After planting, keep plants and flowers healthy though proper watering and nutrition. Choose the gentlest options for managing pests, and watch labels carefully for guidance on protecting pollinators. Consult your garden center, nursery, or greenhouse for expert advice.

A water feature can be a beautiful addition to your garden, providing bees with a clean, year-round water source. For bees, a little bit of water goes a long way.

If you’re looking for the most up-to-date, accurate information, please visit www.growwise.org
**The Buzz About Bee Health**

There is no question that horticulture is beneficial to bees and pollinators. After all, the best way to support bees is to plant healthy and bee-friendly plants. Professional growers of tree, plants, and flowers provide the very thing pollinators need to thrive: diverse and ample sources of forage. Although the improper use of many pesticides can harm bees, a growing number of highly credible independent studies indicate that pesticides, when used properly, are not the cause of widespread bee health issues.

In fact, the USDA’s 2013 report on bee health listed pesticides near the bottom of a long list of factors impacting bee health. In addition, recent reports from the Australian Government’s Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority, which is the equivalent of the US EPA, support the conclusions of the USDA. This respected organization cited that even though neonicotinoids are used in Australia, they have not experienced the same bee health issues seen in both the US and Europe.

**Big Impact on Plant Health. Low Impact on the Environment.**

Some consumers wonder if a particular class of pesticides known as neonicotinoids kills bees. Although the improper use of any pesticide, including neonicotinoids, can harm bees, horticulture professionals use them in controlled, appropriate, specific, and responsible ways. Neonicotinoids have a big impact on plant health and a low impact on the environment.

Pesticides are used as part of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs, which put focus first on preventative cultural practices, the use of beneficial insects (such as ladybugs and ground beetles), thorough and frequent inspection for signs of plant pests and diseases, and, finally, judicious use of pesticides.

Why are neonicotinoids an important tool? When applied in compliance with EPA-approved labels, neonicotinoids are a safer alternative for consumers, professional applicators, and the environment than older, broad-spectrum pesticides. They require fewer applications than other products. They have been studied extensively and found to be useful yet low in toxicity, which is why they are commonly used in and around homes and on pets.

Without these products, trees and even entire forests could be devastated by the emerald ash borer, Asian longhorned beetle, hemlock woolly adelgid, and other invasive pests. Neonicotinoids work very well in fending off the invasive and often chemically-resistant whitefly species as well as the Asian citrus psyllid, which spreads a bacterial disease that wipes out orange trees. When used properly, pesticides like neonicotinoids contribute to establishment and maintenance of healthy and diverse plants and landscapes.

**Stay Informed. Share Information.**

Ask your local garden center, nursery, or greenhouse to help you find the best bee-friendly plants to grow, as well as how to care for them with the right products and practices. By keeping informed of the best growing practices for your garden, and sharing information with family, friends, neighbors, and homeowner associations, you can continue to be a part of the solution. Your hard work will make something beautiful for you to enjoy, increase your home’s value, and contribute to a better environment for future generations.

Keep growing healthy bee habitats. One plant at a time. Our bees will thank you, our nourished bodies will thank you, and our planet will thank you.