

Honey Bee Water Station

Our gardens would be unrecognisable without the gentle buzz of the honeybee, yet in recent years bee populations have suffered from the loss of green spaces and need our help.

Honeybees are miniature superheroes. They fly at a speed of 16 miles an hour and beat their wings 230 times a second. There are about 25,000 different species of bee worldwide of which only 7 species are honeybees, and a lot depends on them. The honeybee helps many flowers, fruits and vegetables to grow, so are hugely important.

Honeybees in particular use water in lots of ways in their hives (aside from their own drinking), controlling humidity and keeping honey at the right concentrations, and foraging for water is an important job for worker bees. Large open bodies of water can be a bit tricky for a bee to navigate, so a nice addition to a wildlife space is a Bee bath or water station. This is basically a shallow dish with stones in it, and enough water that the bees can stand on the stones and safely drink. Other insects need water too and will visit - so keep a note of what visitors you get!

This water station won't take very long to make but will help these wonderful creatures to survive.

You will need smooth pebbles, a shallow dish or bowl (made of something durable such as ceramic, glass or terracotta) and fresh water.

Choose a shady and protected spot in your garden or on a balcony and place a plant pot upside down. Place the pot on top and put a few pebbles in the dish. Add just enough water so that the stones are not submerged. Change the water daily and clean the bee bath weekly. You might want to keep it away from a window as it will get pretty busy!

You could decorate the stones if you want - use acrylic paints to make them pretty and inviting by painting flowers on them.

