

## I Pledge to Plant for Pollinators

In general bees love flowers with nectar and planting a bee garden should include as many months of bloom as possible!

### Bee Friendly Plants

#### Annuals

**Spring** Salvia, Bluebells

**Summer** Zinnia, Sunflower



#### Perennials

**Spring** Clover, Penstemon, Erigeron, Aquilegia, Mountain Mint

**Summer** Joe Pye Weed, Liatris, Milkweed, Agastache, Salvia, Bee Balm, Black Eyed Susan, Coneflower

**Fall** Obedient Plant, Sedum, Aster, Goldenrod, Blue Mist Flower

#### Shrub

Blueberry, Mahonia, Holly, Osmanthus, Abelia

#### Tree

Redbud, Black Gum, Tulip Poplar, Linden, Magnolia, Maples

### Fun History

Honey has been used by humans since at least 7000 BC. Ancient cave paintings in Spain showed bee keeping and fossils of honey bees date back to about 150 million years.

The ancient Greeks, Romans and Egyptians used honey as a sweetener, ingredients in healing and offerings to the gods.

The Egyptians also used it as an ingredient for embalming. It was used in cosmetics (by Cleopatra)

and the Romans used honey to pay their taxes.

During the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, honey and propolis were used by surgeons on the battlefield.

Honey has antiseptic properties and has historically been used as dressings for wounds and first aid for burns and cuts. It also prevents the growth of bacteria as it absorbs moisture (hygroscopic) around the wound, it is extremely acidic (ph 3 & 4.5) and contains gluconic acid and hydrogen peroxide.


Unspoiled honey has been discovered in Ancient Egyptian tombs.

Honey is an anti-inflammatory.

Sources: Smithsonian Magazine; Honey and Pollinator Center at University of California, Davis; Time Magazine; La Brea Tar Pit Museum, Los Angeles, Ca.; Little Neck Life Magazine; Floyd Watkins-Bee keeper; Frank Walker/ Beekeeping 101; Introduction Beekeepers Seminar -Old Dominion University; VBMG presentation to Intern Training.

#### Additional Resources

Please go to Bee City Virginia Beach Website

 [beecityVB@gmail.com](mailto:beecityVB@gmail.com)

 [beecityVB](https://www.instagram.com/beecityVB)



# YOU, ME &



# THE BEEES

### Mission Statement

Bee City is committed to creating and enhancing pollinator habitat on public and private land by increasing the abundance of native plants, providing nesting sites, and reducing the use of pesticides.

Bee City USA, Virginia Beach, VA  
A joint project of VA Beach Parks and Rec and  
Council of Garden Clubs of VA Beach

## Importance of Bees

Often an unappreciated treasure, native bees were responsible for most of the pollination in North America before the arrival of honey bees from the Old World over 400 years ago. We have 4,000 species of native bees which are masters of pollinating native plants, fruits and vegetables. Some native bees build their nests underground and others in hollow stems or holes in trees. Examples of native bees are bumble bees, mason bees, leafcutter bees, and carpenter bees.

Sadly, native bee populations are declining due to habitat loss, poor nutrition and pesticide exposure.

### Pollination

We can thank the *apis mellifera*, our European honey bee, for 1 in every 3 mouthfuls of food we will eat today. They pollinate more than 90 fruit, vegetable, nut and seed crops.

In Virginia alone, approximately 80 food crops rely primarily on honey bees for pollination including, blueberries, peaches, watermelon, strawberries and apples.

They are the unpaid laborers of the American agriculture system, adding more than \$15 billion in value to farming each year.

### Honey

Honey is the only sweetener that can be eaten just as it comes. It is a source of natural unrefined sugars and carbohydrates, which are easily absorbed in the body.

It was even used by the runners in the original Olympic Games in ancient Greece.

Honey is a natural syrup produced by honey bees and is made of glucose, fructose and water with trace amounts of vitamins, minerals, enzymes, pollen and propolis.

Propolis is a natural resin that the bees collect. It is used for repair of the hive honeycomb. It also keeps the hive free of bacteria and viruses.

The medicinal and healing properties of honey have earned it a reputation as one of the purest and most natural remedies for thousands of years.



## Fun Bee Facts

### Did you know?

- ☼ Bees have five eyes and cannot see the color red. However, their eyes are sensitive to the blue into the ultraviolet end of the spectrum. Flowers reflect a very large amount of ultraviolet light and appear very bright to bees.
- ☼ The average worker honey bee makes 1/12 of a teaspoon of honey in her lifetime. That is 5 drops of honey! Amazing!
- ☼ It takes about 556 workers travelling over 55,000 miles visiting 2 million flowers to gather enough nectar to make 1 pound of honey
- ☼ Bee venom, the "ouch factor" most people remember, is likely a bad experience with a wasp and not a honeybee. Only a small percentage of people are allergic to bee stings. Bee venom therapy is widely practiced overseas and by some in the USA to address health issues such as arthritis, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and even MS.
- ☼ You do not have to have a hive in your backyard to be a beekeeper! A beekeeper is someone who understands the importance of bees and then promotes and protects them
- ☼ Bee swarms are clusters of bees that gather on a tree branch, bush, mailbox, etc. in the spring-summer. Notify a Beekeeper and for FREE they will collect the swarm!  
**Bee Swarm—contact number-641-5933**



## How to Help Bees

- ☼ **Avoid Harmful Pesticides** - Opt for organic products or encourage beneficial insects such as praying mantises and ladybugs to live in your garden. Avoid using neonicotinoids at all costs as these pesticides are especially harmful to bees.
- ☼ **Plant a Bee Friendly Garden** - Reduce the size of your lawn and make your garden bee friendly year round. Include bee friendly plants for all seasons. Plant in groups and avoid hybrids and double blooms which may lack pollen. Leave an undisturbed area in your garden for ground nesting bees. 70% of bees live underground.
- ☼ **For Areas with Limited Garden Space,** - consider planting containers with bee friendly plants.
- ☼ **Trees** - Include trees in your landscape. Trees provide pollen, nectar and nesting materials for bees.
- ☼ **Bee Bath** - bees need water after foraging and pollinating. Include a shallow container of water in your garden. Add pebbles and stones that provide a resting area for bees.
- ☼ **Habitat for Native Bees** - Many bees such as mason bees are solitary and live inside trees and hollow stems. Leave areas of your garden undisturbed during the winter. People are also building bee houses and many websites have good instructions on how to build these.
- ☼ **Support Your Local Beekeeper** - Many local bee products are available for sale such as honey beeswax items like soaps, candles, and lotions.
- ☼ **Help Increase Bee Habitat In Your Community** - we can all help by supporting and establishing new community bee friendly gardens which benefit all of us and are incredibly rewarding.