

To: Houston Native Bees

From: A Human-Animal Studies (HAST) major at University of Redlands, CA

Nice to e-meet you! Pardon me for this unexpected email, but I came across your resource page here <https://www.houstonnativebees.org/resources/> and I wanted to express my gratitude as they have helped me get a better perspective on a research topic due this semester. It is about assisting veterans and seniors aging in places or in their homes and other alternatives for them to enjoy relaxing.

As a token of appreciation, I've thought of sending these beekeeping resources I've bookmarked during the course of my reading in case you're still updating your resource list. I'll let you be the judge of these, of course. :)

- Beekeeping Therapy for Seniors and Veterans
- Beekeeping For Veterans

The first article caught my attention as it presented great points on how beekeeping can benefit seniors and veterans. It was surprising to discover that beekeeping can serve as a form of therapy, especially considering the impact of the pandemic on our communities, particularly the elderly and those who have served in the military.

Thanks for your time, and looking forward to hearing from you soon!

From: Houston Native Bees

Thank you for your note and interest in Houston Native Bees. I love your research topic, and your idea of encouraging ways to relax that involves bees and nature.

If it's okay with you, I'd like to add your note to the website section under Gardens/Learning Activities/Notes from Pollinator Allies. I think your ideas will be of interest to website visitors who have an interest in non-native European honey bees and beekeeping.

My interest is with native bees, and I think your senior/veteran populations might find them an interesting and relaxing option. Most native bees are solitary, and since they don't have a hive to protect, they rarely sting which is a plus especially for those hesitant to get close to honey bees.

For me, it is fun and relaxing simply to watch native bees as well as butterflies and other pollinators. I grow plants and create habitats that attract them, but even a small planter on a porch will attract pollinators. They can be very entertaining, acrobatic, territorial, funny, and charismatic. I have 2 monarch butterflies who are constantly chasing each other, then they chase the bumble bees, then the bumble bees chase them and the swallowtails, everyone swooping and diving and then going back to their business, it's a lively community.

My parents (seniors) have developed an interest in native bees, and started growing plants to attract them; in New Mexico they see bees I don't. They send me pictures of interesting ones, just last week a Long-horned bee on a Shepherd's needle they planted. They have also become more engaged Citizen Scientists, and even post pictures on iNaturalist, which adds to our collective knowledge of wildlife especially endangered species, and is a great way to connect with nature.

Your region in California has a great variety of native bees. The University of California Davis Arboretum and Public Garden has information about native bees. They have a logo I love: [Bee Campus USA – Making the World Safer for Pollinators One Campus at a Time](https://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/blog/beyond-honey-bee-learn-more-about-california-native-bees). <https://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/blog/beyond-honey-bee-learn-more-about-california-native-bees>

Perhaps your senior or veteran might be interested in being (beeing) a volunteer for the California Bumble Bee Atlas. They encourage Citizen Scientists to join their collaborative community science effort, in order to track and conserve your state's native bumble bee species. They also provide info on plants that attract pollinators. I personally would love to watch yellow-faced bumble bees which are only along the west coast. <https://www.cabumblebeeatlas.org/>

A senior or veteran community can plant a pollinator garden, or add native plants to an existing garden or landscape. Perhaps their garden can connect to a pollinator pathway to help pollinators navigate between urban and rural environments as they forage.

As a teacher, I would be interested to know how your research project turns out. Thanks again for your interest in Houston Native Bees, and good luck on your project!