XERCES SOCIETY
for Invertebrate Conservation

Bumble Bee Conservation

Spring – Early Summer

Include early-blooming plants and maintain a diversity of flowers in your landscape.

To protect overwintering queens, avoid early raking or mowing. Raking is best done in April and May.

To provide secure nesting sites, keep large patches of land unmowed and untilled. Healthy ground-nesting mammal populations help create future nesting sites.

Because queens are still foraging and colonies are usually very small, avoid the use of pesticides.

Summer – Fall

Include mid- and late-blooming plants such as goldenrod, milkweed, and aster in your landscape.

Leave leaf litter, downed wood, and uncut bunch grasses to serve as potential overwintering sites.

As colonies are producing new queens at this time of year, avoid using pesticides. If pesticides are necessary, choose products that are less harmful to bumble bees, and do not use them at times when bees are active or when plants are flowering.

Winter

Late fall and winter are the best times for mowing. Cut with the mower deck at the highest safe level to avoid disturbing overwintering queens.

To protect overwintering queens, continue to leave large sections of untilled ground.

Small, controlled burns are okay, but burn less than 1/3 of available land annually, and leave unburned patches as a refuge for animals.

If needed, this is the best time to use a targeted herbicide treatment for invasive species.

Extracted from *Bumble Bee Conservation: A Guide to Protecting Our Vital Pollinators* © 2012 The Xerces Society

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For more information about protecting bumble bees and other pollinators, visit xerces.org