

Communities in Bloom

Set a Table for the Bees

Canada has about 800 types of native bees. These little winged miracles depend on plants. Anyone who eats plant material depends on these pollinators.

The bees were out early this year, due to fluctuation of the daily temperature, starting the final week in March. Diligent bee keepers had to feed their little workers, as their source of food was limited. There is a growing concern, when people frown on the many dandelions on their property, but these bright blossoms are an early source of food for the bees.

Wind (we have had plenty of that), drought (another problem this year), prolonged cold weather, uneven temperatures (another 2017 problem) and a poor growing season decrease the food supply for the bees and increase their stress. Viruses are a concern, as there are losses to the bee larvae. Incorrectly used pesticides are detrimental, as it affects the longevity, the memory, and the foraging ability of the bees. For the second year running, we have had an influx of the Forest Tent caterpillar. If not caught early, they denude the fruit trees of blossoms and leaves – yet another loss of food source for the bees. Indiscriminate pesticide use on these predators can harm the bees, too.

Create a pollen friendly environment in your yard and garden for the pollinators. They need water, so place some rocks in your bird bath giving a safe landing pad for the bees to drink. Learn about the plants that support the hives and we will be richly rewarded ... not only with a fine supply of honey, but to allow plants that are important for our tables and for our agriculture to thrive.

To show that Bees Matter, Communities in Bloom will be adding many bee friendly plants to their floral displays this year. They have, also, supplied the Horticultural Society with enough packets of bee friendly flower seeds for the 42 youngsters that have signed up for school gardens this year. Thanks to the extra effort of the Horticultural members, as the seeds had already been distributed.

We must help these little pollinators – our life depends on it.