

Spotting Bees

**WILD
PLANET
TRUST**

Bees are busy at this time of year. There are many different types - from honey bees to solitary bees, and even mining bees that burrow into the ground.

They are all buzzing around collecting nectar and pollen to feed their families. As they fly from flower to flower they transfer pollen on their hairy bodies, which means the plants can produce fruit for us to eat.

Bees also make honey. Did you know that the honey you spread on your toast has been through many bees' tummies before it gets to yours? Doesn't make it any less tasty though, does it?

See if you can spot signs of bee activity where you live, have a look for:

- **Soil Volcanoes.** These are what is left behind when a bee burrows into soil, usually found on grassy areas like a lawn
- **Tawny mining bees.** You might spot one of these near the soil volcanoes, they have got ginger bottoms!
- If you have a bee hotel or a patch of rough vegetation in your garden, see if you can spot bees going in and out.
- **A big, furry bumblebee** - don't try to stroke it though, they're not as cuddly as they look. If you see a bumblebee, have a look for big yellow lumps on its legs: they are the pollen sacs, a bit like a basket on the bee's hind legs for carrying pollen.
- **Honeybees**, which are smaller and less fluffy than bumblebees.



You could also do some great things to help bees in your garden:



Try making a bee hotel.

You will need lots of hollow sticks for this, because solitary bees like to nest in the holes - old garden canes work well. Break or cut the canes, and tie them in a bundle or stuff them into a tube made from a bottle or clean food can with both ends cut off. Choose a sunny location and fix the bundle to a branch, or tuck it into a wall or a gap in a shrub. Just remember where you put it in your garden, to see how the bees are using it. There are lots of instructions online for making bee and bug hotels.

Plant some bee-friendly flowers.

Things that grow quickly and easily and have lots of flowers are great. Try candytuft, calendula, cornflowers and 'love in the mist'.

Leave an unmown strip on your lawn

Get the person who mows the lawn to leave some long grass, daisies and buttercups for bees and other insects to make home and collect pollen and nectar in your garden.

