

Introduction

Summer wouldn't be summer without the gentle buzzing of bees. Bees are vital pollinators in our gardens, but sadly many bee species are under threat. You can help bumblebees by making your garden 'bee friendly'.



Did you know...?

- Three species of bumblebee are now nationally extinct and many species have declined dramatically in recent decades.
- Bumblebees are not aggressive; in fact male bumblebees - drones - do not even possess a sting.
- Bumblebees pollinate many wildflowers, such as foxgloves and cowslips, and much of the food we eat comes from crops pollinated by bees.
- Bumblebees can beat their wings up to 11,400 times a minute.



This leaflet will...

Suggest some of the flowers you can grow to make your garden attractive to bees.

Give you advice on how to provide good sites for bumblebees to nest in.

How to attract a queen and her court to your garden...



The key to attracting bumblebees to your garden is providing a good source of nectar for adult bees to feed on and pollen to feed bumblebee larvae. In the ideal bumblebee world a garden should have nectar and pollen-rich flowers growing in it from February through to October.

Bumblebee species have different tongue lengths, so require different flowers to feed on. Some have relatively short tongues and prefer to feed on flowers such as white clover and bird's-foot trefoil, whereas others have long tongues and prefer long-tubed flowers such as honeysuckle.



Create your own bumblebee meadow

Allow a patch of grass to remain uncut until August, then cut it and remove the grass clippings. This will encourage wildflowers to grow and flower providing food for bumblebees. You can add plug plants to help increase the diversity of your mini-meadow.



Bumblebee menu

Early flowers

- Cowslip, flowering currant, bluebell, pussy willow, red deadnettle, wallflower, lungwort, winter-flowering heather, rosemary, bugle.

Late flowers

- Buddleia, catmint, teasel, lavender, geranium (simple), viper's bugloss, scabious, fuchsia.

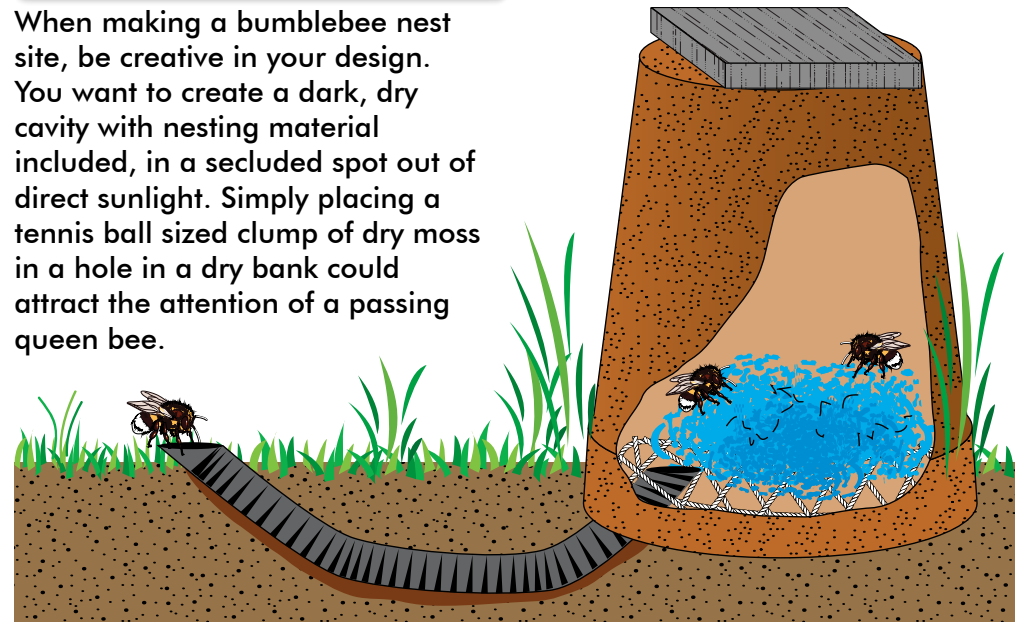
For more advice on bumblebee flowers phone Norfolk Wildline on 01603 598333 or visit our website (see below).

Bumblebee nests

Many bumblebees will use old mouse or vole holes as nest sites. Log piles, compost heaps, dry piles of dead leaves, tussocky grass areas, hedges and sunny banks with dry crumbly soil will all provide good nesting sites for bumblebees.



When making a bumblebee nest site, be creative in your design. You want to create a dark, dry cavity with nesting material included, in a secluded spot out of direct sunlight. Simply placing a tennis ball sized clump of dry moss in a hole in a dry bank could attract the attention of a passing queen bee.



One we made earlier

- Dig a hole under a hedge or in a secluded spot in your garden.
- Place a cradle made out of chicken wire in the bottom and on to it put some nesting material (for example dry moss, hamster bedding or hair).
- Leading from the hole place a length of pipe at least 18mm in diameter - ensure the pipe has drainage holes enabling water to drain out.
- Over the top of the hole place a 20cm terracotta plant pot - cover the top of the plant pot with a roof tile or slate to prevent rain water getting in.

Frequently asked questions

Do bumblebees die if they sting?

No. The sting of a bumblebee is not barbed like a honeybee's, so they can use their sting more than once - but they rarely do as they are not aggressive.

What species of bumblebee are found in Norfolk?

Seventeen species of bumblebee have been recorded in Norfolk since the year 2000. There are seven that are widespread and likely to be found in gardens. These are vestal cuckoo bee, small garden, common carder, white-tailed, red-tailed, buff-tailed and early bumblebee.

How can I remove a bumblebee nest from my garden?

Bumblebees are not aggressive and the nest site will probably only be active for a few months, so we would urge you to leave the nest undisturbed whenever possible.



To find out more about Norfolk's wildlife visit **www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/naturalconnections**

Alternatively call Norfolk's free wildlife information service on **01603 598333**

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Images by © David North, Alan Price, Nigel Jones and Barry Madden.

Illustration and layout by Artworks Design



Supported by

The National Lottery®
through the Heritage Lottery Fund



Norfolk Wildlife Trust: registered as The Norfolk Naturalists Trust, Registered Charity No. 208734.

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