

Celebrate Oregon Native Bee Conservation Awareness Day August 15, 2015



Fun Native Bee Facts

- Most native bees are solitary. If the mother bumble bee is poisoned and does not return to her nest, all her offspring and future generations perish. The survival of each native bee is essential to ecosystem biodiversity.
- Oregon has native bees that nest in coastal dunes, such as the silver bee (*Habropoda miserabilis*)
- Some native bees make their nests out of flower petals, mud and leaves are some other ingredients
- The native berry bee (*Osmia aglaia*) is managed for raspberry pollination and can increase the size of raspberry size by 30%
- Native bees in Oregon pollinate crops and wild plants that honey bees cannot pollinate, do not pollinate, or poorly pollinate
- Honey bees pollinate better when native bees are present
- Alkali bee (*Nomia melanderi*) has been studied since the 1950s by Oregon State University (OSU) and is a managed pollinator of alfalfa
- Female mason bees (e.g. *Osmia lignaria*), leaf-cutter bees, and wool-carder bees all carry pollen on the bottom of their abdomen; these bees have been called “jelly-belly bees”, as the pollen can color their bellies a variety of colors.

Not So Fun Native Bee Facts

- The Western bumble bee (*Bombus occidentalis*) was once the most common bumble bee in the Pacific Northwest, now it is rarely seen
- Franklin’s bumble bee (*Bombus franklinii*), a bumble bee endemic to the Klamath mountains of Oregon and California, appears to have recently become extinct.
- The toxicity of pesticides is not the same for native bees as it is for honey bees and negatively impacts some native bees much worse than honey bees.