine chest, for similar reasons. It is not surprising therefore that the honeybee should seek out these and other resins as a valuable base material for propolis.

In the next editions of *The Buzz*, we will be bringing you more interesting facts on propolis, including how it is used within the beehive.

"The World is plentiful with honey, but only the humble bee can collect it"
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Making Space for The Future



**Interested?
Would like to get involved?
Want to help?**

The BeeArc is not just another bright idea to make money, it is an attempt to create a space where new ideas and ways of living and working can emerge and come into being.

If you connect with this idea and would like to know more, make some suggestions, join in or offer your unique skills then please get in touch and let's have a conversation.

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natureslaboratory.co.uk