

A 'Bee-friendly' Guide to Help Save The Honey Bees

Inspired By Winnie-the-Pooh and Friends



Created by
the British Beekeepers Association and Egmont Publishing



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Step inside this ‘bee-friendly’ guide inspired by Winnie-the-Pooh and all his friends. Created by the British Beekeepers Association in partnership with Egmont Publishing, this guide sees the loveable bear embark on a new adventure, which starts at the bottom of his honey pot.

Read on to see how Winnie-the-Pooh, with the help of Christopher Robin and his friends, sets out to bring the honey bees back to the Hundred Acre Wood...

During their journey, you can learn about the simple steps you and your family can take to help keep the bees buzzing. Whether it’s planting a window box full of flowers or herbs, starting your own vegetable patch or volunteering with your local beekeepers association, there are plenty of ways to get outdoors and involved in supporting the humble British honey bee.





Winnie-the-Pooh and the Missing Bees

One morning, Winnie-the-Pooh was opening his last jar of honey for (a very small) breakfast, when he had a visit from Piglet.

‘Good morning, Piglet,’ said Pooh, pulling out a chair for Piglet to sit on.



‘Hallo, Pooh,’ said Piglet. ‘Shall we take a walk this morning?’

‘Well, Piglet,’ said Pooh, thinking carefully, as Piglet had sat down and he felt he ought to offer someone sitting down a little something as that made them a guest, even if Piglet did only eat haycorns. ‘I was going to offer you a little something but there’s not much honey left.’

‘Oh, that’s alright, Pooh,’ said Piglet. Then he added hurriedly, ‘Do you think you might have eaten too much of it?’

For Piglet knew that bears like Pooh could eat rather a lot of honey, sometimes even in one go, but it seemed a little rude to say so.

Pooh shook his head solemnly, ‘I have been very careful with it, Piglet, as there hasn’t been much honey lately. But you can only be careful for so long before you run out altogether.’

‘Ah,’ said Piglet delicately. And then, after Pooh looked longingly at the empty larder, he said, ‘Perhaps we should go and visit the honey bees then, Pooh?’

‘My thinking exactly, Piglet,’ agreed Pooh admiringly.

So off they went through the forest, past the Six Pine Trees, stopping every now and then to say hello to one or other of Rabbit’s relations (they weren’t sure which), when they came to the honey bees’ usual place.

Except when they got to the usual place, there were no honey bees to be found. Pooh and Piglet walked all the way round it and then they walked a bit further, and then they walked a little more.

Then Pooh tried a hum as he thought that bees liked to hear hums and then they stopped to listen for buzzing and hunnying.





‘There aren’t any honey bees here,’ called Eeyore, who was standing not far off, slowly chewing on a thistle.

Piglet jumped a little, ‘Why, hello, Eeyore.’

‘Do you know where the bees could be?’ said Pooh. ‘Hallo, Eeyore,’ he added quickly.

‘I saw one near here yesterday,’ said Eeyore. ‘It buzzed this way,’ he pointed with one ear, ‘then that way,’ he pointed with the other.

‘And where did it go exactly?’ said Pooh, who was now beginning to get a rumbly feeling in his tummy.

‘I couldn’t say either way,’ said Eeyore. ‘It started raining.’

‘These honey bees usually buzz about together,’ said Pooh. ‘They’re the friendly sort.’

Pooh sat down and scratched his head. Piglet helpfully sat beside him. Eeyore continued to munch on his thistles.

And later, when Christopher Robin walked by, that is just how he found them.

‘Hallo, everyone,’ said Christopher Robin. ‘Are you waiting for something?’

‘We’re looking for the honey bees,’ said Pooh.

‘But they seem to have gone,’ said Piglet.

‘I saw one yesterday,’ added Eeyore.

‘But if there aren’t lots of bees then there won’t be any honey,’ Pooh finished.

Christopher Robin looked around. They were in a grassy, empty sort of place on the edge of the forest. ‘There aren’t any flowers here anymore.’

Pooh wasn’t sure why flowers were important, but he was a bear of very little brain, so he waited patiently for Christopher Robin to continue.

‘Honey bees like flowers and trees with blossoms ... and vegetables too,’ explained Christopher Robin. ‘So they must have gone to live near those.’

‘VegeTables,’ said Pooh. He thought for a moment. ‘So if we give the bees a VegeTable, will they come back?’

Christopher Robin laughed, ‘Oh Bear! We need to plant the vegetables first. Things like tomatoes and runner beans.’

So Christopher Robin gathered everyone together: Pooh, Piglet, Eeyore, Owl, Kanga, Roo, Tigger, Rabbit and all his friends and relations, and he explained what an important thing it was that they needed to do.

They got to work, digging little holes for flower bulbs and scattering seeds. And, in a little corner with plenty of sunshine, they planted vegetables. When they were finished, Pooh felt proud of all his friends for working together and (with the exception of Eeyore), not grumbling too much.



And sure enough, after some time, the Hundred Acre Wood hummed with the sound of happy honey bees buzzing about the flowers and plants.

‘I’m very glad the honey bees have come back,’ said Pooh, licking the last drops from his jar. ‘It’s just about time for a little smackerel of something.’



Top Ten Activities for Families to Help the Honey Bees

Like all the creatures living in the Hundred Acre Wood, there are many things that you can do together in the great outdoors, the garden or even your own kitchen to help the honey bees.

To provide you with some inspiration, the British Beekeepers Association (BBKA) has compiled the following top ten activities for families. All of these are illustrated with unique pictures of the famous bear and his friends visiting areas in England where the honey bees most need help.



Plant your own window box

Planting a window box is the perfect way to help provide much needed food (forage) for honey bees, no matter how much outdoor space you have.

Firstly, choose what type of window box you'd like to create for the honey bees – it could be a pretty floral display or a fresh herb box for your kitchen windowsill.

If you decide on a floral display, try to layer both spring and summer flowering bulbs or perennials to ensure you have a bright windowsill that keeps the honey bees happy all year round. Good flowering plants to consider include cyclamens, crocuses, tulips, violets, poppies, fuschias, geraniums and lavender.

When it comes to tasty herb boxes, it's best to choose plants such as rosemary, thyme, chives, oregano, marjoram and sage, allowing them all to flower. Mint can be a little strong smelling for honey bees, so it's best to plant it separately. Don't forget to regularly water your window boxes!

For more info about the plants and flowers to grow for honey bees and when to plant them, visit: www.bbka.org.uk/learn/gardening_for_bees.



Winnie-the-Pooh and Piglet plant a pretty flowering window box in Oxford to help provide food for the honey bees.

Create your own vegetable patch or tub together

Why not have a go at starting a vegetable patch in your garden or at an allotment? By growing your family's favourite fruit and vegetables to enjoy each season, you will also be helping to provide nectar and pollen as food for the honey bees.

From strawberries and squashes, courgettes and cucumbers, to raspberries and runner beans, there is a huge variety of bee-friendly fruit and vegetables to grow that you can also enjoy adding to your own plate.

If you don't have a large garden or allotment, give growing a go on a small scale with a vegetable tub. Many varieties of fruit and vegetables will still thrive in a smaller container, so you don't need your own Hundred Acre Wood to become a bee-friendly gardener.



Rabbit tastes one of his home grown carrots in the Yorkshire Dales, whilst explaining to Winnie-the-Pooh, Christopher Robin and friends how to create and care for their own vegetable patch.

Plant a flowering tree in your garden

Bring the bees to your back garden by planting a flowering tree – the blossom not only looks beautiful, but the tree will provide nectar and pollen as food to help honey bees thrive.

From cherry trees to crab apple trees, horse chestnuts to hop trees, there is a wide variety of bee-friendly trees that will encourage honey bees to forage in your garden. As well as helping the honey bees, some trees can provide fresh fruit for you and your family, and double up as a cosy spot to find shade on a sunny day.

Don't forget, you'll need to be patient whilst waiting for your flowering tree to grow.



Christopher Robin plants a blossom tree in a Warwickshire garden, whilst Winnie-the-Pooh, Piglet, Roo, Owl and Tigger help to plant smaller shrubs to provide forage for honey bees.

Make some 'seed balls' and throw them into the wild

Distributing 'seed balls' is a great and fun way to brighten up an area of land, by encouraging native flowers to grow and provide essential food for honey bees.

These small balls are made up of soil, clay and seeds, and work by protecting new seeds from the heat of the sun, strong wind, heavy rain and animals that would eat them. This gives the new seeds the best chance of growing. Seed balls should be gently thrown one at a time over the area to be planted, and don't need to be buried or watered. You can purchase seed balls online or at a local gardening retailer.



Winnie-the-Pooh and friends help to create wild flowers for honey bees by dropping seed balls in Birmingham.

Use arts and crafts to educate the younger generation on the importance of bees

Spend time talking with your young children about the importance of honey bees, and the essential role they play in the environment, through fun arts and crafts activities.

Sparking children's interest in helping the honey bees will ensure that we continue to look after our honey bee population for many years to come. Some simple craft ideas include creating bee finger puppets to tell the story of pollination, painting bee pictures, making model honey bees from egg boxes or even knitting bee toys. For more arts and craft ideas, visit the BBKA's Children's Corner: www.bbka.org.uk/kids/more_childrens_corner.



On a summer's day in Sherwood Forest, Winnie-the-Pooh, Christopher Robin and Piglet have fun creating paintings and finger puppets inspired by honey bees.

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Learn to become a beekeeper yourself by attending a course through the British Beekeepers Association

Many local beekeeping associations run courses so you can learn about the correct and safest way to look after your own hive of honey bees throughout the beekeeping season.

If you're lucky enough to have your own garden, farm, orchard or land you can offer it to local registered beekeepers to house their hives.

For more information about upcoming courses, visit: www.bbka.org.uk/news_and_events/events.php. Or contact your local beekeeping association for details about courses in your areas: www.bbka.org.uk/about/local_associations/find_an_association.php.



Winnie-the-Pooh and Piglet watch in fascination as Christopher Robin learns about honey bees from a local beekeeper in Cheshire.

Bake together at home using local honey

Support your local beekeepers by buying the honey they produce and using it to bake delicious cakes, breads or simply to spread on your morning toast.

By buying your honey from a local beekeeper, you're supporting the honey bee colonies they look after and helping to give the honey bees the best opportunity to thrive year after year.

Honey recipe ideas can be found on the BBKA's Children's Corner, and you can contact your local beekeeping association to find out which beekeepers are selling honey in your area.



Christopher Robin, Winnie-the-Pooh and friends help support the beekeepers in Cambridge by using their local honey to bake a special loaf of bread to cheer Eeyore up.

Build bee habitats

Building a bee 'house' for your garden or an outdoor space is an easy and fun activity for the whole family.

Bee habitats can help to provide a safe home for solitary bees to rest in between their search for nectar and pollen from fresh flowers and vegetables.

You can put together your own bee house and hang it on a tree or an outside wall as a shelter for solitary bees, similar to a birdhouse.



Christopher Robin, Winnie-the-Pooh and friends work together to make bee 'houses' so that the honey bees in Gateshead can have a little rest.

Volunteer for your local beekeeper association or visit your local apiary

Get in touch with your local beekeeping association to find out about activities, shows or courses that are running in your area.

You can offer your support as a volunteer for events such as local honey shows, and sign up to receive more information about the beekeeping community in your area.

If you want to see the honey bee colonies in action in their hives and get an introduction to the life of a honey bee, you can also contact your local beekeeping association to find out about visits to your nearest apiary.

Details of your local beekeeping association can be found here:
www.bbka.org.uk/about/local_associations/find_an_association.php.



Winnie-the-Pooh enjoys helping local beekeepers with their preparations for a honey show in Somerset – there are plenty of opportunities for a little smackerel of something.

Don't panic if you see a swarm of honey bees, stay away and contact your local swarm collector

A honey bee colony swarms because it's searching for a new home and their tummies are full of honey.

The swarms sometimes cluster on a tree branch, in a hedge or even on a lamppost. Although they make a loud humming noise, it doesn't mean the swarming honey bees are angry. However, you should still act with caution and stay clear because they're wild insects.

A great way to help swarming honey bees is to contact your local swarm collector, who can collect the swarm and provide them with a new home.

There are over 1,200 registered BBKA members available to collect swarms in the UK. For help with identifying honey bee swarms and finding your local swarm collector, visit: www.bbka.org.uk/help/do_you_have_a_swarm.php.



After spotting a swarm of honey bees in Kent, Christopher Robin contacted a local swarm collector who provided them with a new home.



British Beekeepers Association - Friends of the Honey Bee

Another way to support the honey bees is by becoming a member of the BBKA's 'Friends of the Honey Bee'. Members will receive a packet of honey bee friendly seeds to sow, four seasonal newsletters packed with information about how you can help and what the bees are doing, a planting guide and a pin badge.

Supporting 'Friends of the Honey Bee' helps the BBKA to conduct more scientific research into the health of honey bees and build education programmes for establishing stronger, bee-friendly plant environments.

To find out more, go to www.friendsofthehoneybee.com.

We'd love to hear about how you're helping to support the honey bees.

Whether it's a picture of your vegetable patch or honey bee inspired arts and crafts, share these on Instagram and Twitter using [#Winniethepooh](#) and [#Beeahero](#).



Illustrations by Mark Burgess after E H Shepard

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Winnie-the-Pooh's adventures in the Hundred Acre Wood are available, in print and as eBooks, from all good bookshops and online

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