

10 Tips to identify bee-friendly Water Wise plants

Tip 1: Succulent leaves

Succulents have thick, fleshy leaves where water is stored. Aloes are an example of succulent plants which flower mainly over winter, providing nectar for bees.

Tip 2: Grey or lighter foliage

Grey or light-coloured leaves help reflect the sun's rays away from the plant, thereby conserving water. Examples of plants with grey leaves include lavender and sage wood, which also produce purple flowers which bees find highly attractive.

Tip 3: Needle-like leaves

Small, needle-like leaves have a small surface area which helps to prevent water loss. These plants include lavender and rosemary, as well as grevillea with its splendid variety of colourful, nectar-producing flowers.



Tip 4: Hairy leaves

Leaves with fine or silky hairs slow down air movement across the surface of the leaf. This helps to prevent water-loss from the stomata, which are small openings from which water is transpired.

Tip 5: Waxy leaves

Many arid-adapted plants have a waxy layer on the leaves and stems. This coating prevents water loss and includes plants such as begonias, lavender tree, clivia, agapanthus and star jasmine – all these plants produce flowers which bees are attracted to.



Tip 6: Small leaves

Water Wise plants often have small leaves. Again, the small surface area prevents water loss. Examples include the indigenous acacias which also produce fragrant flowers favoured by bees.

Tip 7: Aromatic foliage

Oil in the stomata reduces water transpiration from the leaves and when temperatures are high, the oil gives off an aromatic scent. Lavender, thyme and rosemary are examples which also attract bees.

Tip 8: Sturdy internal structures

Water Wise plants often have a strong profile which supports the leaves and prevents them from wilting. Examples include strelitzias and blue statice. Strelitzias are rich in nectar and flower throughout the year, providing bees with a regular energy source.

Tip 9: Thorns

Many Water Wise plants are adorned with spikes and thorns. These thorns protect the plant from overgrazing by large herbivores which would otherwise deplete their water reserves. These include indigenous acacias as well as many succulents such as aloes which flower over winter and will keep bees active when many other plants are not yet in flower.

Tip 10: Loss of leaves during dry spells

Some plants completely lose their leaves during extended dry periods, but will still produce fragrant flowers to attract pollinators such as bees. These include coral trees (*Erythrina lystistemon*).



Water Wise bee-friendly gardening

Plant Water Wise plants and get your garden
buzzing with bees...and save water!

Water Wise plants for a bee-friendly garden

The following plants are all ideal for a Water Wise garden and all of these examples will attract bees to your garden throughout the year, and particularly during spring and summer when bee activity and pollination reaches its peak. Bees play an important role in pollinating garden flowers and fruit trees and the presence of bees in your garden is a good indication of a healthy and environmentally sound garden.

Plant a mixed variety of plants which flower throughout the year. Not only will this provide colour in your garden throughout all the seasons, but will ensure an adequate supply of nectar for bees throughout the year.



Create a bee-friendly Water Wise garden

Water Wise plants have adapted to arid regions around the world and many of them are ideal candidates for a Water Wise garden. These plants are ideal for eco-friendly gardens as they require very little water or maintenance once established.

Different species flower through different times of the year and can add colour to your garden throughout the seasons. For example, most aloes flower during winter, while many Water Wise trees flower in spring. Numerous plants will also flower throughout the summer months and some even lasting well into autumn, such as cosmos.

Attract bees to your garden

- * Bees prefer diversity, so plant a range of bee-friendly flowers with large patches of each kind of flower.
- * Bees prefer a more natural and random garden than one which is perfectly manicured.
- * Plant at least ten or more different plants that attract bees. Plant several of each type of plant close together, rather than singly or far apart.
- * If your plant choice is limited by space constraints, then choose plants with blue, yellow, violet, bluish-green and ultraviolet flowers, as bees prefer these colours. You can also select scented flowers over unscented ones.
- * Include some bee-attracting indigenous plants as well as other Water Wise favourites as highlighted in the list below
- * Plant flowers that bloom at different times of the year so that bees have a nectar source throughout the year, even through bee activity decreases over the cold, dry winter months.
- * Sink a few shallow pans of water in the garden – bees need clean water but deep bird baths and water features are often too deep for them.
- * Avoid using pesticides in your garden or try and select one which is bee-friendly.



Trees

- * Coral tree (*Erythrina lystistemon*) 🌸
- * False olive (*Buddleja saligna*) 🌸
- * Highveld protea (*Protea caffra*) 🌸
- * Karee (*Searsia lancea*) 🌸
- * Kei apple (*Dovyalis zeyheri*) 🌸
- * Lavender tree (*Heteropyxis natalensis*) 🌸
- * Scented thorn (*Acacia nilotica*) 🌸
- * Sweet thorn (*Acacia karroo*) 🌸
- * Weeping bottlebrush (*Callistemon viminalis*) 🌸
- * Wild olive (*Olea europaea subsp. africana*) 🌸

Shrubs

- * Abelia (*Abelia spp.*) 🌸
- * Cape honeysuckle (*Tecomaria capensis*) 🌸
- * Dwarf pomegranate 🌸
- * Euryops daisies (*Euryops spp.*) 🌸
- * Lavender (*Lavendula ssp*) 🌸
- * Num-num (*Carissa bispinosa*) 🌸
- * Plectranthus 'Mona Lisa' 🌸
- * Proteas (*Protea spp.*) 🌸
- * Strelitzia (*Strelitzia reginae*) 🌸
- * Cape honeysuckle (*Tecomaria capensis*) 🌸

Perennials

- * Agapanthus (*Agapanthus praecox*) 🌸
- * Blue statice (*Limonium perezii*) 🌸
- * Bush lily (*Clivia miniata*) 🌸
- * Gaura (*Gaura linderheimeri*) 🌸
- * Ivy-leaved pelargonium (*Pelargonium peltatum*) 🌸
- * Scabiosa africana 🌸
- * Tulbaghia violacea 🌸
- * Watsonias 🌸

Annuals

- * Allysum 🌸
- * Arctotis 🌸
- * Cosmos 🌸
- * Gaillardia 🌸
- * Gazanias (*Gazania spp.*) 🌸
- * Hollyhocks 🌸
- * Lobelia 🌸
- * Straw flower 🌸
- * Verbena 🌸
- * Vinca 🌸

🌸 Spring 🌸 Summer 🌸 Autumn 🌸 Winter

Groundcovers

- * Cape jewels (*Nemesia strumosa*) 🌸
- * Creeping foxglove (*Asystasia gangetica*) 🌸
- * Erigeron daisy (*Erigeron karvinskianus*) 🌸
- * Scabiosa africana 🌸

Climbers

- * Bougainvillea 🌸
- * Chinese jasmine (*Jasminum polyanthum*) 🌸
- * Canary creeper (*Senecio tamoides*) 🌸
- * Star jasmine (*Trachelospermum jasminoides*) 🌸

Bulbs

- * Crinum spp. 🌸
- * Haemanthus albiflos 🌸
- * Springbok painted petals (*Lapeirousia silenoides*) 🌸

Succulents

- * Krantz aloe (*Aloe arborescens*) 🌸
- * Mountain aloe (*Aloe marlothii*) 🌸
- * Tree aloe (*Aloe bainesii*) 🌸



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