



Image via [Pexels](#)

How to Plant a Bee-Friendly Garden

Are you wondering how you can support bees and beekeepers? You don't have to own bees to get involved in beekeeping. You can attract bees to your garden, provide forage and nest sites, and even boost your own veggie garden's production by planting a bee-friendly garden with these tips from the [Hawai'i Beekeepers' Association](#).

Step 1: Planning Your Pollinator Garden

Where does your garden grow? Here's what to know as you pick the best spot for your pollinator garden.

- Garden sites should be [sunny and sheltered](#) from wind. Plant your garden somewhere you can sit and observe bees and other pollinators as they forage.
- The informal nature of pollinator gardens makes them well-suited to property perimeters and permanent landscape beds. [Conduct a boundary survey](#) if planting along property lines to avoid disputes with neighbors.
- Make your pollinator garden water-wise with native plants and drip irrigation. In rainy areas, a rain garden can [conserve water](#) instead of using irrigation.

Step 2: Choosing Bee-Friendly Plants

Plant selection is perhaps the most important aspect of planning a bee-friendly garden.

- Honey bees are generalists who feed on a variety of pollen and nectar sources, but some plants stand out as [favorites](#). These include sunflowers, comfrey, cornflowers, and spring-blooming trees.
- Native bees prefer native plants. Find out what to plant for the 70+ native bee species found in Hawai'i at the University of Hawai'i [Cooperative Extension](#).
- Gardeners can also find pollinator-friendly native plants using the National Wildlife Federation's Native Plant Finder [tool](#).
- Other plant selection [rules](#) include: choose long-blooming plants; always have something blooming; group like flowers together; and use a variety of colors and textures.

Step 3: Creating a Bee-Friendly Habitat

Bees need more than pollen and nectar to call a habitat home. These tips will make your landscape a bee-friendly environment year-round.

- Create a bee-friendly [watering hole](#) using a shallow dish of water filled with rocks for bees to stand while they drink.
- Avoid pesticides in the garden. Use environmentally-friendly methods like hand-picking, trapping, and attracting [beneficial insects](#) to control pests.
- Many species of native bees nest in plant cavities and exposed soil. Instead of tidying up your garden each fall, leave bare ground and [hollow stems and twigs](#) as nesting habitat for native bees.

You don't need to be an expert beekeeper to make a difference for bees. All it takes is a green thumb and a little bit of know-how to turn your yard into a bee-friendly oasis. To learn more about bees and get involved in beekeeping, become a member of the [Hawai'i Beekeepers' Association](#) today.