



BWARS

Information Sheet

Gardening for Bees - Summer

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- * Make your garden a bee friendly zone
- * Colourful plantings
- * Continuity of forage
- * Benefits to the gardener
- * Do your bit for the conservation of bees

Featuring:

- Information on Summer species
- Food sources
- Nesting

Suggested Flowers for Summer

- Rosemary** (*Rosmarinus*)
- Lavender** (*Lavendula*)
- Marjoram** (*Origanum vulgare*)
- Chives** (*Allium schoenoprasum*)
- Borage** (*Borago officinalis*)
- Comfrey** (*Symphytum*)
- Fennel** (*Foeniculum vulgare*)
- Thyme** (*Thymus*)
- Lambs Ears** (*Stachys lanata*)
- Firethorn** (*Pyracantha*)
- Bellflower** (*Campanula*)
- Catmint** (*Nepeta*)
- Hebe** (*Hebe*)
- Sea holly** (*Eryngium*)
- Sage** (*Salvia*)
- Bugle** (*Ajuga*)
- Toadflax** (*Linaria purpurea*)
- Geranium** (*Geranium*)
- Knapweed** (*Centaurea*)
- Viper's Bugloss** (*Echium vulgare*)
- Snapdragon** (*Antirrhinum*)
- Foxglove** (*Digitalis purpurea*)
- Lupin** (*Lupinus*)
- Verbena** (*Verbena bonariensis*)
- Globe Thistle** (*Echinops ritro*)

Bees in Summer

In summer bee activity is at its peak. In bumblebee colonies the original queen has produced many workers and they are busy gathering nectar and pollen and raising more of her young.

Solitary bees have made or found nests and are busy provisioning a succession of cells with nectar and pollen, each cell laid with a single egg. Because they fly earlier and later in the day and are so hairy, many bumblebee and solitary bee species are more efficient pollinators than even the honeybee (*Apis mellifera*).

Food Sources

To survive the summer bees need a continuous succession of suitable flowers to forage from. A mixture of cottage garden plants, herbs and native wildflowers works well, and many are hardy and resistant to slugs and disease.

The most suitable plants to grow will vary in different parts of the country and on different soil types. Some bees are specialists on just one family of plants (such as Bellflowers, or the Daisy and Pea family). Choose single, native flowers where possible, as doubles often provide little pollen or nectar and so have little value to wildlife.

Careful pruning can increase the length of flowering in some species and give a second, later, flush in others (e.g. geranium, red valerian). If space allows, plant in swathes of the same species, allowing bees to easily find and move from flower to flower over a short distance.

Nesting

Gardeners should try and leave nests undisturbed, though careful mowing (with blades set higher) over ground-nesting solitary bee nests can continue, to keep grass relatively short. Solitary bees in artificial nesting sites and in ground holes can be safely watched from close quarters as they are not in the least aggressive. Bumblebees (*Bombus* spp.), unlike honeybees, live in small groups and do not swarm, so can be left in peace.

Gardeners providing artificial nesting sites for solitary bees may increase the reliability of pollination of both fruit (apple, plum, cherry) and vegetables (runner and French beans, peas etc.), thereby increasing the yield from their crops.



A female leaf-cutter bee *Megachile centuncularis* at *Rosa rugosa*



Bombus hypnorum at *Centaurea*



The specialist *Colletes daviesanus* foraging at Curry Plant



Chelostoma campanularum

Hymettus Ltd is the premier source of advice on the conservation of bees, wasps and ants within Great Britain and Ireland.

BWARS, The Bees Wasps & Ants Recording Society is the national recording scheme which provides the only source of fully validated data on the UK bee, wasp & ant fauna.

<http://www.bwars.com/>

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