

# Gardening Basics

## LESSON 9:

## GARDENING FOR POLLINATORS

### Why are pollinators important?

**There are many types of pollinators other than bees.**

- Bees, wasps, butterflies, moths, hummingbirds, flies and bats are all considered pollinators – so it's important to consider all these species when designing a pollinator friendly garden
- Pollination ensures you have a better harvest and helps produce healthier plants
- Some pollinators such as solitary bees nest underground, digging tunnels that also help improve soil structure, water flow, and add nutrients to the soil
- Pollination is a critical component of any ecosystem – and is essential for plants to set seed and complete their life cycle. 80% of all flowering plants require pollination to reproduce!



### What do pollinators need?

**Pollinators need what many other living organisms need – food, water, shelter, and protection from the elements.**

- Planting native species is a great way to help native pollinators. Native species will be adapted to your area and have the right nutrition for local pollinators
- Plants that have high levels of nectar help feed pollinators while they move from plant to plant
- Pollinators are attracted to flowers with colour and scent
- Access to non-stagnant water with areas for pollinators to rest on, such as stones placed in a bowl of water that can be refreshed often
- A variety of plants that offer blooms from Spring until Fall
- Safe habitat to nest and lay eggs is essential for reproduction and survival
- An environment free of pesticides – or at least careful attention to directions is important when applying pesticides to protect pollinators



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### Pollinator Habitat

#### Different pollinators require different habitats!

- Just as there are many different species of pollinators, the types of homes they need are different as well
- Many need dead wood, hollow plant stems, and leaf litter for their over wintering homes – ‘messy’ gardens make the perfect homes for many pollinator species!
- Some pollinators, as well as many beneficial insects, nest in the ground. Leaving areas of open ground with direct access gives these species a home. You can cover your soil with organic mulch like straw or leaf litter to provide their homes with extra insulation over the winter months



Image Credit:

<https://www.honeybeesuite.com/pollinator-walls-bee-towers-and-insect-hotels/>

### Pollinator Hotels

A fun project is to build a pollinator hotel.

This can be done in many ways, but there are a few important things to consider:

- Use natural materials such as hollow stemmed dry plants, leaves and straw, bricks, or corrugated cardboard
- Pollinators will need a variety of nooks and crannies and passages for nesting and laying eggs
- Consider location – it should be protected from the elements and receive some sunshine for part of the day
- Plan to have water and food sources nearby for when they emerge in the spring!