



Being Rotterdam
Make Rotterdam a place to bee

What is the problem and why? We are losing the bees. Around the world, due to habitat loss, bees can no longer find sufficient sources of food or places to live. Therefore bees are dying. Bees are at the beginning of our food-chain, they pollinate our crops. 70% of our food we have thanks to bees and we would lose 35% of our produced food if bees would become extinct. 84% of some crops pollination depends on wild bee species. Therefore if we lose our pollinators, we will lose a great deal of our food. Different kind of bees pollinate different kind of crops. Different kind of bees need different kind of flowers. To have diversity in food, there should be a diversity of bees and therefore a diversity of plants. The bigger the variety of flowers, the larger the biodiversity is going to be. In the Netherlands already 2/3 of the bee species are endangered. Bees are of vital importance for our future and bees need good habitats for their future. There is too much stone in the city and a shortage of space for flowers. We need to prevent losing more bees or even totally losing our reduce ambient noise. Scientific research already shows that a natural and green environment makes the climate we live in better, plays a part in social cohesion, contributes to a better physical and mental health and a higher level of wellbeing, reduces stress, and helps with the prevention of illness. Flowers and flowering plants enhance positive feelings and moods and have positive effects on the creativity of people. Smell is connected to emotions and memories. The nice smell of flowers has a positive influence on the health and wellbeing and will also influence the experiences they have. If flower-strips are installed there can be done more research on the positive effect of nature and flowers on the health and wellbeing of people. **What can individual people do themselves?** People must see the importance of bees. We must recognise the significance of the natural environment. We can still reverse what is done and save the bees, if we act now. Take your personal responsibility and share your outdoor space with bees and nature by making it a priority of planting bee-friendly flowers or flowering plants to provide a healthy eco system. Wether you place a small flower box on your balcony, or use a big part of your garden, it will both contribute to the preservation of bees. Integrate nature into your life, bring nature back and take care of it. Together we must and can create a bigger and better habitat for bees. Even the smallest contribution is worth a lot and will contribute to the big solution because one tiny improvement times many, equals a big impact all together. Educate others and tell them about the flowers and nature in their designs and integrate nature in everything they put outside. Flowers, flowering plants and other places bees can live in, should be made a fixed part of outdoor design. With this they can bring nature back at each build-up area. Flowers in the city will make it look nice. Designers and companies must see the importance of bees. Designers must incorporate gardens or natural cladding to their buildings. Landscape architects should realise that empty squares and large streets fully covered with stone are just plain wrong. Every surface that has been built on can have nature included. Public spaces in the city and how they are designed can really support the quality of life. A lot of different flowers will enhance the biodiversity and the street-image. By implementing more flower meadows in their plans, designers can create a more idyllic image of the city. Designers must take their responsibility for bringing more flowers in the city and thereby beautify the surroundings and reducing unpleasant ambient noise which will make the city more appealing to humans and companies. Companies must invest in nature and contribute to the restoration of nature by asking designers for bee-friendly solutions and, if possible, keep the bee in mind in their products or services. They should recognise the value of planting bee-friendly flowers or flowering plants on the grey empty meaningless flat rooftops of Rotterdam or other empty surfaces. **What can the municipality do?** The municipality must see the importance of bees. Especially in the city there is a lot to gain in the field of habitats for bees. They must take their responsibility and utilise space in the city and sharing it with nature by placing urban beehives which are flourishing and more biodiverse than countryside beehives. Only a small investment is needed to achieve a major impact. More nature is coming to cities, thus making cities their own ecosystem with a broad variety of species. The municipality should apply ecological management so they can contribute to keeping the special and endangered species like wild bees. Nature needs and deserves a place in the city. Therefore the municipality must include nature in building decrees and taking the lead in providing information to make residents, designers and companies aware of the need to make bee-friendly alterations to their outdoor spaces. The decrease of hardening of the city has positive effect on the welfare of people, animals and nature. The municipality must actively get to work with their involvement in 'operation Steenbreek' by setting an example and replace grey for green and colourful flowers. Roadsides with flowers in stead of grass look better. Blooming weeds provide good food for bees and should be left alone in stead of spraying, burning or mowing them. The municipality should give subsidies, share their knowledge, set norms and facilitate easy and free acces information for citizens who want to plant bee-friendly flowers or flowering plants. The municipality must support and embrace citizens' initiatives, no matter how small, and enter into partnerships with them. Genuine involvement from and facilitation by the municipality increases the chance of success. **What will be the result?** If municipality, designers, companies and citizens all work together to preserve and improve the habitat for bees, we can and will push the descending spiral up again. We will have more and more diverse flowers, better habitat for bees and a more beautiful city for humans, more bees and bigger diversity in bees and a bigger overall biodiversity. We will keep our food and have a better future. Rotterdam will undergo a positive metamorphosis and will be a better place to bee.