

FIVE STEP GUIDE TO BEE FRIENDLY FARMING



change **X**

WELCOME

“Welcome to the ChangeX Bee Friendly Farming guide! We’re thrilled you’re thinking about becoming a Bee Friendly Farm, as it’s so beneficial to farmers, beekeepers, and all those that enjoy the bountiful foods that bees and other pollinators support!

Here you’ll find all the information, practical tips, and resources you need. There is someone to help you at each stage of the journey so don’t be afraid to get in touch!”

**Kelly Rourke
Pollinator Partnership**



Introduction to the Idea

What is Bee Friendly Farming?

Bee Friendly Farming (BFF) is a program that provides guidelines for farmers and growers interested in promoting pollinator health on their lands, while fostering awareness and support for native pollinators. As a good steward for sustainable agricultural practices, you should be recognized for your efforts and have the tools to continue your work, influencing others to follow your example. The Bee Friendly Farming (BFF) program works with farmers and beekeepers to improve the health of honey bees. When you certify your farm, ranch, orchard, or vineyard with the BFF program, you receive recognition and consumer support. Commercial beekeepers also benefit from bee-friendly plantings on fallow lands, which allow them to avoid trucking bees long distances in search of pasture. Farmers need to meet a number of criteria to become Bee Friendly Certified. A free planting guide specific to your ecoregion will provide guidance on how to reach these criteria.

There are currently 750 accredited members of Bee Friendly Farming across North America and the rest of the world and

the goal is to reach 2,000 members over the coming two years. Any farm can work towards accreditation no matter what size, from small “farm to farmers market” sized farms to large industrial farms. Farms can be urban or rural.

Once qualified, your farm location is pinned on the BFF map, and you are then able to use the BFF logo to indicate that your products or services are produced on lands that promote pollinator health. The BFF program offers signs, stickers and bookmarks to help raise public awareness and promote your bee-friendly efforts.

Why is it important?

Pollinators are an indispensable natural resource in agriculture and healthy ecosystems. Unfortunately, most agricultural landscapes do not provide sufficient or balanced pollinator habitat. Intensive cultivation has eliminated plants that pollinators need. Farmers and beekeepers play a key role in the health and survival of pollinators. Sustainable farming promotes healthy populations of bees, native pollinators, and other beneficial insects. It really is a win-win!

STARTING BEE FRIENDLY FARMING

EVERYTHING YOU NEED

TIME



The time needed will depend on the size of your farm and how many actions need to be taken to meet the criteria, but an average would be 6 hours per week.

PEOPLE



You'll need a team of approx. 5 people to help you start Bee Friendly Farming. Spreading the word helps encourage new farms to start.

FUNDING



Funding is needed for seeds, plants, tools, machinery, meeting costs and water costs.

Who typically starts a Bee Friendly Farming?

Someone who:

- is a farmer or works on a farm
- is passionate about supporting pollinators
- enjoys bringing people in the community together

5 Step Summary

- 1 Complete the 30 Day Challenge
- 2 Get to know the criteria
- 3 Start taking action on your farm
- 4 Get certified
- 5 Spread the bee friendly love!

Support and Additional Resources

Support from ChangeX: Call us at 612-232-6626. Email: hello@changex.org

Support from Pollinator Partnership: Call on: 415-362-1137 Email: info@pollinator.org

STEP 1: COMPLETE YOUR 30 DAY CHALLENGE



The 30 Day Jumpstart Challenge has been designed to get your project off to the strongest possible start by building momentum in the first month. Once you have completed your challenge your first funding payment will be unlocked.

- Learn more about the idea you're starting**
This '5 Step Guide' includes all you need to know about the specifics of starting your project.
- Schedule a Call**
Pick a time that works for you to talk to a ChangeX team member about what's involved in your chosen project as well as to ensure that you understand the Guidelines & rules associated with the Challenge.
- Find 5 interested people**
You already have your own project page on changex.org. Use the site to share the project with others and recruit neighbors, friends, or other folks with an interest to be your first supporters.
- Set up a casual kick-off meeting**
Host a meeting with your team at your home, at a community center or in a coffee shop and come up with an action plan. You can use your page on changex.org to set up an event and invite people.
- Share a team photo and your plan of action**
Upload a team photo taken at your first team meeting to changex.org. In addition, provide us with a narrative on what you will spend the funding on, what your next steps as a group will be, and how you hope the project will ultimately benefit your community.

STEP 2: GET TO KNOW THE CRITERIA

Once you have decided to become a Bee Friendly Farm, and you have your organizing team together, it's time to look at the criteria and work out how your farm and farming practices measure against them. Some farms will already be meeting the criteria and some will have some work to do to get there.



THE CRITERIA

1. Offer forage providing good nutrition for bees on 3-6% of land.
2. Plant continuous bloom of different flowering plants throughout the growing season, especially in early spring and late autumn in temperate regions.
3. Offer clean water for bees.
4. Provide a variety of habitat for nesting through features such as hedgerows, natural brush, or bufferstrips.
5. Practice Integrated Pest Management (IPM); reduce or eliminate the use of chemicals.
6. Pay the annual \$45 certification fee

STEP 3: START TAKING ACTION ON YOUR FARM

If there are elements you need to make improvements on to meet the criteria, Pollinator Partnership have made detailed region-specific ecoregional guides that will help you to identify native pollinators and suggest actions you can take to support them. All you need to do is just enter your zip or post code here: <https://www.pollinator.org/guides> to download the ecoregional guide that's relevant to your Pollinator habitat, or else you can find them on the resources page on ChangeX.org.

Depending on the size of your farm, and therefore what size the pollinator friendly area needs to be (3-6% of total), these actions can take anywhere from a few weeks to a couple of years to implement.

You can use the funding you receive from ChangeX to fund this implementation stage and you can reach out to Pollinator Partnership or ChangeX with any queries you might have about native species, pesticides, which type of plants to plant, or anything at all!

GENERAL TIPS!

- Select low maintenance plants, especially drought tolerant natives, and avoid invasive species
- Set mower height to allow for bee food plants, such as clover and dandelions
- Apply all insecticides and fungicides after sundown when pollinators are less active, and avoid spraying during bloom
- Check all pesticide labels for toxicity to bees and eliminate chemicals with extended residual toxicity
- Leave some areas mulch-free, wild, and undisturbed to provide habitat for ground nesting bees

Support

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STEP 4: GET CERTIFIED

Once you believe you have achieved all the criteria it's time to get accredited by the Bee Friendly Farming team at Pollinator Partnership! As a good steward for sustainable agricultural practices, you should be recognized for your efforts and have the tools to continue your work, influencing others to follow your example. This certification will help you to receive this recognition and consumer support.

Sign up here: <https://www.pollinator.org/bff/get-certified> and your farm will be reviewed. To get accredited you need to pay an annual membership fee of \$45. This fee goes towards cost-share efforts by growers to plant additional bee forage.



STEP 5: SPREAD THE BEE FRIENDLY LOVE!

Once qualified, your location is pinned on the Bee Friendly Farming map and you are then able to use the BFF logo to indicate that your products or services are produced on lands that promote pollinator health. The BFF program offers signs, stickers and bookmarks to help raise awareness and promote your bee-friendly efforts. Once certified, visit BFF <https://www.pollinator.org/bff/store> to get your BFF materials!



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