



Bees Need Our Help!

Caring for the environment and ecosystems around us is a form of self-care.

Bees are one of the most essential parts of food production. The food we eat sustains us physically and mentally. With the continued use of harmful pesticides, we are putting these essential creatures, and therefore ourselves, at risk. Here are some things you can do to create a safer environment for bees.

Plant Pollinator friendly flowers and trees.

Planting different flowers, shrubs, and trees of certain colors, shapes, and scents will attract a wide variety of pollinators to your garden. If you don't have a garden, you can plant flowers in containers and leave them on your patio, balcony, or windowsill.

It's important to plant plants that are indigenous to your region. Here are some suggestions to plant in an Illinois garden:

Bee balm (*Monarda spp.*)

Echinacea

Mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum muticum*)

Milkweed (*Asclepias spp.*)

Butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)

New England Aster (*Aster novae-angliae*)

Prairie Blazing Star (*Liatris pycnostachya*)

Blue Vervain (*Verbena hastata*)

Blue False Indigo (*Baptisia australis*)

Catalpa

Avoid using pesticides in your garden.

Neonicotinoids are a group of insecticides used widely on farms and in urban landscapes. They are absorbed by plants and can be present in pollen and nectar, making them toxic to bees.

The main marketed neonicotinoids are imidacloprid, thiamethoxam, clothianidin, thiacloprid, dinotefuran, acetamiprid, nitenpyram and sulfoxaflor. You can check for them by reading the ingredient label on the insecticide bottle.

The biggest thing you can do to protect the bees is reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides with neonicotinoids in your pollinator friendly garden. Instead incorporate plants that attract beneficial insects for pest control.

Most pests can be managed safely without the use of pesticides. [Here is a link](#) (link opens in a new tab) to an integrated pest management program which shares a variety of methods to tackle a variety of different pests in your garden.

Support local beekeepers

You can also help the bees by supporting your local beekeeper by purchasing the honey they harvest!

Another way is by finding a local beekeeping program to volunteer with. Here at Garfield Park Conservatory, we offer beekeeping classes and training to prepare you to volunteer with our in-house beekeeper!

Find out more info [here](#) (link opens in a new tab).

Resources for learning about how to keep bees safe:

<https://www.epa.gov/pollinator-protection/basic-tips-and-educational-resources-pollinator-protection> (link opens in a new tab).