



K-STATE Research and Extension Douglas County

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Honeybees and Other Pollinators

Pollination services provide nearly one out of every three bites of food humans consume. These services are largely provided by both European Honeybees and Native Bees, though there are other pollinators. Interest in bee populations has been increasing in recent years due to an increased understanding of population decline in many bee species. There are likely several factors that have contributed to this phenomenon, most notably the loss of habitat and insecticide use. Homeowners who are interested in reversing this trend have several options:

- Manage Honeybees
- Provide Habitat for Natives
- Provide Pollen/Nectar Sources
- Restrict Insecticide Use on Flowering Plants

There are great differences in the level of involvement needed among the choices above. Managing a colony (or colonies) of honeybees is far different than simply providing habitat and nectar for native bees and other pollinators.

MANAGING HONEYBEES

Many new beekeepers find that consulting established beekeepers is the best way to learn the trade. Where possible, identify associations or established apiary operators who offer their support services. The following is a listing of subjects that are widely written about, but require following-up with practical, hands-on experience, if possible:

- Biology and Colony Organization
- Beekeeping Equipment
- Colony Structures and Siting
- Starting a Colony
- Handling Bees
- Seasonal Colony Management
- Pest Scouting and Management
- Honey Production
- Harvest and Storage
- Dividing a Colony
- Moving a Colony
- Requeening

Further Information:

[Bee Health Resource Area \(eXtension.org\)](#)
[Beekeeper Education & Engagement System \(NC State\)](#)
[Northeast Kansas Beekeepers Association](#)

PROVIDING HABITAT FOR NATIVE BEES

Native plants are a good choice for nectar and pollen sources for native bees. Simply planting native species of wildflowers is one of the most constructive means of supporting native pollinator populations.

Unlike social European Honeybees, most native bees are solitary and do not store food reserves. Because they nest individually, gardeners can play a role in offering space for native bees relatively easily. Natural landscapes provide a bounty of nesting sites for native bees, among other vertebrate and invertebrate organisms. However, most managed landscapes are rid of these amenities. You can take steps to reintroduce natural nesting sites like bare ground, fallen or standing dead trees/logs, or you can create replicas of these sites that may suit the needs of native bees.

Further Information:

[Nests for Native Bees \(Xerces Society\)](#)
[Pollinator Plants \(Xerces Society\)](#)

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