

PHOTO BY DEBBIE ROOS

the importance of bee-ing

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- ☉ **K**now what kind of grass you have. Care differs by type!
- ☉ **A**pply only the amount and kind of fertilizer you need, if any.
- ☉ **N**ever apply fertilizer before a heavy rain. It will run off.
- ☉ **C**reate a **no-mow, no-fertilizer** zone (buffer) along ditches and streams. This is important to slow and filter runoff before it reaches our waterways.

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# 'Beeing' in the garden this spring

Plan your garden with the bees in mind (How I got hooked!)

BY KEN MOORE ❀ PHOTOS BY DEBBIE ROOS



Honey bee on Veronica

When my wife enrolled me in the recent Chatham County Center, North Carolina Cooperative Extension/Chatham County Beekeepers' Association's eight-week beekeeping school, I unenthusiastically consented, declaring, "How in the world can it take eight weeks to learn beekeeping?"

Wow; eight weeks is not enough, and my appreciation of bees is now a continuing, learning pursuit.

Beekeeping, referring to non-native honey bees, is totally engaging. As a community of thousands of individuals, honey bees are way more civilized and successful at managing themselves than are we humans. I look forward to having a few hives in our wild yard before too long.

## HONEY BEES AND NATIVE BEES: A FEW FACTS

Non-native honey bees from Europe, Asia and Africa are important as major pollinators of food crops and they produce that honey we all love!

Think tulip poplar and sourwood trees; if these two native trees are not common in your neighborhood, plant some!

Many of us don't know that there are more than 4,000 other species of bees that are native to the U.S.

Like non-native honey bees, native bees are effective pollinators, plus they are more active in cool, wet weather.

Native bees are more efficient at pollinating some crops.

Native bees buffer against losses in honey bee colonies.

Native bee activity improves the efficiency of honey bees in some crops.

So be kind to all bees!

## PLANNING YOUR BEE GARDEN

You need sunlight.

Include a diversity of species, planting groups of plants rather than single individuals.

Plant to have flowering during the entire growing season.

Avoid invasive exotic plants.

Choose natives, because they are beautiful and attract all the bees as well as other beautiful pollinators like butterflies and hummingbirds and they are in tune with the nature of where we live.

Don't use pesticides and herbicides. These agents are harmful to bees and other pollinators (and humans).

Most importantly, move slowly and gently through your garden; all the bees and other pollinators out there are trying to avoid humans in their foraging for pollen and nectar.



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Sweat bee on *Echinacea*



Honey bee on *Rubus*



Bumble bee on *Hypericum*



Carpenter bee on *Passion Flower*

## THE PLANTS

Chatham County Cooperative Extension agent Debbie Roos has an excellent bee plant list. (See "Local resources" at end of column) Most of the recommended plants are natives or non-invasive exotics. The list includes trees, shrubs, perennials, traditional herbs (great bee plants), some annuals and a few vines.

Debbie recommends plants that are easy to grow, drought tolerant, support pollinators of every description, and are just downright beautiful. Some of my favorites from her list, progressing from spring through fall, are: naturalized mustard greens, *Brassica* spp., henbits, *Lamium*

*amplexicaule* and *L. purpureum*, speedwells, *Veronica* spp. redbud, *Cercis canadensis*, black cherry, *Prunus serotina*, evening primrose (sundrops), *Oenothera fruticosa*, wild blackberries, *Rubus* spp., black-eyed susans, *Rudbeckia* spp., several St. John's worts, *Hypericum* spp., any and all golden-rods, *Solidago* spp., blazing star, *Liatris* spp., any and all asters, *Aster* spp., sunflowers, *Helianthus* spp., ironweed, *Vernonia novaboracensis*, and the "never-know-where-it's-going-to-emerge-next" perennial vine, passion-flower, *Passiflora incarnata*.

So get out there and enjoy your garden, knowing that it's not just about the flowers!

## LOCAL RESOURCES

We have great resources with the Orange County Beekeepers' Association ([theocba.org](http://theocba.org)) and Chatham County Beekeepers' Association ([chathambeekeepers.org](http://chathambeekeepers.org)). In addition, check out growingsmallfarms.org and go to "Pollinator Conservation." There you'll find Debbie Roos' extensive list, "Native Plants for Bee Forage." Search around on that site and you'll find lots more valuable information.

I give special thanks to Debbie who got me hooked on bees and whose beautiful photographs encourage us all to plant for the bees!

## ONLINE RESOURCES

### NORTH CAROLINA BOTANICAL GARDEN

[www.ncbg.unc.edu/](http://www.ncbg.unc.edu/)

### NORTH CAROLINA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

[www.ncwildflower.org/](http://www.ncwildflower.org/)

### NORTH CAROLINA HERBARIUM

[www.herbarium.unc.edu](http://www.herbarium.unc.edu)

### NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE/ ORANGE COUNTY

[orange.ces.ncsu.edu/](http://orange.ces.ncsu.edu/)

### NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE/ CHATHAM COUNTY

[chatham.ces.ncsu.edu/index.php](http://chatham.ces.ncsu.edu/index.php)

### ORANGE COUNTY'S FARM WEBSITE

[orangecountyfarms.org/](http://orangecountyfarms.org/)

### CAROLINA FARM STEWARDSHIP ASSOCIATION

[carolinafarmstewards.org/](http://carolinafarmstewards.org/)

### CARRBORO FARMERS' MARKET

[carrborofarmersmarket.com](http://carrborofarmersmarket.com)

### ORANGE COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

[www.co.orange.nc.us/Master-Gardener](http://www.co.orange.nc.us/Master-Gardener)

### GROWING SMALL FARMS

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## FARMERS' MARKETS

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301 W. Main St., Carrboro  
280-3326  
carrborofarmersmarket.com

Saturdays, 7 a.m. to noon  
Wednesdays 3:30 to 6:30 p.m.  
(Wednesday market starts in April)

Fresh, naturally grown produce, prepared foods, flowers and crafts sold by the original producers.

### FEARRINGTON FARMERS' MARKET

Next to 2000 Fearington Village Cntr  
www.fearington.com/village/farmersmarket.asp

Tuesdays, at 4 p.m. (opens April 7)

Organic fruits and vegetables, fresh flowers, herbs and more from local farms.

### HILLSBOROUGH FARMERS' MARKET

Home Depot Parking Lot  
hillboroughfarmersmarket.org

Saturdays, 10 a.m.-noon  
Seasonal fruits and vegetables, jams and jellies, fresh baked goods, local crafts, nursery plants, artisan cheeses and much more.

### ENO RIVER FARMERS' MARKET

Public Market House  
120 East Margaret Lane

Saturdays, April-November 8 a.m.-noon;  
December-March: first and third Saturdays from 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Fresh, naturally grown produce, prepared foods.

### PITTSBORO FARMERS' MARKET

Chatham County Fair Grounds  
Pittsboro 542-8202  
<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/chatham/ag/SustAg/pittsboro.html>

Thursdays, 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. (opens April 3)

Locally grown fruits and vegetables, flowers, herbs, meats, canned goods and more.

### SOUTH ESTES FARMERS' MARKET

201 South Estes Dr.

Chapel Hill, in front of A Southern Season in the University Mall parking lot

Saturday, April-November: 8 a.m.-noon  
December-March: 9 a.m.-noon the first and third Saturdays inside University Mall

Fresh, naturally grown produce, prepared foods.

Carrboro Farmer's Market



### SOUTHERN VILLAGE FARMERS' MARKET

Market Street, Chapel Hill  
280-3326  
southernvillagefarmersmarket.com/

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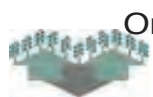
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- \* Creative Journaling, Using Nature’s Transitions (3/22)
- \* The Evolution of Charles Darwin (3/29)
- \* Spring Wildflower Digital Photography (beg. 4/15)
- \* Bluets--Preschoolers Exploring Nature (beg. 4/15)
- \* N.C. Plants that Trap Insects (4/26) . . . and much more . . .

(all programs require pre-registration: call 962-0522)

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