



The buzz on native bees.

Australia has more than 1600 native bee species, many of which make their homes in the Botanic Gardens. The best known bee in Australia has been the yellow-brown commercial European Honey Bee (*Apis mellifera*). This species was introduced to Australia in 1822 to produce honey for European settlers. Did you know we have our own native bees, of all shapes and sizes, visit our gardens and wildflowers?



Australian native bees have evolved with wildflowers for hundreds of years. They are divided into three types: solitary bees, semi-social bees and social a handful of social species that produce honey.

Solitary bees usually nest in soil or wood burrows or in isolated cells made from resin or mud. Females nest alone, stocking the cell with pollen and honey and laying an egg in the cell. Solitary bees vary in size, shape and colour, and most of them can sting. We have two insect hotels on display outside Gardens Administration which have been made from bee friendly materials. The hotel has different-sized tubes and hollows to encourage a wide variety of native bee species to nest in the 'rooms'. You can attract native bees to your garden too! Plant some nectar rich flowering plants in your garden to attract a range of native bees, adult butterflies and perhaps even birds.

Attracting native bees to your garden.

The easiest way to have natives bees in your garden is to have your own hive/s and also plant a variety of nectar rich local native flowering plants. Local native plants have so many benefits and they also look great too.

- Low maintenance once established
- Will attract a range of species to your garden, including adult butterflies and birds; The aim is to have at least two flowering species all year round to encourage bees and other pollinators to be regular visitors. Water features are also a great way to attract birds and other pollinators to your garden too.



Exploring some of our native bee species

Native bees can be found in most of Australia's diverse habitats. Multitudes teem through the carpets of flowers in our heathlands and swarm around the blossoms at the tops of gum trees. Native bees live in all parts of Australia. This stingless bee (*Tetragonula carbonaria*) lives in Queensland and NSW.



Australian Native bee groups found in Queensland:

- Stingless Bees
- Yellow and Black Carpenter Bees
- Green Carpenter Bees
- Reed Bees
- Blue banded bees
- Teddy Bear Bees
- Leafcutter Bees
- Resin Bees



Get into the buzz

1. Plant a bee friendly garden – to attract local native bees to your garden. There are a range of local native flowering plants to grow which will also attract other pollinators, birds and butterflies.

2. Provide nest habitat – look out for bee nesting areas and protect them where possible. Leaving bare earth in the yard encourages ground nesting bees. You can also create your own insect hotels to attract bees and other beneficial insects. 3. Spread the word – about native bees. Learn as much as you can from websites and books. Look for the Mackay Native Bee Network on Facebook who are a group that share a range of information about native bees. Here are some websites that can provide information on native bees, pollination, bee hotels and creating a bee-friendly garden:

- <http://www.buzzaboutbees.net>
- <http://www.aussiebees.com.au>
- <http://flyingdocbees.wix.com/flyingdocbees>

