

BEE AWARE MONTH

Planting for pollinators

Throughout Bee Aware Month, Apiculture New Zealand ran a social media campaign suggesting pollinator-friendly plants for every type of garden—from a few pot plants on the balcony to large, lifestyle blocks, and every type of gardener—from the avid, green-thumbed variety to the haphazard gardener looking for low-maintenance options.

The campaign also included plant suggestions for those times of the year when pollen sources are more scarce. Pollination biologist and Trees For Bees botanist Linda Newstrom-Lloyd says that honey bees need more pollen sources in autumn, especially February to April when bees are preparing for winter, and spring when colonies are coming out of winter and working on building up their populations.



Koromiko (*Hebe stricta*). Photo: Barry Foster.

PLANTING FOR POLLEN DEARTH

Flowering in spring especially in October:

- maple trees (e.g., *Acer rubrum*)
- oak trees (e.g., *Quercus robur*)
- photinia (e.g., *Photinia beauverdiana*).

Flowering in autumn especially February to April:

- hoheria (*Hoheria sexstylosa*)
- koromiko (*Hebe stricta*)
- autumn-flowering alder (*Alnus nitida*).

Flowering in late winter especially July and August:

- five-finger (*Pseudopanax arboreus*)
- kōwhai (e.g., *Sophora tetraptera*)
- fried egg plant (*Polyspora* or *Gordonia yunnanensis*).

For more bee-friendly planting ideas, visit: treesforbees.org.nz

PROMOTING POLLINATOR PATHWAYS

In urban areas there are fewer places for pollinators such as honey bees to gather nectar and pollen. While honey bees are probably one of the most well-known pollinators, New Zealand is also home to a wide range of other pollinators including over 28 species of native bees, solitary creatures that nest in the ground. There are also birds, geckos, bats, bumble bees, butterflies and moths that gather food via pollination.

Landscape architect Andrea Reid is promoting the creation of a network of paths that run throughout our cities, linking pollinator habitats together so that pollinators don't have to travel so far to reach flowers. This includes non-airborne pollinators like skinks that find it especially difficult to find sustainable habitats in urban areas.

Some city councils are now aiming to create pollinator pathways that link pollinator habitats. This includes thinking of ways to increase plantings in areas along roads and cycleways and around parking areas.

Every little bit helps, from planting on berms to growing pollinator-friendly plants in pots on your balcony.

For more information on pollinator pathways, visit: <https://www.pollinatorpaths.com/>



Five-finger (*Pseudopanax arboreus*). Photo: Krzysztof Ziarnek, Wiki Commons.



Plant harakeke/flax (*Phormium tenax*) to attract native bees to your garden. This ornamental plant represents whānau (family) in te ao Māori. The inner rito (shoot) is protectively surrounded by the awahi rito (parents) while the outer leaves represent the tūpuna (grandparents and ancestors). Photo: Trees for Bees Research.



Many citrus trees grow well in plots, making them a versatile option for renters or people with little outdoor space. Feed and water them well and lemon trees like this one (*Citrus limon*) will reward you with juicy lemons, a kitchen staple and perfect match with honey. Photo: Beverly Buckley, Pixabay.



Lavender is a popular garden plant and an excellent low-maintenance option for the haphazard gardener. Photo: Annie Spratt, Unsplash.