

Bee garden

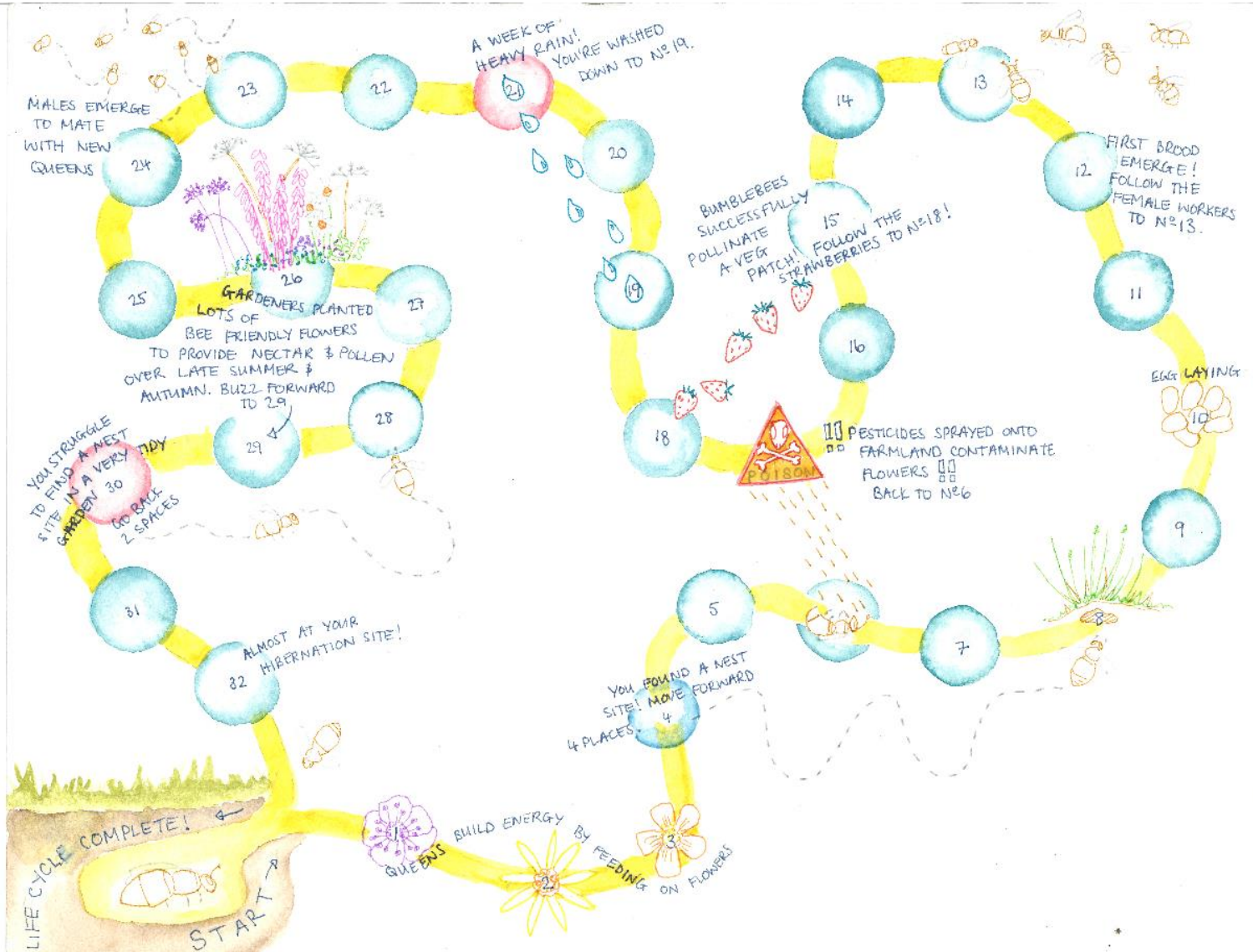
AIMS

Look at a map of a back garden and see places that bees might visit for food or to find shelter/nesting sites.

Look at why bees choose certain flowers and nesting sites.

Try to map your own garden and think about how to make it better for bees.

This game shows a bee life cycle and you can see what a dangerous life she has. So if you want to help her – read on.



Do you ever see large bumble bees searching in your house?



I found this girl bumping against the window this morning, she's a bit blurred because she wouldn't stay still.

Why was she in my house- surely she wouldn't want to nest there? Anyway I let her outside.

She was actually searching for shade, crevices or holes to nest in.

Next time I saw her she was in my greenhouse – was that a better place to bee?!

Would a bee be able to find a good place to nest in YOUR garden? Let's start by looking at my garden - I did a survey of where bees might be able to nest or hide.

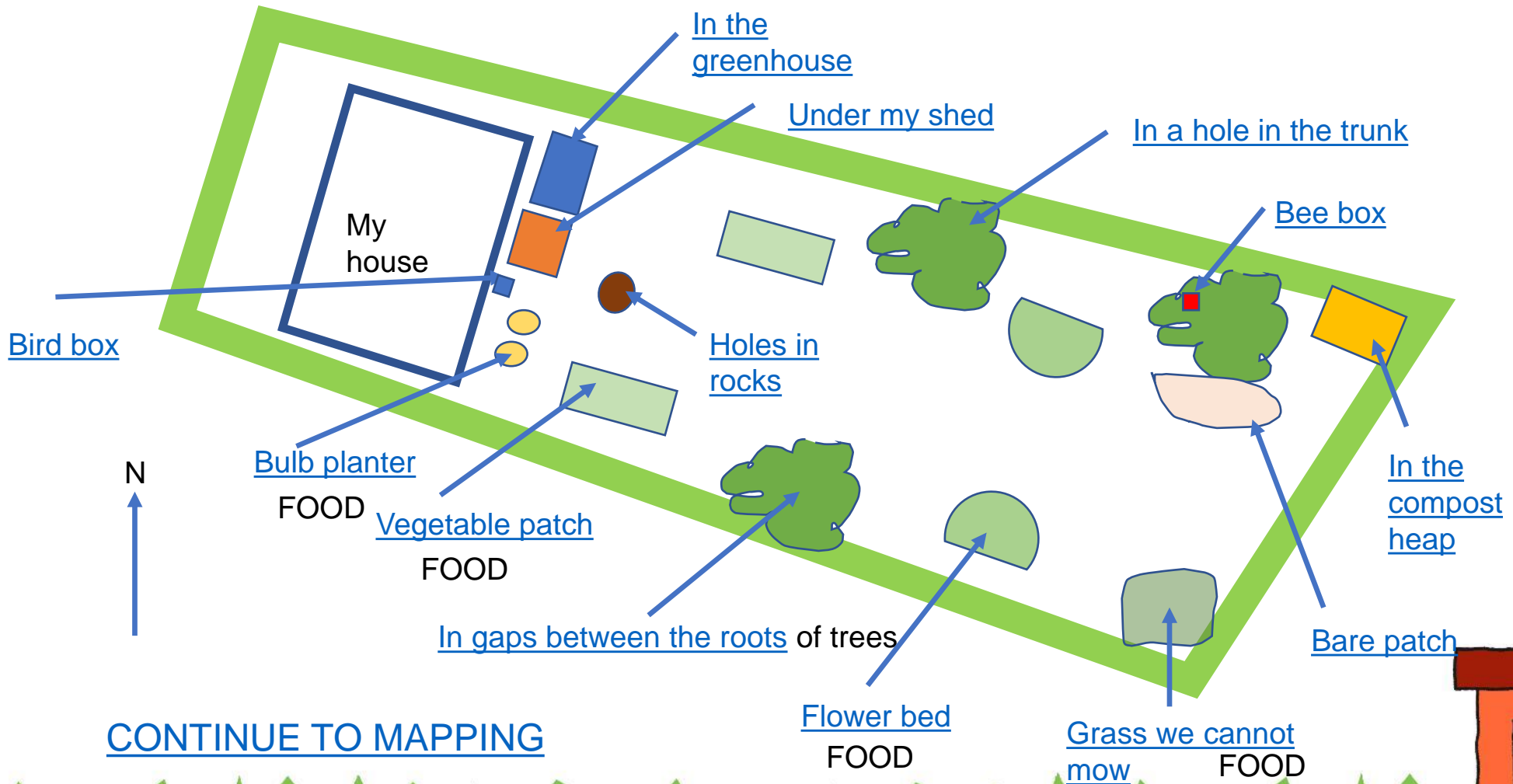
You could do the same.

My Garden map



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Here is a map of my garden, showing you the main places where I thought a bee could nest or hide. I also marked on places where they might find food.



Bulb planter



A good place to live as the bulbs flower early and provide lots of pollen. You do have to have a long tongue though!



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Bee box



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My bee box.
You can make your own out of
bundles of bamboo canes.
Solitary bees such as mason bees
and leafcutter bees use these, laying
about 4 cells of eggs at a time.

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Gaps between roots



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In holes in between roots.
This is a very well protected
place (e.g. from rain)
although other living things
may come along and try to
take over.

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Compost heap



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My compost heap has some old carpet over it. Could be lovely and warm but there is a danger of humans digging it over or rats coming for food.

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Holes in tree trunks



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Holes in tree trunks
are favourites of
bigger bees – tree
bumblebees like holes
and even bird boxes!

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It is really messy under the shed but less likely to be disturbed.

We have had several bumblebee nests in children's games that have been left out.

Try to leave some places undisturbed.

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Holes in walls



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Holes in walls
and rockeries
are good
places for
solitary bees.

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Bare earth



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Mining bees like bare earth and banks or areas with short grass in order to excavate holes.

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Hidden areas of flower beds



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Large flower beds may have hidden areas at the back where the weeders do not reach!

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Veg patches



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There may be good places in raised beds and the bare earth in vegetable beds.

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My greenhouse has lots of hidey holes and the bees can get in and out as I never close the door properly.

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Bird box



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I would like the birds to use it really but if they don't like it, it would be a good bee nest site.

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Grass I cannot mow!

There's no picture as the grass hasn't really grown much yet so this spot doesn't exist. I suppose it's the whole lawn really at the moment!

And anyway I don't think most bees would risk it!!

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HOW DID I DO - MY MAP



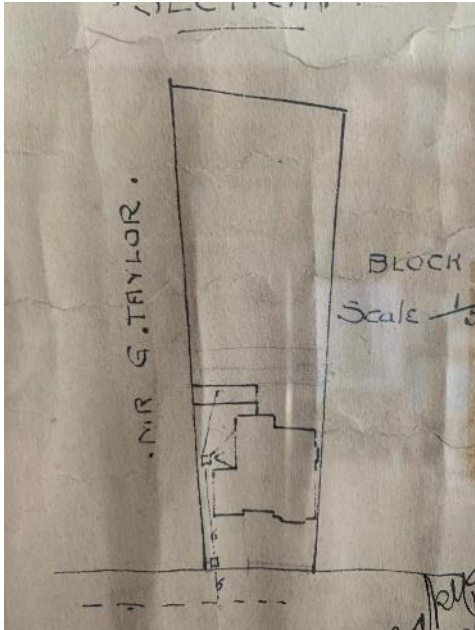
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1 First I looked for my garden on Google Earth so I could get the shape of it. The trouble is that the trees and hedge were covering a lot of it - you couldn't see the outline so I didn't bother to use it. It might work better if your photo was taken in the winter!

2 You could photograph your garden from a bedroom and use that to do a rough sketch map, or you could measure it if you have a tape measure and then draw it onto graph paper.

3 I guessed my garden was a rectangle but in the end I was lucky enough to find this old plan and discover that the shape was quite a long thin rectangle with a lopsided end.

4 I also tried to work out where the best sun would come from (the south) - if I wanted good bee flowers to grow it would be good to know the best place to plant. I drew my plan so the top of the map faced north.



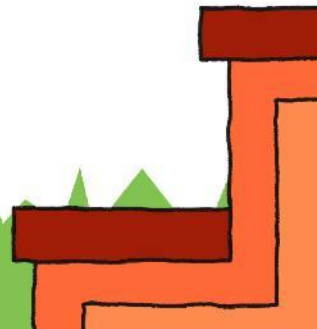
Am I correct?



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**This is a list of places that bees might like
but it varies with their species...**

Underground – old rat holes, or dig out own burrow in dry soil
Under sheds
Thick grass
Bird boxes
Tree – crevices between tree roots, in tree trunks
Roofs or lofts of houses
Holes in between bricks, walls rocks
Compost heap
Old hedgerow
Rotting wood
Bee house



What percentage of bumblebee nests are successful?

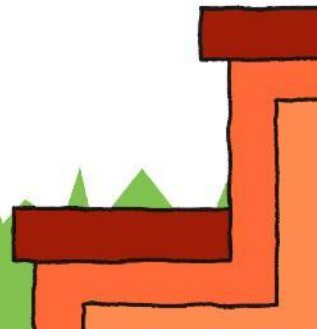


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50%

...but much less if
disturbed so don't try
to move them

#DOORSTEPWILDLIFE



Bee flowers - which are best?



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- Flowers with lots of nectar and pollen, good scent and patterns to attract that we cannot always see.
- Flowers with a good flat landing stage for bees - like cow parsley.
- Flowers in packets of wildflower seeds.
- Flowers with tubes for [long-tongued bees](#)
- Variety of flowers so a long range of flowering from early spring to winter
- Start with bulbs for the early bees like the queen bumblebee eg snowdrop, crocus, grape hyacinth

Later in spring have lungwort, bluebells, forget-me-not, borage, calendula and rosemary to provide attractive spring **blooms** in a **bee** garden.

Bees feast on **bee** balm, echinacea, snapdragons, foxglove and hosta in the summer.

Finally zinnias, sedum, asters, witch hazel, goldenrod and ivy are late bloomers that will tempt foragers.

[Lots more about my favourite bees!!](#)

Bee with long tongue feeding on grape hyacinth nectar



Lungwort attracts lots of bees in the spring

Picture credits

Janice Bridger took all the pictures except this one taken
by Deborah Overton.