

MARCH GARDEN 'TO DO' LIST

By Claudette Sims, Halton Master Gardener

☐ **Perennials** – Continue to leave seedheads for birds, but be aware that they are not useful to our bees *until they are cut*. When you see your first bee flying, trim stems down to 20-60 cm (8-24 in) and *leave them until next year* to allow bees to complete their life cycle. For more detailed information read this article about [Gardening with Wildlife](#).

☐ **Pruning** – Prune *Hydrangea arborescens* – (Smooth Hydrangea or 'Annabelle') before new growth appears. Remove old weak stems, leaving about 1/3 of stems 30 cm long for structure and support. For information about other hydrangea species check out our easy to read [factsheet](#)! **Clematis** – This method works for all clematis: Starting at the top of the plant working down, cut out all deadwood on each stem until you reach a live bud. Secure vines as needed. For more information about pruning specific clematis groups, check out this [factsheet](#). Prune **fruit trees** such as apple, cherry, plum, pear before flower buds swell. Remove any dead, diseased twigs and prune for an open shape. Pear trees generally don't require pruning, except for shaping. **Overgrown Shrubs** – Use [rejuvenation or renewal pruning](#) to restore scraggly or overgrown multi-stemmed shrubs. **Red raspberries** – Cut and remove any canes that bore fruit last year as well as any weak canes and dead tips. **Blueberries** require annual pruning to produce high yields. Prune out dead, broken, injured branches and remove weak canes and canes older than 5 years or larger than 5 cm. **Prune with Wildlife in Mind**– Use the "[chop & drop](#)" method so 'prunings' replenish the soil & provide nesting material for native birds. Leave larger pieces of wood in the garden for wildlife & consider leaving 'snags' in place as long as it is safe to do so.

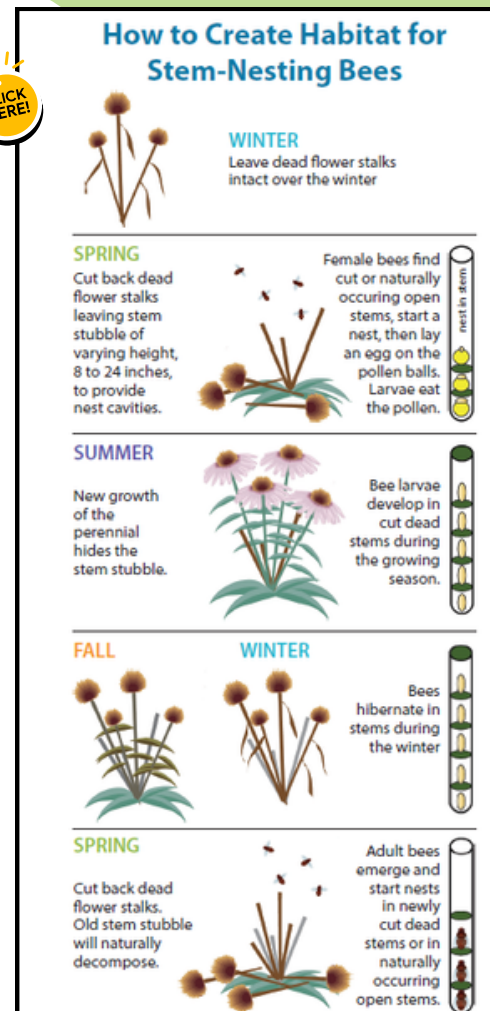
Image: [linda bergman-althouse](#)

“Bee Care-ful!

How you garden makes a difference to our native bees. Cut back stems in spring as soon as you see bees flying! Leave those stems for a year so bees can complete their life cycle”



For more information



☐ **March break** is the perfect time to try some of these [fun gardening activities](#) with your children or grandkids!

