



# **BEE FRIENDLY FARMING® HANDBOOK**

**POLLINATOR  
PARTNERSHIP**

Bee Friendly Farming® has three distinct categories of participation – **BFF CERTIFIED, BFF PARTNER and BFF GARDEN**. Each has different requirements and benefits. The following pages detail each of the three categories. For any questions contact Miles Dakin at 707-321-7165 or [Miles@pollinator.org](mailto:Miles@pollinator.org).



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# BEE FRIENDLY FARMING®



## Purpose

**Bee Friendly Farming® (BFF)** provides guidelines for farmers and growers to promote pollinator health on their lands. **BFF** strives to set standards for sustainable farming on important concepts like planting pollinator food resources, providing nesting habitat, and incorporating an integrated pest management strategy. Through **BFF**, farmers, home gardeners, and private or corporate sponsors can be directly involved in providing resources necessary to support pollinators. By providing a low-cost membership program, growers and gardeners can spend valuable time and money getting plants and seeds in the ground to support pollinators.







## History

Bee Friendly Farming® was acquired by Pollinator Partnership in 2013 at the fifth anniversary of its existence. **BFF** was founded by Kathy Kellison in 2008 through the Partners for Sustainable Pollination (PFSP) in order to work with growers to promote and provide pollinator habitat in agricultural landscapes, in collaboration with Sam Droege, Mace Vaughan, Dennis vanEnglesdorp, Marla Spivak, Randy Oliver, Robbin Thorp, Karen Strickler, Gerry Miller, Jeff Anderson, Phil Giles, and Gene Brandi, among others. Pollinator Partnership has continued to expand and grow **BFF** into the program it is today. A Taskforce of the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign (NAPPC), which includes scientists and farmers, meets monthly to oversee the program.

Over the last 7 years, **BFF** has expanded to include over 800 farmers, wineries, home gardeners, apiarists and sponsors. P2 is dedicated to further expanding and developing this program and supporting members in providing habitat for pollinators. In the beginning, the goal of **BFF** was to engage as much landscape as possible and manage it responsibly to welcome and sustain bees and other pollinators. It was used to raise awareness in the consumer of the importance of patronizing responsible producers. This basic goal has not changed much in the long history of **BFF**, but it certainly has been refined, improved and expanded to embrace a variety of approaches to support pollinators responsibly.

# BEE FRIENDLY FARMING® CATEGORIES TODAY



## Bee Friendly Farming® Categories Today

The Bee Friendly Farming® program has expanded into three distinct categories - **CERTIFIED, GARDEN, and PARTNER**. These three categories provide avenues for participation for a variety of landscapes and goals. Each category has its own requirements and benefits. **BFF CERTIFIED** is most appropriate for farming operations. It is rigorous and requires the most stringent compliance while allowing the use of the **BFF** logo to those whose diligence is authenticated and rewarded.

**BFF GARDEN** is designed for home and community gardens that maintain pollinator habitat and management practices. Both of these categories recognize habitat on the land and the management practices that keep habitat safe and supportive for pollinators.

**BFF PARTNER** is a designation for members of the community, corporate or individual, who do not necessarily maintain pollinator habitat but wish to support the program. Their financial backing allows for more habitat for pollinators and more support for growers and partners.





Ron Bruger

## Apiarists

BFF is grateful for and supportive of our commercial apiarists community members and encourages them to apply for a category that matches their needs and goals. For apiarists that do not manage their own lands, the PARTNER category has the addition of a specific apiarist category that will provide them with resources and support specific to their needs.

The designation of BFF categories allows P2 and participating members to connect and interact in distinct ways unique to their capacity and goals. This means the ability to design specific outreach and participation materials for each category.







## How to determine the right BFF category

In order to choose the right category for each member, it is important to recognize the main goals of each. **CERTIFIED** is designed for large scale commercial farms, ranches, wineries or other land-use businesses that grow food or other resources. This designation gives the land, and product grown on it, the ability to be labelled with the **BFF** logo on marketing and packaging material. **PARTNER** is designed for members who want to provide more financial support to the program and gives logo use on promotional materials. For a small, non-commercial garden, **GARDEN** would be the ideal designation for them. This level does not receive logo use rights as it is designed for non-commercial lands.

## BFF Application Fees

Members may apply to one of the three **BFF** categories through the online application. Along with the information required to meet the criteria for the chosen category, a non-refundable application fee is required for **BFF GARDEN** and **CERTIFIED**. The application fee for **GARDEN** is \$20. The fee for **CERTIFIED** is \$45. Upon acceptance into the program, this application fee will count as the first year membership fee, upon which an annual recurring fee of an equal amount will be required. **BFF** strives to provide resources and engagement with members at a minimal cost. By keeping membership fees low, **BFF** hopes that members can further enhance the environment to support pollinators. Members can use the money that might have gone to more expensive certification programs to plant more foraging habitat, implement new management strategies, or spread the word about pollinator health!



## Checking in and getting checked out: compliance with the rules

Along with the qualification criteria for each category and maintaining annual membership fees, each category has compliance criteria. **CERTIFIED** members must file a compliance form once every 3 years. These forms will be audited by the **NAPPC BFF** Taskforce. Field visits will take place with between 3 and 6% of the **CERTIFIED** memberships. **PARTNER** compliance will require a short annual survey to determine how the **BFF** logo is being used. **GARDEN** compliance will be maintained annually through a short survey.

Through these compliance methods, P2 can access habitat management practices, the success of habitat installations, benefits provided, and any additional changes that the land-owners have made to further support pollinators. Verification of compliance will take place through review of each submission by the **BFF** administrative and coordinator team,

as well as through the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign (**NAPPC**) **BFF** Task Force. Just like the federal government (which gives millions of dollars to farmers) **BFF** does not have third-party verification. First, we trust that farmers are trying to do their best and it's in their best interest to do the right thing for their farm and future; in addition, they are asked to report extensively in the required compliance form checked by the **NAPPC BFF** Taskforce and the **BFF** staff. Second, rather than expensive third party policing, **BFF** invests in more seeds on the ground – something that will make a real and lasting difference. And third, since **BFF** has designated staff and advisory board members specifically tasked with **BFF** membership and compliance, **BFF** builds direct relationships with growers and supports both their productivity and the sustainability of pollinators. **BFF** combines the best of science and support for farmers and pollinators.



# BEE FRIENDLY FARMING® CERTIFIED



The **BFF** flagship certification has been revamped and redesigned to highlight and support farms, wineries, ranches, and other commercial land-use operations that promote and support pollinator health. By becoming **Bee Friendly Farming® Certified** the grower helps preserve and protect pollinator populations by implementing positive, incremental, substantiated changes on agricultural landscapes.

Each **Bee Friendly Farming® Certified** farm is an essential part of keeping pollinators healthy and the food supply abundant, and receives use of our **Bee Friendly Farming®** logo and can be featured on the P2 blog for product promotion.

## Criteria for Certification:

1. **Offer forage providing good nutrition for bees on at least 3% of land. Forage includes cover crops, if they are left to bloom.** Pollinators require year round food and habitat other than crops. By planting flowering plants that produce nectar and pollen, we can support our pollinators year round.



Various pollinator friendly perennial plants



- 2. Provide bloom of different flowering plants throughout the growing season, especially in early spring and late autumn. There is no minimum land coverage for seasonal bloom.** During the growing season, it is important to provide pollinators with alternate food sources that offer a complete diet. Both commercial honey bees and native pollinators benefit when provided with diverse food sources.



Cover crop in almonds

- 3. Offer clean water for bees, if not inhibited by government-mandated water restrictions.** In large scale commercial farming operations, it is important to provide clean water for pollinators. Irrigation canals, holding ponds, lakes, or natural bodies of water can count for certification.



4. **Provide permanent habitat for nesting through features such as hedgerows, natural brush, buffer strips, or bare ground.**



Bee Friendly Farming® winery with various flowering plants

5. **Pest Management (IPM); reduce or eliminate the use of chemicals.** Many insecticides negatively impact pollinators and have led to a dramatic decline in insect populations over the last century. With this in mind, it is important to develop IPM programs that take into consideration the farmer's needs and pollinator health. BFF Certified farmers are expected to practice IPM and reduce or eliminate the use of chemicals.
6. **Pay the annual certification fee. In order to support the BFF program, there is an annual certification fee.** This fee accompanies logo-use. Larger growers are encouraged to contribute an additional donation with increasing acreage.
7. **Complete the compliance form once every 3 years (audited by the BFF Taskforce).** A compliance form must be submitted every 3 years and will be audited by the **BFF** Taskforce. The project coordinator will conduct field visits on 6% of compliance submissions annually.



Demonstration area of BFFC with variety of plants





## Benefits of Bee Friendly Farming® CERTIFIED

- Use of **BFFC** logo on products
- Sustainable sourcing and consumer demand for **BFF CERTIFIED** products
- Access to **BFF** team for support, including plant suggestions, connection to sourcing, site visits etc. These recommendations are built on the best science for both pollinators and your crop
- Access to seed grants (e.g. Flow Hives grant, Seeds for Bees)
- Connections to corporate sponsors/ partners
- Membership to a network of like-minded growers
- Access to branded hats, signs, etc. on website store
- Monthly newsletter, blog, website, other features to learn from and be featured in
- Feedback survey
- Complete privacy policy for data usage; farmers can feel comfortable sharing information with **BFFC**.







## Checklist for Application to become Bee Friendly CERTIFIED

It should take less than 45 minutes to fill out and submit online if you use the checklist below to prepare the uploads you will need:

- ☒ Audit files from other accepted certifications (CASP, Live Certified, Bee Better Certified, USDA Certified Organic, among others). Uploading these files will allow you to skip some sections of the form. If your certification is not found in this list, please reach out to [isaac@pollinator.org](mailto:isaac@pollinator.org) for more information.
- ☒ A list of all known plant species on your farm that provide forage for bees and other pollinators
- ☒ Images of your forage habitat
- ☒ Images of your clean water sources
- ☒ Images of potential bee nesting habitat
- ☒ Pest management protocol, including application conditions, drift management, etc.
- ☒ Create a PayPal account if you do not already have one. (Please reach out to [isaac@pollinator.org](mailto:isaac@pollinator.org) if you need to use another payment method.)
- ☒ Proof of any pesticide certification class you have taken in the past 3 years. (extra credit)
- ☒ Digital farm map (extra credit)
- ☒ Images of other ecological infrastructures (extra credit)
- ☒ Results of a regionally appropriate habitat assessment (extra credit)

You are ready to fill out your certification application. Be sure to allow the form access to your location when prompted, and enter your farm's primary phone number to make future compliance forms much easier; this information is how you will retrieve your application data.



## Integrated Pest Management

One of our goals at Pollinator Partnership is to provide science-based resources and expertise that make incremental changes to land-use practices. The Bee Friendly Farming® program highlights and supports farming operations that set the standard for pollinator health management. The program is built on four criteria that support all pollinators: providing diverse forage for pollinators, providing and managing nesting habitat, providing clean drinking water, and developing mindful pest management programs. One of the keystones of the program is working with farmers to develop Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plans that consider pollinator health, while meeting the goals of the farmer.

The Bee Friendly Farming® Certified application focuses on the main principles of IPM:

- Pest monitoring and identification
- Decision making based on monitoring and thresholds
- A multi-faceted approach that combines chemical, physical, biological, and cultural control methods
- Prevention of infestations
- Evaluation and improvement of management strategies

While each of these fundamental aspects of IPM play an important role in optimizing management of pests, careful consideration of pollinator health should be taken in each of these steps to support pollinators without limiting efficacy of pest management strategies.



The **BFF Certified** application requires adoption of IPM. Information on each of the IPM principles.

**1. Pest monitoring and identification:** Proper identification and monitoring of pests is vital in understanding the specific situation and potential mitigation with any possible pest infestations. This series of questions asks for detailed information about how monitoring occurs, by whom, where the information for identification is coming from (extension guidelines, etc.), and if records are stored.

This informs management decisions that might affect pollinators. Here are the questions we ask **BFF Certified** operations to answer:

Do you use governmental or university IPM guidelines for pest management decisions?

- Which pests do you primarily treat for?
- Do you monitor for pests?
- How do you monitor for pests?
- How often are traps monitored?
- Who conducts trap monitoring?
- Are detailed records of trap counts collected and maintained?

**2. Decision making based on monitoring and thresholds:** Management decisions should be based on monitoring and assessing if threshold levels are met. Models are commonly used to help make decisions about the timing of management practices. These can be based on initial trap catches and weather data. By using these types of models, growers can make science-based decisions in developing management plans. This is important because it ensures that growers are applying management strategies at the proper time and avoiding any unnecessary applications, reducing pesticide exposure to pollinators.

- Do you use degree-day modeling to assist in determining spray timings?



Antony John





### **3. A multi-faceted approach that combines chemical, physical, biological, and cultural control methods:**

IPM benefits from a combination of management approaches that can use different modes of action and strategies, taking advantage of physiological, ecological, and behavioral characteristics of the target pests. These non-pesticide approaches reduce potentially toxic exposure to pollinators. The means of applying chemicals are also important in mitigating exposure to pollinators.

- Do you use chemical treatments?
- Do you use any mating disruption treatments?
- Do you release natural enemies for the control of any pests?
- What is the average temperature during spray?
- What type of spray application equipment is most commonly used for your applications?
- When do the majority of sprays occur?
- Describe how you mitigate drift during sprays.
- What do you do to limit pollinator contact with chemicals?
- Have you taken a pesticide certification class in the past 3 years? (not necessary for certification)



Gail Vandersteen

**4. Prevention of infestations: An important aspect of IPM is the principle of avoiding potential infestations.**

Small steps can be taken to mitigate outbreaks, many of which directly benefit pollinators.

- How do you manage weeds?
- Describe how you prevent pest outbreaks in lieu of pesticide applications.

**5. Evaluation and improvement of management strategies:**

Many of these principles can be adjusted as seasons change. Adapting farming practices to new methods, changes in the environment, or emerging pests are essential to developing impactful IPM programs. We are interested to learn

more about the internal process and decision making for adapting to these situations and how pollinator health is incorporated in these decisions.

- Is this a change from previous protocols on your farm?

At **Bee Friendly Farming®**, we understand how complex and important IPM is to our members. We believe that these key principles provide the growers a framework to not only protect their livelihoods, but incorporate pollinator health and awareness. We also understand that practices and situations change from year to year, and we continue to listen and adapt to the needs of our members and pollinators.



# BEE FRIENDLY FARMING® PARTNER



In order to support our pollinators, commercial and individual sponsors can become a **Bee Friendly Farming® PARTNER**. **BFF PARTNER** registers sponsorship from companies and individuals, but also includes commercial apiarists who do not actively manage their own landscapes, but wish to support the program. These sponsorships provide the resources necessary to build and maintain this program, benefiting pollinator health and food security. Sponsorships and donations will not only benefit pollinators, they will benefit us all. Bees and other pollinators are threatened, but with support from **Bee Friendly Farming® PARTNER** members, P2 is developing programs that help improve pollinator health on landscapes across the globe.



# DONATION levels and BENEFITS of Bee Friendly Farming® PARTNER

## Honey \$45

- Restricted to Apiarists
- Use of **BFF** logo on website, promotional material
- Monthly **BFF** communication
- Listed on **BFF** website

## Pollinator Friend \$500

- Use of **BFF** logo on sponsor website
- Listed on **BFF** website with link
- Monthly **BFF** communication

## Copper \$1000

- Same as Pollinator Friend PLUS
- Sponsor logo on **BFF** Website

## Bronze \$5000

- Same as Copper PLUS
- Listed in **BFF** Communications
- Listed in **BFF** webinar credits

## Silver \$10,000

- Same as Bronze PLUS
- Listed in Ag Ad
- Plant Consultation

## Gold \$25,000

- Same as Silver PLUS
- Link with product shot
- Logo on Annual poster
- Ability to print logo on packaging
- Plant consultation with planting supervision
- Large sign

## Platinum \$50,000

- Same as Gold PLUS
- Large sign – personalized
- Your operation/product featured in webinar

### Engagement:

- Interviews, blogs, feature on website
- Monthly Newsletter

### Compliance:

- Use of logo MUST include either “Partner of **BFF**” or “**BFF Partner**”
- Annual survey to determine logo use
- Annual donation



# BEE FRIENDLY FARMING® GARDEN



**BFF's** newest and most unique category of registration is specifically designed for home and community gardeners who promote and provide habitat and pollinator health in non-commercial settings. **Bee Friendly Farming® GARDEN** has been designed to distinguish these members from commercial farming enterprises or sponsors, as well as highlighting gardeners who follow the specified guidelines in providing for pollinators and offering a diverse and permanent habitat source at a scale at or above a small home garden.

In addition, **BFF GARDEN** registration means limiting or avoiding the use of harmful pesticides on blooming plants, and paying the annual \$20 registration fee.

**BFF GARDEN** membership does not include logo use except in special circumstances. Contact the **BFF** team for use information. Habitat signs and support are available, as well as the opportunity to be featured on the P2 blog.



Gail Vandersteen



## Criteria for Bee Friendly Farming® GARDEN

- Plant native plants to provide nectar and pollen throughout the bloom season.
- Provide nesting sites through permanent plantings, bare ground, tree stumps, or by building bee boxes.
- Reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides. Use Integrated Pest Management (IPM). Apply no chemicals to blooming plants or when pollinators are foraging. (See [here](#) for more information).
- Pay the annual membership fee.
- Complete annual garden surveys.

## Benefits of Bee Friendly Farming® GARDEN

- Support for and inclusion in the **BFF** program.
- Access to hats, signs, etc. on website store
- Blog/ social media feature - [My Pollinators - My Story](#)
- Monthly email newsletter
- Access to gardener-specific information
- Provide feedback through annual surveys



# BEE FRIENDLY FARMING® LOGO USE

As outlined in each category section, logo use is restricted to **BFF CERTIFIED** and **PARTNER** members. **BFF GARDEN** designation DOES NOT include logo use outside of the ability to post official **BFF GARDEN** signs in designated habitat. **BFF GARDENS** may not use the **BFF** Logo for any monetary gains. Prior to application submission, all applicants must agree to the **BFF** Logo Use Agreement and follow all criteria and requirements listed in the agreement. If a member violates the agreement, their membership may be revoked, unless a resolution is made between P2 and the member. **CERTIFIED** and **PARTNER** members shall use their respective logos in a manner similar to below:



**CERTIFIED**



**PARTNER**

It is possible that members of these two categories can modify the Bee Friendly Farming® logo to not include their category designation, but must specifically state their designation in writing above or below the logo use. This modification is laid out in the **BFF** Logo Use Agreement. As an example:



"This land is a **CERTIFIED Bee Friendly Farm®** by Pollinator Partnership"



"We are a proud **PARTNER of Bee Friendly Farming®**"



**POLLINATOR  
PARTNERSHIP**