

## Starting A Garden: How The Bees And Your Kids Can Benefit



Photo via Pixabay by [Maohlin](#)

Starting a garden has many [benefits](#); it can be a relaxing pastime that reduces anxiety, for one, but it also improves your family's ability to eat healthier foods when you grow your own veggies. In fact, getting the kids involved with the gardening process can help boost their self esteem and give them a feeling of responsibility, which can help them later in life. However, perhaps one of the best benefits of having a garden is that you'll be helping the bees in your community thrive.

Bees are extremely important parts of our ecosystem. Many people don't realize the role they play in food production, but they are responsible in some way for as much as  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the food we eat. From pollinating fruits and veggies to making sure the plants that animals eat are healthy and thriving, bees are irreplaceable in the grand scheme of our crop system.

Unfortunately, they are dying out at a rapid rate. Pesticides and loss of habitat are just two of the reasons the bee population is dwindling, and it's up to us to change that. Creating a space for something to grow ensures that the bees in your area have plenty of food and water, as well as a place to rest after a long journey. It might seem like an overwhelming feat, especially if you don't have a big lawn or live in the city. However, there are many ways you can contribute.

Here are a few of the best ways to get started.

## **Do some research**

Talk to your kids about the importance of bees and the role they play in our food production system. Take them to the local garden supply store to pick out seeds; let each child choose one type of flower, fruit, or veggie to grow and let them be responsible for it. Look up some of the [best flowers](#) to plant for the area you live in that will attract bees; for instance, most bees love flat-headed flowers that give them a good space to land on and rest while they eat, such as sunflowers and black eyed Susans, but these may not grow well in your climate.

## **Give the bees a drink**

Bees love pollen and nectar, but they get thirsty, too! Place some water in a bowl with a few protruding rocks so the bees have a place to land and get a drink without drowning. You can even have the kids paint the rocks for a colorful summer day project.

## **Get crafty**

If you live in an apartment or don't have a very big lawn, consider starting a window box full of flowers or [herbs](#). Bees love these savory treats, and you can use them to cook with, too! Talk with your family about the best herbs to plant; you can even use this as a jumping off point for cooking lessons with the kids. Growing your own foods and harvesting them to eat is a wonderful way to teach kids about the importance of being responsible for something outside of themselves, and it can even help them be more empathetic and develop leadership skills.

For more information on how to get kids involved in the gardening process, read on [here](#).

## **Get healthy**

Growing your own veggies means being able to introduce healthier foods to your family's meals, so look online for some vegetable-friendly meal ideas that everyone will love. Vegetable lasagna is a great option, but you can also create a different type of salad for everyone in the family depending on what they like. Tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, and spinach are wonderful options, and they'll give the bees a yummy snack as well.

Remember that you don't have to have a big space in order to help out the bees. Show your support to local beekeepers and farmers by buying [local honey](#) and visiting farmer's markets on the weekends.

Author: Christy Erickson (SavingOurBees.org)