

Challenge: Help the Bees!

Did you know that 97% of the native British Wildflower habitat has been lost since World War 2? Wildflower habitats are where bees and butterflies make their lives. This is serious for Britain. Without bees, our flowers and plants wouldn't be pollinated and grow. This is particularly important if you think about the crops (the plants grown on farms) which give us food. And, without bees, we wouldn't have honey which is an AMAZING natural product, useful for lots of things – not just eating! It's full of vitamins to help keep us healthy, and is a great way to reduce symptoms of hayfever too, and honey is a great moisturiser. So, we need to help the bees! Here's a challenge to help you do your bit...

Step 1: Ask an adult to help you think of a good place to plant some wildflowers. This could be in a garden, in a plant pot, or even in a planter on a balcony. All you need is some soil or compost, some seeds and a bit of water, and they need sunshine.

Step 2: Prepare the soil or earth by making sure it's nice and loose and free from weeds if you can. It should be nice and moist but not too wet. This will give the seeds the best chance to grow.

Step 3: Get your seeds (these can be bought very cheaply from many garden centres, shops or even supermarkets for less than £1), or sometimes, companies give them away for free to encourage people to help the bees! Decide where you will scatter them.

Step 4: Sprinkle your wildflower seeds into the soil - try and spread them out a little if you can. Then gently cover them with a thin layer of soil or compost. They don't need to be buried very deep, just enough to cover them. Now, it's time to wait – wildflowers need plenty of sunshine and a bit of water to help them get going, so it's best to plant them around April, or later in the year around September.

Step 5: Keep watching and waiting. The seeds normally take around 2-3 months to grow. Why not keep a diary of what you see? Once they have grown, make sure they have enough water (but not too much) so if it hasn't rained for a while, give them a little drink of water. Keep looking out for bees and other insects visiting your wildflowers especially on sunny days. If you can get close enough, can you watch what they're doing?

Step 6: Next, we want you to share what you've learned about bees, what's happening to them and why we need them. Maybe you could include some ideas on how other people can help bees by planting their own wildflowers? Could you design a poster, a leaflet or perhaps even a video or photos of what you've done?

You will need:

- Soil or compost
- Wildflower seeds
- Some space in the garden or a planter or plant pot
- Water
- Paper, pencil, crayons, etc.



Which skills will I be developing?

