

Create a honey bee haven with flowering plants

Eating bee-pollinated fruits and vegetables keeps us healthy. Yet bees themselves are not as healthy as they use to be. In fact, populations are in decline in Minnesota and nationally. Fortunately, there are steps you can take to help bee populations. **Plant bee-friendly plants and reduce pesticide use.**

University of Minnesota Extension has maintained an internationally recognized honey bee program since 1918. Marla Spivak, professor and Extension entomologist, recommends two steps for better bee health this growing season.

1. Plant bee-friendly flowering plants.

Bees need flowering plants for nutrition. **Bee balm, anise hyssop, lupine, asters, Autumn Joy sedum, sunflowers, and herbs like thyme and oregano are a few good choices.** Plant flowers in yards, in public spaces, and on farms as borders and hedgerows. Farmers contribute to bee nutrition with alfalfa, clover and other flowering forages and cover crops.

2. Reduce pesticide use.

Select healthy, natural plants and keep them free of pesticides. Avoid buying plants treated with neonicotinoid and other systemic insecticides, which remain present in the leaves, pollen, and nectar of the plant. Many plant pests cause only temporary, aesthetic problems that can be managed or tolerated. **If you do use pesticides, read the label and follow directions.**

Source: Marla Spivak, University of Minnesota Extension Entomologist



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Savage, MN 55378
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