

Bees Love Plants

Bees need somewhere to live, including a place to eat and live well. They also need materials, and that is where native plants work well with native bees. Large native trees provide shelter and habitat, just like the smaller groundcovers and shrubs. Trees provide pollen, nectar and/or resin, which act as food sources for food and for materials used in construction of their nests.

There are a large range of native plants that can be planted to attract native bees into your garden and these can also attract other pollinators too, including butterfly, dragon flies, honey bees and native birds.

Even if you don't have a garden to plant in, you could still use pots or tubs and these can be planted with small native herbs such as Pigface, Pennywort, Pastel Flower, *Xanthosia*, Yellow buttons, Billy Buttons, Ground Daisy, Christmas Bells, Blue Bells, *Hibbertia* or Native Mint - just to name a few.

Choose a number of plants that will flower together along with those that flower consecutively so that your garden has a continual variety of flowering and food sources for native bees. These could include a mixture of native plants that will create diverse food sources and wellbeing for your native bees.

Plan well ahead for continual flowering in Summer, Autumn, Winter and Spring and also for the climatic conditions that can occur. This planning could include a selection of drought tolerant species (for those long dry spells) and frost tolerant species for times when frost occurs.

Site aspect is important for bees as they do love the sunshine, but not the extreme heat. Therefore, shade is valuable to them during Summer. If you think you have room, think about planting large shrubs. These shrubs can also be manicured during the non-flowering seasons to keep them low. *Syzygium* (Lilly Pilly) is a great native plant for this purpose as it can be easily pruned and the native bees go crazy over it during flowering periods. In fact, all bees go crazy over it during flowering! Native bees do not like to forage in the wind, so if you can, choose a sheltered site for your plants.

Consider your soil condition as some native plants will establish better on sandy loam than they would on clay loam. Most plants also establish better on soil with a pH range between 6.0 and 7.5, however, native plants have shown their suitability in areas where the pH is outside of this range. Some natives are also able to adapt in areas where they would not normally be found, but generally, soil conditions are an important factor for their survival.

Establishing plants where acid sulphate soils exist can be challenging, so consider inclusion of more salt tolerant species in your plant selection.

Some plants can become invasive! Choosing the right plants ensures we don't create environmental problems in the future.

