

YOU CAN HELP LOCAL HONEYBEES!

With lawn care season here, this is a great time to learn how your yard can play a role in reducing toxins in our communities. Did you know that more pesticides are applied to city lawns than are used in conventional agriculture?

Every yard CAN make a difference.

Why are pesticides a problem?

- Pesticide-Treated Lawns can be toxic to humans, pets, and wildlife. And pesticide residues can track indoors and remain for years.
- Polluted Waterways: Pesticides, herbicides and excess fertilizers can be washed from lawns into storm drains and disrupt the Huron River ecosystem.
- Hurts honey bees and other pollinators: They are critical to our food system and they are in decline. Pesticides used on lawns can kill honey bees.

Tips for a Safer Yard

Learn just how dangerous lawn chemicals can be. How? Reading the product label statements is not enough since they generally refer only to acute or immediate toxicity, but say nothing of chronic or long-term effects like cancer, birth defects, sterility, miscarriage, or other permanent and debilitating effects. To learn what ingredients are in these products you need the scientific chemical ingredient names. You can find these on the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS). The website www.safeyardsmontclair.org has a great chart of commonly used lawn pesticides, what the active ingredient is, and health effects. It is at <http://www.safeyardsmontclair.org/images/30health-6.pdf>

Choose eco-friendly, organic lawn care practices. Chemicals give your lawn an artificial boost, but deplete your soil of important nutrients. Organic materials do the opposite. They feed the soil, which then provides a consistent and sustainable food source for the grass. Over time, your lawn will need less maintenance as it becomes safer for you, for pets, for the environment, and for pollinators like honeybees.

You may have to accept some clover, dandelions and other native plants, but they certainly will not take over your lawn. Did you know that clover and dandelions are important nectar sources for honeybees? Clover is actually a great natural nitrogen source for your soil! Or, hire an organic, eco-friendly service. And, try organic fertilizers and soil enhancers (compost, compost tea, plant-based materials).

Don't let your dog sniff yards that use pesticides. Studies link synthetic pesticides to certain canine cancers.

Talk to your neighbor. Share this flier and have a discussion if they are spraying pesticides.

Reduce your lawn over time and replace it with native, drought-resistant plants and gardens. More sustainable alternatives include groundcover (plants which spread across the ground but do not grow tall, so no cutting is required), ornamental grasses and native flower and plant beds. These are beautiful alternatives and better environmental choices. Why? They decrease water usage, filter dirty storm water run-off, require NO mowing, feed your soil, may offer honeybees nectar and pollen sources, and will save you lots of time and effort. It is the new trend and there are many native gardeners in Ypsilanti who can help you. See the back of this flier for some good choices of what to plant. Or you could consider replacing lawn areas with organic vegetable gardens, which is a great way to make your backyard productive. Contact the Local Honey Project (734-483-6420) or Growing Hope (734-786-8401) to learn more.



—adapted from SafeYardsMontclair.org

NATIVE PLANTS FOR BEES

Native plants should be your first choice to help honey bees (with queen, below).

Listed below are some plants that are good sources of nectar or pollen for bees. Both the common and Latin names of the plant genus are given. This list is not exhaustive; there are many other plants good for bees.

Use a wildflower guide or contact local nurseries to find the best local species.

- Aster *Aster*
- Black-eyed Susan *Rudbeckia*
- Currant *Ribes*
- Elder *Sambucus*
- Goldenrod *Solidago*
- Blueberry *Vaccinium*
- Joe-pye weed *Eupatorium*
- Lupine *Lupinus*
- Mountain Mint *Pycnanthemum*
- Oregon grape *Berberis*
- Penstemon *Penstemon*
- Purple coneflower *Echinacea*
- Rabbit-brush *Chrysothamnus*
- Rhododendron *Rhododendron*
- Sage *Salvia*
- Scorpion-weed *Phacelia*
- Snowberry *Symphoricarpos*
- Stonecrop *Sedum* (far right)
- Sunflower *Helianthus* (near right)
- Wild buckwheat *Eriogonum*
- Wild-lilac *Ceanothus*
- Willow *Salix*



Garden plants for bees

Flowerbeds in backyard gardens, businesses, campuses, and parks are great places to have bee-friendly plants. Native plants will create a beautiful garden but some people prefer "garden" plants. Many garden plants are varieties of native plants, so this list only includes plants from other countries--"exotic" plants--and should be used as a supplement to the native plant list. As with the native plants, this list is not exhaustive.



- Anise hyssop *Agastache* (top right)
- Basil *Ocimum*
- Cotoneaster *Cotoneaster*
- English lavender *Lavandula*
- Globe thistle *Echinops* (at left)
- Hyssop *Hyssopus*
- Lemon balm *Melissa*
- Marjoram *Origanum*
- Mints *Mentha*
- Rosemary *Rosmarinus*
- Russian Sage *Perovski*
- Wallflower *Erysimum*
- Zinnia *Zinnia*