





# Bees

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## Food

With the introduction of the European honeybee, native bees have had to compete for resources including water, habitat and most importantly, food! If you want native bees to hang around in the garden it is important to provide enough food to keep them happy. When choosing plants to put in the garden, try to pick species that native bees prefer and plant flowers that bloom at different times of the year. This will ensure they stay around through every season. Try to choose a variety, as different species will prefer different sizes and shapes when it comes to flowers. For useful information on which species to plant and which species are best for your area, visit the Natural Resources web page: <https://www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/adelaidentloftyranges/plants-and-animals/native-plants-animals-and-biodiversity/urban-biodiversity>

Native bees prefer native species, but they also like to visit other flowering plants in the garden. Some the non-native species they like to visit in the garden are rosemary, sage, thyme, oregano, mint, basil, parsley, chives, lavender, salvias, most daisy bushes, borage, fruit trees (when in blossom), roses, camellias, nepeta and statice. Some of the flower colours that native bees seem to prefer are blue, purple, violet, yellow and orange. Keep in mind that bees see the world in ultra-violet light, so what we see and how bees see flowers are completely different. Try to avoid flowers that have been bred to have a second set of petals. These are known as 'doubles' and they lack the pollen producing anthers that bees look for.

## Water

Providing a reliable water source in the garden that stays full year-round will attract not only bees but other beneficial insects and birds to your garden. When providing a water source for your bees to visit, make sure the dish is shallow and has a rock or branch positioned in it to offer an area to land or for them pull themselves out if they should fall in.

Checking the dish regularly in the warmer months is vital to ensure the bees can rely on it as a regular water source.

## Sprays

One of the reasons bee populations are in decline globally is the use of agricultural and home garden sprays including insecticides, herbicides, miticides and fungicides. Bees are under threat from just about every spray used in the home garden. They are sensitive little creatures that don't appreciate even the 'eco-friendly' chemicals.

Think before spraying in the garden: 'What consequences will this have further down the chain?' and 'Is there an alternative to spraying?'. There are many home remedies that can be used as effective alternatives. If spraying is your last resort, always read the warnings on the back of the bottle before use and try to avoid spraying when bees are active, such as when plants are in flower.