



BATS

Bats are one of nature's most important creatures and play vital roles in the environment. Along with bees, butterflies and birds, bats help pollinate over 1/3 of the food we eat. Bats are also one of the best methods of natural pest control consuming several thousand insects and mosquitoes – up to half their body weight – every day.

Most bats only produce one baby a year – the slowest reproduction rate of any mammal their size. Their populations are decreasing significantly across North America due to habitat loss and a fungal disease called White Nose Syndrome. In 2012, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service attributed roughly 6 million bat deaths to the disease with over 90% of the bats in many colonies dying. Scientists are trying to help the bats and find treatments but the recovery process for bats will be very difficult and very long.

You can make the difference for bats by using natural pest management instead of pesticides, creating a naturescape and putting up a bat house.

Bat Facts

- A bat is the only mammal that can fly – it is not a rodent
- The smallest bat and mammal is the bumblebee bat of Thailand – it weighs less than a penny
- The largest bats are the giant flying foxes of Indonesia with wingspans over six feet
- Bats are very clean and continually groom themselves
- Bats are active from spring through late fall
- During the winter, bats hibernate in caves or migrate
- In the southern U.S. they are active year-round
- Bats are not blind – they have a sophisticated sonar system that guides them in the dark
- Bats only bite in self-defense and will not bother you if you do not handle them
- You have a better chance of winning the lottery than coming into contact with a rabid bat – research has shown that the incidence of rabies in bat populations is less than 0.5% (University of Calgary)
- Bats do not like people's hair

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Saving nature in your backyard

North American Bats

- [Little Brown Bat](#) (*Myotis lucifugus*)
- [Big Brown Bat](#) (*Eptesicus fuscus*)
- [Pallid Bat](#) (*Antrozous pallidus*)
- [Evening Bat](#) (*Nycticeius humeralis*)
- [Tri-colored Bat](#) (*Perimyotis subflavus*)
- [Yuma myotis](#) (*Myotis yumanensis*)
- [Mexican Free-tailed Bat](#) (*Tadarida brasiliensis*)
- [Southeastern Bat](#) (*Myotis austroriparius*)

Bat House Tips

- Bats that roost in buildings and under bridges will also live in bat houses
- In spring, bats search for new places to start a colony
- Put up your bat house by March 1 before bats start searching for a new home
- Mount the bat house at least 15 feet above ground on a pole or side of a house or building
- Face the bat house south or southeast in an area free from obstructions, where it will get at least 6 hours of direct sun daily
- Mounting in trees is not recommended
- If bats do not roost in your house by the end of the second summer, try moving the bat house to another location
- Bats will not interfere with backyard birds