



The Bee Cause

a booklet on pollinators and the
plants they love



Bee Facts



They may be tiny but bees are essential to a healthy environment. We rely on them and other insects to pollinate most of our fruit and vegetables. Bees are under threat and without them so is our food and economy.

1

The honey bee, *Apis mellifera*, is the most well known bee species but there are 1884 wild bee species in the EU.

2

Not all bees are social creatures. While the honey bees and bumble bees live in colonies and are led by a queen, solitary bees, like the Mason bee, tend to live and nest with a family unit made up of a single pair.

3

Bees are facing numerous threats. Causes of bees' decline include – changes in land use, habitat loss, building projects, disease, pesticides, farming practices, pollution, invasive non-native plant and animal species, and climate change.

4

Bees ensure pollination for over 80% of crops and wild plants

Who are the Pollinators?

Bees are one of the most important pollinators in both natural and agricultural systems, however they are not the only ones doing this good deed. If you walk around a garden, you may notice beneficial insects such as butterflies, moths, flies, wasps and beetles visiting flowers. They are all performing the vital role of making sure that plants reproduce.

Many crops we consume in our daily lives depend on natural pollination—these include coffee, cacao, almonds, strawberries, apples, melons, tomatoes, vanilla, sunflowers, watermelons and many others.

The bees...



Honey bee

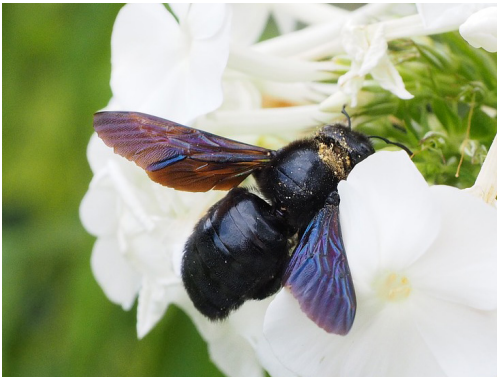
Apis mellifera

The worker is around 12mm long. It lives in colony lead by one queen. This bee often visits one particular plant species at a time, e.g. thyme, lavender, carob.

Buff-tailed bumblebee

Bombus terrestris

This is another social bee. It is around 10-16mm in length, and has a particular dirty white tail. Collects pollen from an array of plants.



Violet carpenter bee

Xylocopa violacea

Characterised by a black body and metallic violet wings. Bores into wood and often nests in giant reed stalks.

There are numerous other bees in Malta. Some common species are *Osmia latrellei*, *Osmia kohli*, *Eucera algira*, *Andrena nigroaenea*, *Rhodanthidium siculum*, *Halictus fulvipes*, *Amegilla quadrifasciata*

...and their plight

The outlook for bees right now is quite bleak – and their drop in numbers is a sign of the plight of the natural world as a whole. Across society, we often undervalue nature and what it does for us. The truth is, if we want an economy that provides for everyone's needs in the long term, we need to reverse damage to the environment around us. Our politicians need to understand the importance of protecting the natural world – and protecting bees as key players in it.

Without bees we're in trouble. We need to take action now, for the sake of people and wildlife. You can make a huge difference where you live by doing a few simple things. Planting flowers rich in nectar will really help bees find the food they need. Choosing local, Maltese honey will lend your support to our honey bees and their beekeepers. Encouraging your friends and neighbours to do the same will help create bee-friendly communities.



TAKE ACTION

Create a bee-haven in your back yard

The great thing about gardening is that it's good for you as well as for the wildlife. Every bee-friendly plant in Malta helps bees and our ecosystem. If you don't have a garden, go for pots and containers, on a sunny windowsill or balcony. Most plants can feed both you and the bees.

You could try:

- ✿ Flowering herb like marjoram, sage, thyme, borage.
- ✿ Bushy aromatic plants like rosemary and lavender.
- ✿ Easy edibles like strawberries, tomatoes and beans.
- ✿ Ornamental flowers like sunflowers, echinacea & verbenas.



Make a Bee 'n' Bee

Bees need more than just food. A Bee n' Bee is a space where bees can find much needed shelter. Bees will nest in small tubular holes, such as a block of wood which has been bored into with a driller, or bamboo straws bundled together. These work as a perfect nesting space for solitary bees.

By creating a Bee hotel you'll be helping bees to thrive by providing food, water and nesting space. Make sure to also leave a source of water in the vicinity, especially in the hot summer months.

BED

A bee hotel to provide nesting spaces for many different types of solitary bee.



BREAKFAST

Flowers with nourishing nectar for bees to feast on.



REFRESHMENT

A water source allows honey bees to collect water to cool their hive.

Flowering Plants







































This chart shows when each plant flowers, providing nectar and/or pollen to our bee friends that feed them throughout the year

No Garden? No Problem!

Herbs love pots and containers and can be grown on a sunny windowsill or terrace space.



	SPRING			
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Lavender			✿	✿
Thyme			✿	✿
Sage		✿	✿	✿
Melissa			✿	✿
Marjoram			✿	✿
Mint			✿	✿
Basil				
Fennel			✿	✿
Honeysuckle	✿	✿	✿	✿
Borage	✿	✿	✿	
Poppy	✿	✿	✿	
Sunflower			✿	✿
Daisy	✿	✿		
Red Clover	✿	✿	✿	
Strawberry	✿	✿		
Carrot		✿	✿	
Pumpkin			✿	✿
Celery		✿	✿	✿
Onion		✿	✿	✿
Bay Laurel	✿	✿		
Apple	✿	✿		
Carob				

SUMMER		AUTUMN			WINTER		
Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
							
							
							
							
							
							
							
							
							
							
							
							
							
							
							

Sponsor a Bee Hive



The Maltese honey bee is a sub-species of the honey bee, *Apis Mellifera Ruttneri*, and is endemic to the Maltese Islands. This bee was always found in the wild but has become rarer to spot due to its decline.

Friends of the Earth Malta is currently establishing an apiary to serve as a home for this bee.

Help us help the bees by sponsoring the upkeep of one of our hives through a contribution of €50 per person per year.

In return, you will receive a thank you, with the following:



BeeCause kit



Jar of honey from our apiary (subject to a successful harvest)



Updates from the hives



Invitation to an annual event

**Inspired to do more for
the Maltese bees?**

www.foemalta.org/hives
www.foemalta.org/donate

Friends of the Earth Malta

For more than three decades we've seen that the wellbeing of people and the planet go hand in hand and it's been the inspiration for our campaigns. Together with thousands of people like you we've secured safer food and water, defended wildlife and natural habitats, championed the move to clean energy and acted to keep our climate stable. Be a Friend of the Earth – see things differently.

Come and find out more at www.foemalta.org

Acknowledgment

The content in this book was produced with the support of our partners, Friends of the Earth EWNI (England, Wales and Northern Ireland).

Information about plants and species was attained with the help of Dr Joe Borg and Dr Mario Balzan.

This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union, financed under the School of Sustainability project and co-financed by the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties, and the Malta Community Chest Fund.



FOND
GĦALL-GĦAQDIET
VOLONTARJI

Malta Community Chest Fund



MINISTRY FOR SOCIAL DIALOGUE,
CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

Bees help produce three-quarters of our most vital crops. But they're under threat. This booklet offers a glimpse into their amazing world and suggests what we can all do to help save them.



www.foemalta.org/beecause