

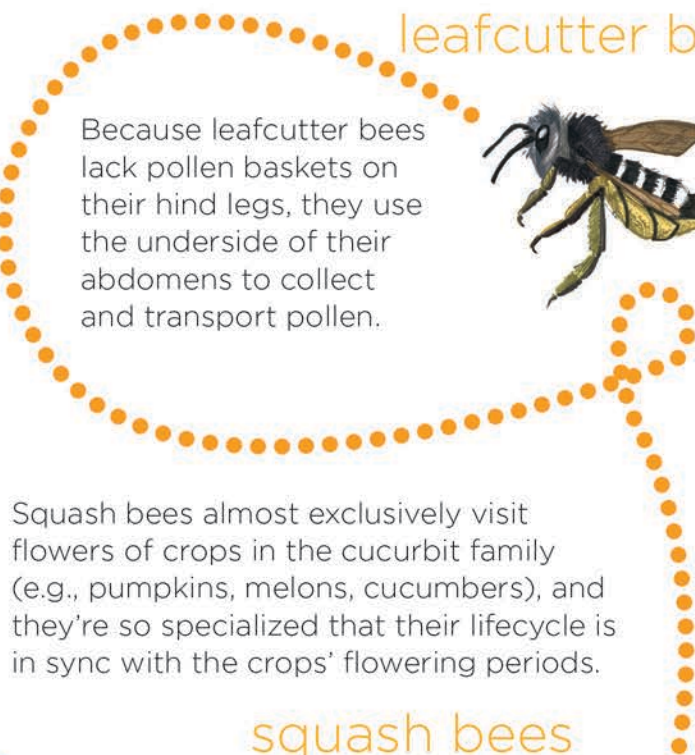
Native Bees & Our Food

Honey bees were brought to the U.S. by European settlers in the early 1600s, but native bee species—over 4,000 of them—have always called North America home. Since the vast majority of native bee species are solitary, we may not notice them around us, but native bees are critical to a productive agricultural system and a healthy environment.

According to USDA, bees of all kinds pollinate approximately **75%** of the fruits, nuts, and vegetables we consume.

leafcutter bees

Because leafcutter bees lack pollen baskets on their hind legs, they use the underside of their abdomens to collect and transport pollen.



Squash bees almost exclusively visit flowers of crops in the cucurbit family (e.g., pumpkins, melons, cucumbers), and they're so specialized that their lifecycle is in sync with the crops' flowering periods.

squash bees



bumblebees

Bumblebees use their flight muscles to "buzz pollinate" and dislodge firmly held pollen from plants such as tomatoes, which honey bees typically are unable to pollinate.



blue orchard bees



Blue orchard bees are some of the only native pollinators that are managed for agricultural use and are named for their excellent pollination of fruits such as apples, peaches, pears, and almonds.

