



# Bees as Pollinators



There are over 4,000 species of native bee in North America. Bees are one of the most productive pollinators because they have stiff hairs along their legs which carries large quantities of pollen and transports it from one plant to another as they search for food. Like most insects, bees have very high energy needs requiring them to continually search for pollen and nectar for themselves and their offspring. Nesting bees depend on pollen as a source of protein for the multiple generations of bees produced each year, making pollen collection necessary throughout the season.



70% of bees nest in the ground often excavating tunnels in open patches of bare sandy soil. 30% of bees nest in pre-existing wood or plant cavities. Individual nesting habitat and building technique vary greatly between bee species. While the majority of bees are solitary, some like the sweat bee, bumble bee, and honeybee are social, meaning that they live in large colonies. These colonies have a dynamic social structure often consisting of a queen, female worker bees, and male drones.



While honeybees are not native to North America, they provide a valued pollination service and support many of the agricultural crops we depend on.

## **Bee Flower Characteristics:**

Full of nectar, bright colored petals- blue, yellow, or white (bees are unable to see red), sweet aromatic or minty fragrance, open in daytime, provide landing platforms, tubular with nectar at base, contrasting nectar guides, varying cup sizes



## **Plants Frequented in This Garden:**

Joe Pye Weed, Echinacea, Penstemon, Blazing Star, Aster species, Bee Balm, Summersweet, Black-Eyed Susan, Smooth Leaf Hydrangea, Chokeberry

