



Five Ways Kids Can Help Bees

by Wendy Fachon

1. Convince your parents to avoid using herbicides on the lawn and garden.

Let there be weeds! Dandelions and clover are popular with bees. Dandelions can be harvested from gardens and lawns and used in salads. Stores sell dandelions in the produce department for a pretty penny. Clover helps to replenish the soil with needed nitrates.

2. Convince your parents to avoid using pesticides.

Ask them to purchase herbs and flowers that help to repel pests, and plant them among vegetables. Catnip, peppermint, garlic, basil, wormwood, marigolds and nasturtiums attract bees; yet repel beetles and other pests. Include plants that are not bothered by pests, like Echinacea. All of these garden plants can be dried and used to make healthy teas.

3. Help your town or city protect bee habitat.

Deforestation and land development destroy healthy habitat. Advocate for smart growth and volunteer to plant wildflowers and other native vegetation in schoolyards and along roadways.

4. Put out water.

Like most living things, bees need water. Set up a birdbath, fountain or small dishes of water. Clean and refill the birdbath and dishes regularly. Mosquitoes will breed in water that is left standing too long.

5. Build a Bee Condo.

Bee condos attract tunnel-nesting solitary bees and wasps. Drill holes into logs or blocks of wood. Holes should be closed at one end; don't drill all the way through. A range of hole sizes is best for biodiversity: a 3/8-inch wood bit and other drill bits larger and smaller (approximately 3, 4, 6, 8, 10mm). Ideally, smaller holes should be 3 to 4 inches deep, larger ones 5 to 6 inches deep. Holes should be smooth on the inside, with roughly 1/2-inch between holes.

There are about 3,500 species of bees in North America. Most species are active as adults for only a few weeks of the year, during the time when their preferred floral hosts bloom. About 85 percent of all bees are solitary. This means that every female bee mates, makes a nest with about 10 brood cells, stocks each cell with a nectar and pollen mixture as food for her larvae, lays an egg in each and dies before her young emerge, according to the website *PollinatorParadise.com*.

Learn more about bees, weeds and seeds at blog.netergetics.com.

Contributing writer Wendy Nadherny Fachon is an educator with COZ in Pawtucket, RI. She is also the creator of Story-walker, an outdoor investigative learning game, designed for kids of all ages and made available online at Netwalking.com.

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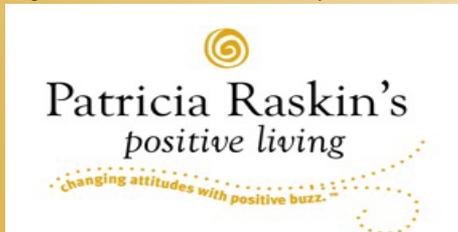
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