

Love our pollinators

Bees and other insects help make our food by pollinating plants, fruit, vegetables, nuts and seeds. Many of our native plants also rely on pollinators. Find out more about New Zealand's pollinators, and how you can help them.



Meet our pollinators

Bees are probably the best-known pollinators. As well as honey bees, we have four types of bumblebee and 28 types of native bee. Native bees are generally smaller and blacker than honey bees and bumblebees, which were brought here from England.

Other pollinators include many flies, native butterflies and moths, and the flower longhorn beetle. Our nectar-eating birds, such as tūi and bellbirds, are thought to pollinate around one in twelve of New Zealand's native plants.

We need to protect them

New Zealand's population of honey bees are generally in better shape than many other countries, thanks to our strict biosecurity laws and monitoring pests and diseases. Research shows that some types of intensive agriculture affect our native bees. And, across New Zealand, all of our pollinators face the problem of loss of habitat and potential poisoning, if exposed to pesticides and other chemicals.

What you can do to help

- Grow more flowering plants and trees. Plant a mixture so they flower at different times of the year.
- Try using less chemicals in the garden. You could pull out weeds or squash pests by hand. You could use a net to protect plants from caterpillars. You could use boiling water to spot-kill weeds or moss on your paths.
- If you do use chemicals, be careful when spraying. Follow the instructions, don't spray near buds or flowers, or when it's wet or windy. Avoid spraying large areas at a time.
- Leave patches of garden to grow wild and don't spray chemicals there. Some flowering weeds are valuable food sources for pollinators. Leave areas of long grass as shelter for insects.
- Cut your lawn less, and mow smaller areas at a time.
- Make clean, pesticide-free water available for bees and insects to drink. 
- Don't disturb insect nests. 
- Have some banks of earth or bare soil in your garden. Native bees nest in these.
- Chat with your neighbours, family and friends about looking after pollinators. Share cuttings and seeds from pollinator-friendly plants to reduce costs. Find out about looking after your pollinators on community land or in schools.