



Washington State Department of Agriculture

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Gardening? Quick tips to keep bees buzzing in your garden

OLYMPIA – The [Washington State Department of Agriculture](#) (WSDA) has developed a new pamphlet meant to help guide home gardeners on the ways to protect bees and other pollinating insects from the possible effects of certain pesticides.

The guide, "[10 Ways to Protect Bees from Pesticides](#)," offers information on pesticide use and bees, web sites with information on the topic, and tips to reduce the risk to bees.

One tip is to avoid applying pesticides to plants when they are in bloom, since this is when bees are most likely to visit the plants. Another tip urges home users to read pesticide labels closely and look for specific instructions regarding the protection of bees and pollinators.

"There has been a growing concern about the health of bees and other pollinators in Washington and across the country," WSDA Director Bud Hover said. "Our agriculture community and our environment need these pollinators, and sharing information like this is one way we can help more people do their part to protect our bees."

In addition to making honey, bees pollinate a variety of fruit and vegetable crops. It is estimated that the value of the crops pollinated by bees in Washington state was more than \$2.75 billion in 2011. While no large bee deaths have been reported in Washington in recent years, there has been a general decline in the state's bee population and significant bee death incidents elsewhere.

According to pollinator experts, the possible reasons for the decline of honey bee colonies may include parasites, disease, genetics, poor nutrition and pesticides. In mid-August, the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#) (EPA) announced new pesticide labels that prohibit the use of some neonicotinoid pesticides where bees are present.

WSDA has posted the pamphlet on its website and has advised retail associations that it is available so they can share the information with homeowners purchasing pesticides in local businesses.

For more information or copies of the pamphlet, email pestreg@agr.wa.gov or call 360-902-2078.

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