



Native Bee Fact Sheet

Many native bee species across North America are suffering. They have lost a lot of their habitat and food sources. Native bee species are important because they are the best pollinators for native and some crop plants. Most native bees are solitary species. Solitary bees do not produce honey or wax. This means that their nests do not attract pests that may be after honey, like raccoons. Because they use so much energy building their own nests, and caring for themselves and their brood, they generally do not or can not sting. Those that can sting have mild stings and only do so when under extreme duress. They don't have a hive to protect like honey bees.

Miner Bee

- These are the bees that can be seen emerging from their burrows in the video on the Merry Lea YouTube channel "Finding Native Pollinators: an Exploration for Bees."
- This classification of bee is one of the largest with over 1,300 species
- Most commonly a reddish color with white bands on their abdomen
- The females construct nest burrows where they leave some pollen and nectar to feed the developing larvae.
- They prefer sandy or well drained soils to build their nests.



How can you help the miner bee?

Avoid putting pesticides on places where the miner bee might nest or feed (like your lawn or garden)

Mason Bee

- Very gentle: rarely sting
- Every female makes her own nest and lays her own egg
- Typically nest in narrow gaps and naturally occurring tube like cavities: hollow twigs, abandoned wood-boring beetle nests, snail shells, under bark, or in other small protected cavities. They can not dig their own nests
- They are called mason bees because they often use clay or mud to construct their nests like a stone mason.
- Typically have a metallic green or blue color.



How can you help the Mason Bee?

You can build mason bee homes!

Click [here](#) to know how to build a home that does more good than harm.

Bumble Bee

- Bumble bees make up a smaller portion of bee species in North America.
- They are known for their plump and fuzzy appearance.
- Unlike miner and mason bees, bumble bees do tend to form small colonies.
- They have striped black and yellow warning coloration to deter predators.
- Bumble bees have longer more specialized tongues that can reach into longer closed flowers that other bees cannot pollinate.
- Their fuzzy coats help them stay warm and give them the ability to fly in colder weather than other bees.
- Bumble bees are one of the only pollinator types to be able to pollinate tomato plants.
- The Rusty Patched Bumblebee and the Variable Cuckoo Bumblebee are listed as critically endangered



How can you help the Bumblebee?

Plant a pollinator garden. Good plants for Indiana bumblebees and other pollinators:

- Crocuses
- Primroses
- Cornflower
- Geraniums
- Lupine
- Raspberry
- Strawberry
- Roses
- Lavenders
- Honeysuckle