YOUR FIRST BEE GARDEN

A small space. A thoughtful plan. A place for bees.

Start with one manageable patch, bed or container. This workbook helps you choose a site, plan flowers and care for the habitat already there.



THINK BEYOND THE FLOWERS

Food: suitable flowers across the local growing season.

Places to nest: natural soil, stems and woody habitat where appropriate.

Thoughtful care: avoid unnecessary pesticide use.

MY STARTING POINT

☐ A garden bed ☐ A small patch ☐ A container

The place I have in mind: _____

Built for a nationwide mission. Adapt the plants, timing and care to your own region.

No yard? A suitable container can provide flowers. A container alone does not meet every nesting need. You can also observe pollinators at a park or help plan an approved community space.

START WITH WHAT YOU HAVE.

GET TO KNOW YOUR SPACE

Watch the site before buying plants. Match your plan to the conditions you actually have.

CITY / STATE OR GROWING REGION

AVAILABLE SPACE (LENGTH x WIDTH, OR CONTAINER SIZE)

WATCH THE LIGHT

MORNING	MIDDAY	AFTERNOON
Sunny / mixed / shaded	Sunny / mixed / shaded	Sunny / mixed / shaded

APPROXIMATE HOURS OF DIRECT SUN

SOIL / MOISTURE: DRY, AVERAGE, DAMP OR SLOW TO DRAIN?

WATER ACCESS / WHO WILL HELP WITH CARE?

BEFORE YOU COMMIT

Confirm permission for shared spaces. Keep paths and entrances clear. For balconies, confirm load limits and drainage. Before digging, follow local utility-marking requirements.

Plan one area you can care for well. You can expand after you learn what works.

CHOOSE FOR YOUR REGION.

PLAN A SEASON OF BLOOMS

Use a local native plant guide or Extension resource. Check the scientific name, sun, moisture and mature size before buying.

A national worksheet needs a local plant list.

Choose flowers for the early, middle and late parts of your local growing season. Fill in the months below. Flowering times vary with location and weather.

PLANT + SCIENTIFIC NAME	BLOOM / MONTHS	SUN / MOISTURE	MATURE SIZE / NOTES

Check your coverage:

☐ **Early months:** _____

☐ **Middle months:** _____

☐ **Late months:** _____

FIND YOUR REGIONAL PLANT LIST

Xerces Society: Pollinator-Friendly Native Plant Lists

For local timing and plant availability, also consult your state Extension service.

FOOD AND NESTING SPACE.

MAKE ROOM FOR BEES

Draw your planting area. Include paths, existing plants and natural features worth keeping.

KEY: F = flowers P = path S = existing bare soil T = standing stems W = woody habitat

MY SCALE: ONE SQUARE =

FEATURES I WILL LEAVE UNDISTURBED

NESTS ARE NOT ALL HIVES

Many native bees nest in soil. Others use stems or holes in wood. Where suitable, keep some natural nesting features undisturbed. A flower-filled container provides food, but it does not replace these nesting places.

Bee hotels are optional and need maintenance. Do not open or disturb occupied nests.

Watch from a distance. Do not dig into holes or move logs to look for bees.

MAKE THE PLAN MANAGEABLE.

PLANT. CARE. COME BACK.

Use local guidance for planting dates and watering. There is no single calendar that fits the whole country.

BEFORE PLANTING

- [ ] Confirm each plant suits your site and is native to your region.
- [ ] Check mature spacing and prepare the site without disturbing known nests.
- [ ] Ask whether plants were treated with systemic insecticides; choose untreated plants when available.

AS YOU GET STARTED

- [ ] Plant at a locally recommended time and follow the plant's planting guidance.
- [ ] Water for establishment according to the plant, soil and weather.
- [ ] Keep an access path so you can observe and care for plants without trampling them.

AS THE GARDEN GROWS

- [ ] Watch before treating pests. Avoid applying pesticides to blooming plants.
- [ ] Keep suitable natural stems, soil and woody nesting features undisturbed.
- [ ] Note bloom gaps and plan your next improvement. Growth can take more than one season.

A NOTE ABOUT PESTICIDES

"Organic" does not automatically mean harmless to bees. Use nonchemical approaches when possible. If a pesticide is needed, an adult must follow its label and local guidance.

YOUR STORY STARTS HERE.

WATCH YOUR PATCH CHANGE

Repeat a short observation from the same safe spot. Record what you see, including days with no visitors.

DATE / TIME	WEATHER	WHAT IS BLOOMING?	VISITS / NOTES

ONE CHANGE I WILL MAKE NEXT

GROW WITH SAVE THE BEES USA

Share a garden photo or a small success with us:
buzzus@savethebeesusa.org
Subject: **My bee garden update**

Schools and organizations: explore our garden grant

Check current eligibility and availability. Funding is not guaranteed.

Explore all programs

Support our nationwide mission

LEARN MORE / SOURCES

Xerces Society: Regional native plant lists
University of Minnesota Extension: Nests for pollinators
UF/IFAS: Native bee landscape guidance

UF/IFAS plant examples are Florida-specific; use its planning principles with local plant guidance. Observation notes show what you noticed, not a measured change in bee populations.