

# BIMBY



## BACKGROUND

## How to grow a wild bee sanctuary

Wild bees need our help. Many are experiencing population declines due to habitat loss, disease and pesticide poisoning. Domesticated honeybees managed for honey production and agricultural services are also struggling.

Bees pollinate our crops, providing us with one-third of the food we eat. They also allow wild plants to reproduce and produce berries, fruits and seeds. Loss of bee populations poses a risk to our agricultural systems and to ecosystems that support other wildlife.

Fixing this big problem can start with some small solutions. Each of us can create pollinator-friendly habitat in our yards to support local bee populations. If each of us does our part, the collective benefit will be significant.

### Here are five steps to creating your own wild bee sanctuary:

#### 1. FLOWER-FILLED YARDS

Bees rely on blooming wildflowers, shrubs and trees to provide the nectar and pollen on which they feed. Add a new garden bed filled with blooming native plants. Let your lawn grow natural by mowing less and avoiding herbicides that kill nectar-producing lawn plants such as clover, creeping thyme and dandelions.

## 2. PLANT NATIVE

Native plants are the species naturally found in your region. They provide bees with their only food source: nectar and pollen. Some native bees can only feed on pollen from specific groups of native plants. Native plants are great choices for the garden, because they are adapted to the soil and weather conditions in your region. If you plant them in the right spot, they'll thrive with no need for additional watering, fertilizer or chemicals. Many native plants are available at your local garden centre.

## 3. GO ORGANIC

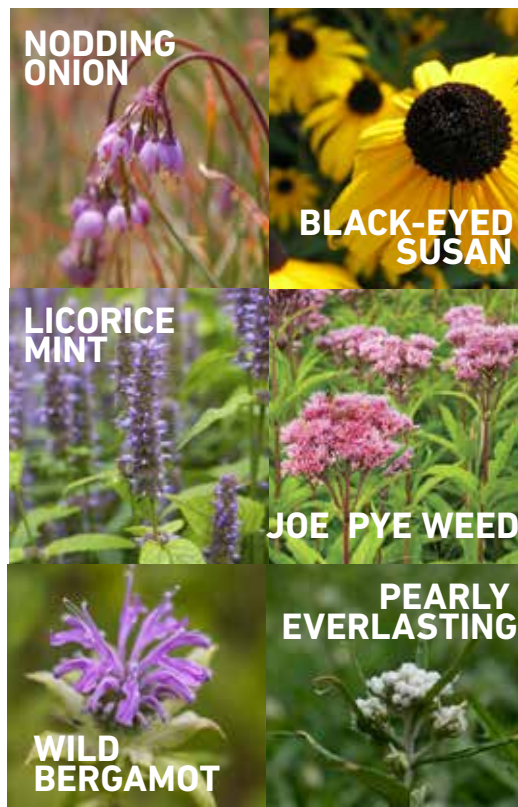
Bees are insects, so using insecticides on your lawn and garden will kill them. Don't use them and avoid plants that have been pretreated with insecticides, like neonics. Instead, try time-tested techniques, like hand-picking pests and using physical barriers that keep pests out.

## 4. JUST ADD WATER

Insects need water but can't drink from deep water for fear of drowning. You can help by placing a shallow bowl or plate with stones in your garden and filling it halfway with water. The stones provide safe places to land and crawl out should they fall in. Birds and butterflies will thank you too. Replace the water every few days to eliminate any mosquito larvae.



These wildflowers are native to much of Canada. Local conservation and horticulture groups can help you find species native to your community.



## 5. OFFER NESTING PLACES

Honeybees and bumblebees live in social colonies, but most wild bee species are solitary. About two-thirds of solitary nesting bees use tunnels in the ground to lay their eggs. About a third use hollowed out plant stems or tunnels in dead trees or fallen logs. Leave patches of bare soil in your garden for ground-nesting bees. Leave plant stems standing through the winter and keep dead trees or fallen logs. You can also create native bee hotels filled with replaceable nesting tubes that provide places for native bees to reproduce.

For more information about bees and other essential pollinators, visit: [www.davidsuzuki.org/wildbees](http://www.davidsuzuki.org/wildbees)