

BEE GARDEN

A Place Buzzing With Life

The plants in this garden represent mostly native Georgia wildflowers that attract bees. Bees are essential pollinators. Most are solitary (live alone) while others are social and live in colonies (honey bees and bumble bees). Pollination by bees results in the production of fruits, nuts, berries, seeds and foliage that are food for birds, mammals, millions of insects and ourselves.

Bees pollinate many different kinds of wildflowers and flower shapes. Take a look at the flower shapes you see in the garden. Some are cone-shaped like black-eyed Susan or coneflower (*Rudbeckia* spp.) and others are tubular like beard-tongue (*Penstemon* spp.). Smaller bees, like sweat bees, prefer the cone-shaped flowers while larger bees, like bumble bees and carpenter bees, prefer to crawl inside the tubular flowers.

Did You Know?



This garden contains three groups of plants that are used by bees – legumes (large bees), mints (small to large bees) and composites (mostly large bees).



Bees prefer flowers in which 20-40% of the nectar consists of dissolved sugars.



Many bees nest in twigs with pithy stems; others nest in the holes of dead trees. You can provide homes for bees by providing nesting boxes.



Bees are covered with hairs designed to collect pollen. This makes them efficient pollinators and allows them to collect pollen. At their nests, the pollen is fed to the larval bees.



There are an estimated 20,000 bee species worldwide, 3,500 bee species in the US, and over 200 bee species in Georgia.



If you do not provoke bees, the chances of being stung are very low. Visit www.pollinator.org for more information.



Cone-shaped



Tubular



Leafcutter Bee, *Megachile* sp.

Leafcutter bees are solitary bees that live alone and not in hives. Leafcutter bees usually nest in hollowed-out dead twigs. They cut semi-circles of leaves that they carry to the nest. The leaves are used to line the nests. They are easy to spot because they carry pollen on the underside of their abdomen.



Bumble Bee, *Bombus* sp.

Up to 6 species of bumble bees occur in eastern Georgia. These large bright yellow and black bees are known for buzz pollination, where they grab onto a flower and then buzz their wings until the pollen vibrates out. Plants like tomatoes can only be pollinated this way.



Sweat Bee, *Agapostemon* sp.

Sweat bees get their name from a unique behavior they have – collecting sweat which they lap up with their tongue (proboscis). Sweat bees, like the majority of bee species, are solitary and build nests either in the ground or in small cavities.

