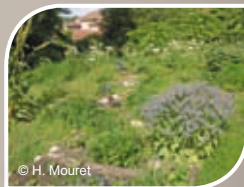


WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP WILD BEES?

- You can take part in the global move towards reducing and ultimately stopping altogether the use of pesticides (herbicides, insecticides, fungicides) and consume more organic products;
- You can mow less often, and let wild plants grow freely in a corner of your garden, to offer room and board to a rich array of wildlife;
- You can also sow a flowering meadow, but be careful to avoid commercial seed mixes that mainly contain exotic and/or horticultural plants, and that are usually unsuitable to feed the pollinators in your garden. When out on a walk, use the opportunity to create your own seed mix by gathering wildflower seeds growing naturally on roadsides or field borders in your local environment;
- To get a closer look at wild bees, you can install bee hotels in your garden, on your balcony, or even on a window ledge, and to do so just use the models provided on the **URBANBEES** website;
- Lavender, rosemary, thyme, sage... all these aromatic plants will adorn your garden and bring new life to your cooking, while their flowers will provide a feast for pollinators.



© H. Mouret



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THE CITY... ...and its bees



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CONTEXT

Global pollinator decline

Scientific studies have revealed a decline in many insect populations in recent years, and in particular among pollinators. This loss could have a severe negative impact on natural ecosystems and agricultural production: over 80 % of wildflower species and 70 % of the crop species grown in Europe depend on insect pollination, mainly by bees*.

There are many causes that can explain this decline, all of which are closely linked to changes in human practices such as:

- > intensive farming with the widespread use of pesticides, the removal of hedgerows, monoculture and the disappearance of grassland;
- > urbanization with the destruction and fragmentation of natural habitats, and the excessive mowing of green spaces and roadsides...



Mining bee
[Andrenidae]

© H. Mouret



Carpenter bee
[Apidae]

© F. Lafond



Leafcutter bee
[Megachilidae]

© J. Gauthier

➤ The loss of agricultural and semi-natural habitats leads to the colonization of new spaces by some animal and plant species. Compared to rural areas, urban and peri-urban areas generally use less pesticides, indeed none at all nowadays in some cities, provide flowers over an extended period throughout the year, and are slightly warmer, meaning that they are able to offer food as well as suitable nesting habitats to pollinators.

* *Apis mellifera*, the honeybee, is only one of 2000 known bee species in Europe. You will be amazed by the diversity of wild bees when you explore their different lifestyles! Visit our website www.urbanbees.eu.



Anthophora bee
[Apidae]

© D. Bourgeois

Gaining a greater understanding of wild bees and helping increase their abundance and diversity

Bee hotels, squares of bare soil, insect spirals and plantings of flower meadows were introduced on 16 sites across the Grand Lyon (in the Rhône-Alpes region of France) to provide favourable nesting sites and food supplies for wild bees. In parallel, a 3-year scientific study was launched to enable us to assess the diversity and abundance of wild bees in different environments (semi-natural, agricultural, urban and peri-urban). Not wholly surprisingly, it is the peri-urban sites that come out on top: lying between the city and the countryside, these spaces gather a rich variety of different environments, which help conserve and enhance wild bee diversity. Some 309 different bee species were identified in **URBANBEES'** sites, which is almost a third of the total number of species in France!



© C. Visage

Raising awareness about wild bees

Special emphasis was placed on creating initiatives designed for training and raising the awareness of a large array of people about wild bees. Educational projects in schools, exhibitions, guided nature tours, conferences, nest building workshops and professional training courses have been organized to enable the general public to discover wild bees: children, politicians, professionals and city dwellers at large.

Disseminating the results of the URBANBEES Program throughout Europe

To help make urban habitats more bee-friendly, **URBANBEES** has developed a management plan, which will be circulated across Europe throughout 2014 and presented in the form of a management guide, conferences, and an international exhibition that will be displayed in cities across Europe (get in touch if you would be interested in hosting it in your city).



© Arthropologia

URBANBEES: PROVIDING A REFUGE FOR BEES IN THE CITY

➤ The LIFE+ Biodiversity* **URBANBEES** program (2010-2014) aims to gain and promote a greater understanding of wild bees, and to disseminate an action plan throughout Europe to boost their numbers and diversity in urban and peri-urban landscapes.

Four years after the project was launched, we can now provide some feedback on the initiatives carried out in the URBANBEES program

*** LIFE is the European Union's financial instrument that supports environmental projects. The LIFE+ Biodiversity projects are funded in part by the European Commission with the goal of helping to reduce the loss of biodiversity across Europe.**

To know more www.urbanbees.eu

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