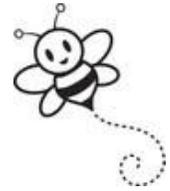


Building a Bee Garden on a Budget: How to Make a Difference without Breaking the Bank



Many of the foods we eat and flowers we enjoy rely on bees for pollination, but these insects are facing alarming population declines due to changes in the ecosystem. As awareness of this issue grows, people are looking for ways to get involved and support the bees. Creating a bee garden is a great way to help, and it doesn't have to cost an arm and a leg to make a difference.

Start slow and focus on what you truly need

As Tenth Acre Farm notes, one of the first steps to creating a bee garden on a limited budget is to start slowly. Don't try to overhaul your whole yard in one season, as this can get costly and overwhelming. Instead, focus on one small area, knowing that you can expand more each year.

While you will have to invest some money in building a pollinator-friendly garden, one easy way to save money is by avoiding pesticide use. The Environmental Protection Agency explains that many experts believe that pesticide use is one of the reasons bee populations are declining, so you can embrace having natural pests in your garden, skip the chemical-laden pesticides, and save a few bucks all at the same time.

Another easy place to save money when you are putting together your bee garden is in the materials you choose. You may be tempted to build beautiful raised beds made of lasting wood choices like redwood or cedar, but you can also put together these beds on a budget by creatively using cinder blocks, concrete, logs, galvanized roofing, or pallets.

Look for economical ways to get your plants

Buying plants for a bee garden can get expensive in a hurry without some budget-conscious planning. For starters, think about whether you want to use seeds or seedlings, details Bee and Bloom. Seeds can be somewhat tricky to get started successfully, but they are more economical to buy than seedlings.

There are some other budget-friendly options for obtaining your initial bee garden plants. Check with friends and neighbors who may be able to give you cuttings from their own plants. Starting from cuttings works for many different perennials, vines, shrubs, and even trees, and others are usually happy to lend a helping hand by sharing from what they've grown.

You can also head to your local farmers market to look at options, as there are usually vendors there ready to provide seedlings at a good price. Another fun option is to look for seed swaps in your area where you can connect with other gardeners and utilize what they've saved from their own gardens.

Get creative in finding cheap resources for materials

There are other materials you will need for a bee garden, and many of these can also be acquired on a budget. Look on sites like Craigslist in their free or barter section for tools, compost, pots, or plants, and check with local tree-cutting companies to see if they have any mulch they're giving away. Don't forget to keep an eye out for garage sales, flea markets, or even areas in your own home that might have gardening supplies or items you can repurpose to fit your needs.

Helping the bees recover from recent population declines doesn't have to be an expensive effort. Creating a bee garden is an easy way for an individual to have an impact and a lot of this can be done economically. Get creative in finding and repurposing items to use in your garden and look for ways to get seeds or seedlings cheaply. Start small and know that every little bit makes a difference when it comes to helping the bees via your gardening efforts.

Christy Erickson
savingourbees.org
info@savingourbees.org