

RAMSEY READER



THIS WEEK'S ACTIVITIES:

Make a water tray and bee shelter

See bees in action

Dance like a bee

Bees

Apples, pears, green beans, coffee, cotton, lemons... what do all these things have in common? They are all pollinated by bees! Every year, billions of dollars of food production depends on bees for pollination. Wild, native bees pollinate berries and alfalfa, among other things. This Ramsey Reader shares activities that will help our important native bees as well as provides some amazing info on dancing honeybees.

Bee kind

The phrase “busy as a bee” refers to someone who is actively moving about to accomplish many things, and originates from bees being hard workers. Bees are indeed busy little insects with the very important job of pollinating plants like fruits and vegetables. However, even the hardest of workers need to take a break every once in a while. Encourage bees to hang around your yard by creating a bee refuge and they’ll in turn help your garden flourish.



CRAFT A MASON BEE BLOCK HOUSE



Native bees don’t live in large colonies like honeybees do and require small places to rest and hibernate. Invite them over to your yard by making a bee house — native bees aren’t aggressive toward people. You only need a few items that you may already have at home.

What you’ll need: scrap wood (at least 6 inches) and a drill with 3/8th or 5/16th bits. Drill holes in different sizes to attract a variety of bees and do alternate rows with the different size bits if you can. Add an overhanging roof to protect the bees from the rain

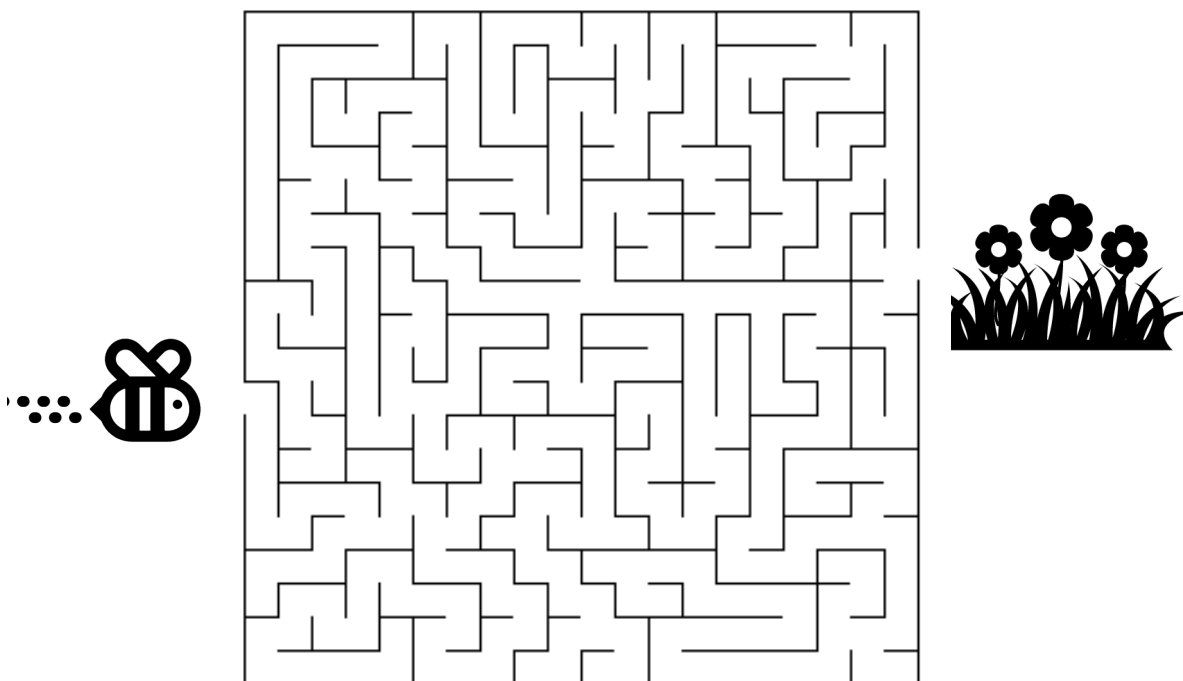
and wind. Finally, find a sunny area close to some flowers and hang the house about head high so you can observe if bees have found the new “Bee & Bee”. Find the full activity at tiny.cc/diybeehome.



CREATE A WATER TRAY

Pollination is hard work; bees’ wings can beat up to 10,000 times every minute. This means bees get thirsty just like you do! Create a bee watering station and provide a safe place for our pollinator friends to get a drink.

Simply fill a small tray — such as a pie plate, cookie sheet or flower pot base — with rocks or marbles and add some water. Make sure you don’t cover the rocks completely and change the water regularly, so mosquitos don’t lay eggs. To see the full activity and instructions, visit tiny.cc/beewaterstation.



Buzz by

"April showers bring May flowers," and May flowers bring out the bees! You can enjoy the "buzz" of dedicated bees at any of Ramsey County's parks; it just takes some patience and a watchful eye. Stop and observe flowers and you may see pollination in action. Here are a couple locations we recommend:

→ SEE THE BEES IN ACTION

Long Lake Regional Park Restored prairie area along the park entrance road. Park at the New Brighton History Center, 700 Park Drive, and walk the paved trail back towards the park entrance and look for prairie wildflowers on both sides of the road.

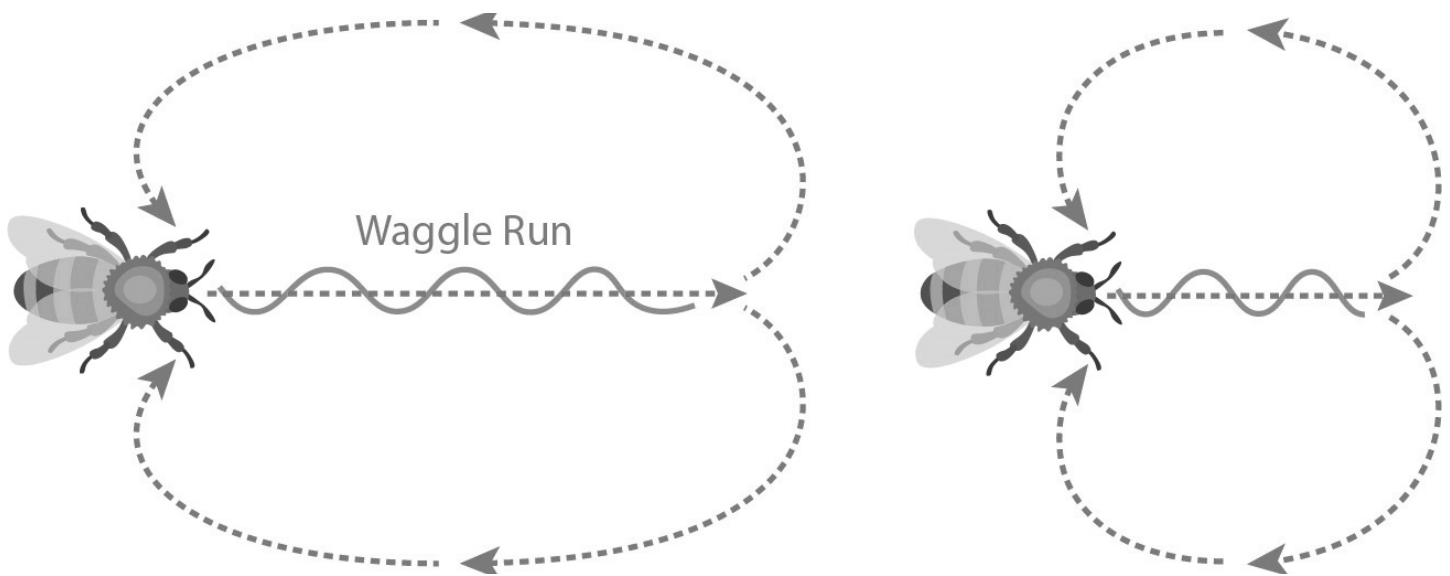
Keller Regional Park Visit the restored habitat along Keller Creek. When the wildflowers are in bloom, you may be able to hear the buzz of hundreds of busy bees.

Park at 2166 Maplewood Dr, Maplewood, take the footpath south and go underneath Highway 61. Continue on the path and the restoration area will be on your right. This area is also accessible by bike via the Gateway Trail.

Wiggle and Waggle

Bees dance! The dances are an important part of how bees share information. When one honeybee finds a good food source such as a flower patch, she returns to the colony and starts a “waggle” dance. What’s a waggle? That’s when a bee shakes its abdomen and moves in a figure eight pattern. Depending on the direction of the dance and the length of the waggle, the other bees can determine the location of a flower patch that is over three miles away!

The longer waggle dance on the left shows a flower patch that is farther away from the colony.



DO A DANCE

Can you dance like a bee? Try your best waggle dance! Ask an adult or siblings to join in and waggle like a bee with you.

For a more detailed explanation, additional drawings and a short video of the dance, visit:

tiny.cc/beewaggledance

tiny.cc/waggledancing

Learn more

There's so much more to learn about bees. Check out these select resources to continue exploring and discovering.

[University of Minnesota Bee Lab](#)

Learn all about bees and beekeeping.
beelab.umn.edu

[National Geographic Kids](#)

Find out 10 amazing facts about honeybees.
natgeokids.com/za/discover/animals/insects/honey-bees/

[Minnesota Honey Producers Association](#)

Try some delicious honey recipes.
minnesotahoneyproducers.org/recipes

[Minnesota Bee Atlas](#)

Check out this species guide from the University of Minnesota, where you'll find a list and photos of Minnesota bees and other creatures you may find in a bee block.
apps.extension.umn.edu/environment/citizen-science/bee-atlas/bee-blocks/SpeciesGuide

Did you know?

Bees use their five eyes to see an incredible amount more than humans. They can perceive movement at a rate six times that of humans. If bees were watching a movie with humans, they'd see it one frame at a time, where all the frames run together for us. Bees can also see ultraviolet light, which is invisible to humans.