PLANTS & HERBS

If You Want to Help Save Bumblebees, Plant these Flowers in Your Garden this Spring

By bestfolkmedicine · 11/02/2020 · 2 min read



A team of Californian researchers has identified the most helpful flowers for bees as an effort to aid the conservation of the North American bumblebee whose population is declining.

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In the world, there are around 20,000 known species of bees, 4000 of which are US native, according to the US Geological Society.

Bees are known to pollinate around ¾ of fruits, nuts, and veggies throughout the country and one of every four bites of food in the world can be credited to bees.

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Unfortunately, they're in decline with 40 percent of honeybees lost last year.

Their population has dropped because of numerous reasons, including pesticide overuse, parasites, and low flower amount on landscapes.

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Planting Specific Flowers to Help Bumblebees

Scientists worked with the Entomological Society of America to find out which flowers bumblebees prefer and thus, ask from land managers to restore their habitat by planting these flowers.

Jerry Cole, author of the study and biologist working at the Institute for Bird Population explains that it's vital to consider the availability of the plants when finding out what bees prefer.

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https://twitter.com/InstBirdPop/status/1224444851950772224

They caught more than 12 distinct species of bumblebees on more than 100 distinct flowers species in the Sierra Nevada, California.

They recorded the types of flowers which the bees were visiting and then estimated the numbers of the plants in every plot.

At the end, they concluded that different bumblebees chose specific flowers, even when they were going through the same landscape.

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Which Flowers Did Different Bee Species Prefer?

The yellow faced bumblebee opted for large-leaved lupines more than it did for other plants available. Three of five bumblebee species chose A. urticifolia, a flowering plant from the mint family.

They also visited the Oregon checker-mallow, Alpine mountainbalm, tall fringed bluebells, and cobwebby hedge nettle.

Bees Don’t Have Personal Preferences

Bees choose the flowers on the basis of quantity or quality of nectar or pollen.

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And, these results need to be cautiously interpreted as the study didn’t find whether the plants were used as source of pollen or nectar.

According to the US Forest Service, these findings can help better the effectiveness of the restoration of bumblebee habitat in an easy and cost-effective way.

These findings are also helpful for landowners that are managing or restoring bee habitat.

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