**ENCOURAGING BIRDS, BEES AND BUTTTERFLIES**

1. **BIRDS**

Planting the right plants can attract anything from 50 to 100 species of birds to your garden. Birds like eating nectar, berries, fruits and seeds, so planting plenty of these delicacies, is the way to go. A bird feeder providing a variety of seeds is a sure way to attract some avian friends too, especially in winter when food is scarcer.

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| **NECTAR PLANTS** | **BERRIES, FRUITS & SEEDS** |
| AloesCape HoneysuckleEricasWild Fuchsia & Tree FuschiaRed Hot PokersStrelitziasWatsoniasPincushion | Strawberry TreeTortoise BerryWhite StinkwoodHawthornKei AppleLoquatWild FigsCherry GuavaElderberryPepper Trees | Wild oliveCosmosGrassesMarigoldsSunflowersAcaciaCassiasWild PlumWild PeachCape LilacTamarisk |

**Nesting material:**

Some bigger trees in your garden will give birds a safe spot to build their homes. You can provide nesting materials by:

* Leaving twigs that fall from bushes on the ground
* Growing plants with fluffy, soft, silky seeds for lining nests, such as wild rosemary
* A little patch of mud will encourage birds such as swallows and swifts who build their nests from mud
* Leave longish pieces of dried grass in a little accessible spot when you trim longer grass
* A shady area in your garden could provide some soft moss
* Provide an enticement by putting up a birdhouse at a height that is safe from predators, in a spot that isn’t too exposed to the elements.

### Water:

Birds are great bathers, so a range of different shapes and sizes of bird baths for them to ruffle about in, will definitely go down well, in addition to giving them a supply of water. All sorts of pots and pans can be used for this purpose – up-cycling and re-cycling!

### BUTTERFLIES

A biodiverse garden will also attract insects. Butterflies and moths start off as caterpillars, so encouraging these fluttering beauties in their earlier worm-like form will create a juicy supply for our avian feasters. They will also make sure they don’t get out of hand. The ones that survive will soon be fluttering around as a further food source for birds, frogs and lizards.

If you want the privilege of butterflies in your garden, you’ll need to make peace with a few munching caterpillars. Look at them in a different light – they provide food for things like frogs, birds, lizards, spiders and praying mantis’ and they really only make temporary, repairable inroads into your foliage. To encourage butterflies in your garden means you have to allow for the larval stage too.

Go lightly on pesticide and only use them when really necessary, to give caterpillars a fighting chance – they are already pitted against plenty of natural predators if you are creating a diverse ecosystem on your garden. Toxic pesticides can also get into the plant nectar that adult butterflies drink.

The female butterfly lays her eggs on a host plant and this plant will be the first thing the little caterpillars munch their way through to grow up to be a beautiful butterfly. You need the right kind of indigenous host plants to start the transformation from larvae to butterfly.

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| **HOST PLANTS & TREES FOR BUTTERFLY LAVAE & EGGS** | **PLANT & TREES TO ATTRACT BUTTERFLIES** |
| White IronwoodHorsewoodOrange & Lemon TreesButter CassiaWild PeachFlowering SalviasGazaniasGeraniumsAsystasiaSmall Honeysuckle TreeMackaya BellaMona LavenderTrailing DaisiesCape Forget-Me-NotSetaria Megaphylla GrassIndigenous JasminesWild Mint | LucerneDaisiesImpatiensMarigoldsAlyssumGazaniaLobeliaVernoniasLavendersMintSacred BasilSalvia SagesRosemaryHibiscusImpatiensRibbon Flower | Rice FlowerStar FlowerVerbenaZinniasButterfly BushFlowering AcaciaBottle BrushPuzzle BushCape PlumbagoSweet ThornWhite Ironwood TreeWild PeachCape HoneysuckleFoxglovePride of the Cape |

### Adult butterfly food

Butterflies like colours ranging from blue to mauve, red, pink or white when it comes to flowers. Some butterflies like rotting fruit such as bananas or pineapple. Leave some fruit from your fruit trees to rot on the ground as food. They like to get some minerals in from pockets of mud too, so a little mud puddle or two is appreciated.

### Some more butterfly tips:

* Butterflies are coldblooded and like the odd spot where they can sun themselves
* Butterflies are paper-light in winds and breezes, a calm wind and breeze-free area will give them a chance to rest
* If you are one to love the nocturnal version of the butterfly, the mysterious moth, plant some night blooming flowers such as jasmine.

## BEES

Bees are such a precious part of our eco system and there has been some concern about their wellbeing over the last few years. It is thought that certain pesticides and mass monoculture farming are playing a key role in weakening their immune systems, causing colony collapse and declining numbers. Loss of habitat and urbanization are also taking their toll. This problem is far more severe in the industrialised northern hemisphere, but is gaining ground in South Africa too.

By making your garden a biodiverse haven, play your part in keeping the bees thriving as an indispensable part of our ecosystem.

It’s important to make sure that you are not using nasty pesticides in your garden that are known to contain bee-harming chemicals such as neonicotinoids. Read your labels. They usually contain acetamiprid, clothianidin, imidacloprid, and/or thiamethoxam as active ingredients.

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| **PLANTS THAT ATTRACT THE BEES** |
| BlombosSeptember BushCape MayWhite AlyssumLavenderFruit Tree BlossomsAgapanthusAnisodonteasButterfly BushesBottle BrushBasil | GeraniumsRosemaryLinariaBlanketFflowersSageScabiosa SpeciesSunflowersThymeCosmosThymeOriganum | CalendulaPrimulasBorageBee balmVygiesSweet thornKareeBush willowsWeeping wattleFuschias |

**Some more bee-loving tips:**

* They are especially attracted to purple, violet, blue, blue-green, yellow, ultraviolet and white flowers and prefer scented flowers.
* Plant flowers that bloom at different times of the year to keep the bees well fed year-round.
* Leave some wild meadow-like areas, bees like natural wildness. If you have a lawn, let some wild clover grow on it.
* Some bees live in the earth so they’ll appreciate a little mud to go round.
* A bee bath needs to be shallower than a bird bath – a shallow tray-like bath of water is what they need.
* Provide shelter with rotting vegetation and tree stumps. You can install bee shelters and hives too.

## TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!