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Learn beekeeping for bee-ginners with Lettuce Grow

What's all the buzz about bees?

"Bee kind to pollinators, and they'll be kind to your garden," says Kira DeSorcy, Lettuce Grow lead instructor.

Whether you're interested in some backyard hives, or have barnyard dreams of beekeeping, join Mikel Vossen at North Island College's Courtenay campus for Beekeeping for Bee-ginners on Saturday, Apr. 13 from 1 to 3 p.m.

Topics at this Lettuce Grow workshop include: the how-to on hive equipment, styles, and frame and hive building, as well as bee biology, purchasing bees, pest control, honey extraction, and more! For more information, or to register, visit <http://www.nic.bc.ca/continuingeducation/> or call Julia Peters at 250-923-9724.

"If the bee disappeared off the surface of the globe, man would have only four years to live," said Albert Einstein. Bees are losing habitat rapidly, and people can help by planting bee-friendly flowers and flowering herbs in local gardens, avoiding chemicals and pesticides, putting our chemical-free water (even a small basin) in our yards, and protecting native landscapes.

"Even something that seems like a small contribution, a simple organic herb garden, flower patch, or a space left wild, can provide valuable pollinator habitat," DeSorcy explains. *"Each bee species has a different tongue length, so a variety of flower shapes support bee diversity. And remember to think about flowering times throughout the seasons to provide a consistent source of food for them."*

Spring flowers that are best for local bees include lilacs, penstemon, lavender, sage, verbena, and wisteria. For summer, you could plant mint, cosmos, squash, tomatoes, pumpkins, sunflowers, oregano, rosemary, poppies, black-eyed Susan, passion flower vine and honeysuckle. Autumn suggestions include fuschia, mint, bush sunflower, sage, and verbena.

"By providing proper habitat for these beneficial pollinators, you can triple the yield of fruit and veggies in your garden. No more lumpy strawberries or shrunken squash!" DeSorcy says. *"Remember that bees don't sting if you don't threaten them. And creating hospitable homes for beneficial insects in your garden means they are less likely to move into your house!"*

Sign up for Lettuce Grow's Beekeeping for Bee-ginners and learn how you can raise your own bees with the added bonus of honey!

Like this article? What to hear more? Is there a workshop you would like us to organize? Write us your questions and requests to growlocal@campbellriver.ca.

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Photo: *Daniel Ludwig AKA Big D of Big D's Bees with one of his hives*