

Food for native bees



on the Copper Coast



1. Plant a range of native plants that flower from early spring to late autumn

Most native bees only live for a few weeks. They need pollen and nectar to reproduce. If they can't find food in your garden, they won't settle in. Plant a variety of locally native plants that provide flowers from early spring to late autumn, and you'll keep different species of native bees happy all year. Eucalypts, hakeas, Banksia, peas and Eremophila are very attractive. Plant smaller plants in clumps, to make them more attractive.

2. Plant buzz pollinated plants

Honeybees cannot use buzz pollinated plants (see overleaf), so by providing them, you provide an edge for native bees. Senna, fringe, flax and chocolate lilies, Hibbertia, and velvet-flowers are all buzz pollinated. Make sure there are nectar producing plants close by (Scaevola, Eucalypts, Christmas bush, tea-tree and Bottlebrush are all good).

3. Limit pesticide use

Chemical pesticides, particularly broad spectrum and systemic insecticides, can negatively impact native bee populations. Use pesticides conservatively, or better yet, not at all. That way, you'll also encourage beneficial predators to stick around and feed on your insect pests.

4. Leave some areas of your garden free of vegetation

Many native bees nest in the ground; these bees usually seek out slightly compacted soils, not too dry, not too wet, with at most light traffic, that are free of vegetation, often on a bit of a slope. Yes, they are picky! Look for existing nests, and leave or make a few patches of bare soil, so they can burrow, and they won't have to travel so far to pollinate your flowers.

5. Be careful with mulch and don't use weed barriers

Mulch has large benefits. But half of our native bees dig nests in the soil, and a layer of mulch or plastic weed barriers will discourage them from taking up residence in your garden. Leave a few suitable areas (see under 4) free of mulch for the bees.

6. Leave dead wood for wood nesting bees

Resin bees often use old beetle bores in dead wood. Leaving dead trunks or branches will help them.

7. Plant plants with pithy vines or canes

When pruning dead branches with pithy or hollow centres, leave a stretch of 10 cm or more above the node to allow reed, masked and resin bees to construct a nest.

8. Don't mow your lawn so often

When you don't have many native plants yet, weeds can provide nectar and pollen when nothing else is flowering. Mowing trims these flowers. Try to let your lawn grow a little longer before you mow.

9. Install some artificial nests for resin, masked and leafcutter bees

Resin, masked and leafcutter bees make tube-shaped burrows, in which they lay their eggs. Having a small bee hotel will allow you to observe them provisioning their nest. But remember: you won't get many residents in your hotel if it doesn't have a restaurant. So start by planting bee food.

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Australian Government
Department of Agriculture
and Water Resources






AgriFutures
Securing
Pollination

Supported by



common name	latin name	spring	summer	autumn	winter
trees					
Drooping She-oak	<i>Allocasuarina verticillata</i>				
* Gilja / Chindoo Mallee	<i>Eucalyptus brachycalyx</i>				
* River Red Gum	<i>Eucalyptus calmaldulensis</i>				
* Yorrell	<i>Eucalyptus gracilis</i>				
* Red Mallee	<i>Eucalyptus oleosa</i>				
* White Mallee	<i>Eucalyptus phenax</i>				
* Summer Red Mallee	<i>Eucalyptus socialis</i>				
* Mallee Box	<i>Eucalyptus porosa</i>				
* Eucalypts	<i>Eucalyptus spp.</i>				
* Dryland Tea-tree	<i>Melaleuca lanceolata</i>				
small trees					
Wattle species	<i>Acacia spp.</i>				
* Native Apricot	<i>Pittosporum angustifolium</i>				
* Quandong	<i>Santalum acuminatum</i>				
large shrubs					
Allyogyne	<i>Allyogyne huegelii</i>				
* Sweet Bursaria	<i>Bursaria spinosa</i>				
* Bottlebrush	<i>Callistemon rugulosus</i>				
Hakea/Needlewood	<i>Hakea spp.</i>				
* Mallee Honey Myrtle	<i>Melaleuca acuminata</i>				
Cross-leaved Honey Myrtle	<i>Melaleuca decussata</i>				
Broombush	<i>Melaleuca uncinata</i>				
* Boobiella	<i>Myoporum insulare</i>				
Mintbush	<i>Prostanthera spp</i>				
Twiggy Bush-pea	<i>Pultenaea largiflorens</i>				
medium shrubs					
* Common Fringe-myrtle	<i>Calytrix tetragona</i>				
Correa	<i>Correa pulchella</i>				
* Native Honeysuckle	<i>Eremophila alternifolia</i>				
* Tar bush	<i>Eremophila glabra</i>				
* Emu bushes	<i>Eremophila sp</i>				
Holly-leaf Grevillea	<i>Grevillea ilicifolia</i>				
Velvet-bush	<i>Lasiopetalum spp</i>				
Cassia	<i>Senna artemisioides</i>				
Paper flower	<i>Thomasia petalocalyx</i>				
small shrubs and herbaceous plants					
* Common Everlasting	<i>Chrysocephalum apiculatum</i>				
* Tall Scurf-pea	<i>Cullen australasicum</i>				
Dampiera sp.	<i>Dampiera rosmarinifolia</i>				
* Bitter-peas	<i>Daviesia spp.</i>				
Narrow-leaved Wax flower	<i>Philothea angustifolia</i>				
* Mallee Bush-pea	<i>Eutaxia microphylla</i>				
* Goodenia spp	<i>Goodenia spp</i>				
Spider-flower	<i>Grevillea lavandulacea</i>				
Guinea-flowers	<i>Hibbertia species</i>				
Common Beard-heath	<i>Leucopogon virgatus</i>				
* Austral Trefoil	<i>Lotus australis</i>				
Austral Stork's-bill	<i>Pelargonium australe</i>				
Holly Flat-pea	<i>Platylobium obtusangulum</i>				
* Showy Copper Wire Daisy	<i>Podolepis jaceoides</i>				
* Mulla mulla	<i>Ptilotus exaltatus</i>				
* Orange Darling Pea	<i>Swainsona stipularis</i>				
* Cockies Tongue	<i>Templetonia retusa</i>				
bulbs, lillies and other strap-leaved plants					
Common Vanilla-lily	<i>Arthropodium strictum</i>				
Milkmaids	<i>Burchardia umbellata</i>				
Flax-lily	<i>Dianella spp.</i>				
Twining Fringe-lily	<i>Thysanotus patersonii</i>				
ground cover					
Australian Bugle	<i>Ajuga australis</i>				
Pigface	<i>Carpobrotus rossi</i>				
Round-leaved Pigface	<i>Dyiphyma crassifolia</i>				
* Southern Sea-heath	<i>Frankenia pauciflora</i>				
Mallee Blue flower	<i>Halgania cyanea</i>				
* Muntries	<i>Kunzea pomifera</i>				
* Creeping Boobiella	<i>Myoporum parvifolium</i>				
* Fanflower	<i>Scaevola spp</i>				
Groundsels	<i>Senecio spp.</i>				
New Holland Daisy	<i>Vittadinia spp.</i>				
* Native Bluebell	<i>Wahlenbergia spp.</i>				
climbers					
* Mistletoe	<i>Amyema spp.</i>				
Sweet Apple berry	<i>Billardiera cymosa</i>				
Love Creeper	<i>Comesperma volubile</i>				
* Mistletoe	<i>Lysiana spp.</i>				

legend

-  pollen only
-  pollen + nectar
-  buzz pollinated plant (see below)
- * star bee plant

How many flowers do bees need?

The more the merrier!

As a guideline, aim for the abundant flowering of three sources of pollen and three sources of nectar at any time.

Why pollen and nectar?

Bees need nectar for energy and pollen for protein. Without this they cannot reproduce.

When do bees need food?

Different species are active at different times of the year.

Expect bees to be present in your garden between late winter and late autumn.

Why native plants?

More than half of the ~ 300 local native bee species do not use introduced plants.

All bees will use native plants, and local native plants are best.

Buzz pollinated plants for native bees

Many native bees can get pollen out of buzz pollinated plants. But introduced honey bees cannot handle these flowers, so by planting buzz pollinated plants, you provide pollen exclusively for native bees.

However, buzz pollinated plants provide pollen only, so make sure to have nectar sources available as well.

Blue banded bees

These are generalists that will visit buzz pollinated plant species, vegetables such as tomato and introduced garden plants like salvia, borage and basil, the long-flowering, buzz pollinated *Solanum rantonetti* and *Hibbertia scandens*, as well as the nectar producing *Duranta erecta* and English lavender.

Grasses...

Grasses do not provide any food for bees. However, native grasses can attract butterflies to your garden.