



What is White Nose Syndrome (WNS)?

WNS is a deadly fungal disease, since its introduction to North America in 2006 WNS has been responsible for the deaths of over 6 million bats. WNS has yet to be found on Vancouver Island but its arrival is imminent, and it has recently been detected in guano collected in British Columbia.

WNS affects hibernating bats; in some cases, the fungus appears as a white fuzz on the bats' noses but it can appear on other parts of the body. WNS causes discomfort and abnormal behavior in hibernating bats. This results in them burning off valuable fat reserves and can ultimately lead to starvation during the winter months.

WNS poses no known risk to human health.



Why should you try to help bats?

Bats provide the best organic pest control available, and they work for free! All of our Vancouver Island bats are insectivores and consume large numbers of insects, including moths, spiders, beetles and mosquitoes. One

little brown bat can eat hundreds of mosquitoes in a single night, and pregnant or nursing females may consume more than their body weight every night to keep up with energy demands!

Now imagine trying to enjoy a backyard barbecue in a world without bats. You would be swarmed by pesky mosquitoes, making it hard to relax.



Creating a Bat Friendly Garden



Bats on Vancouver Island are facing many threats, including habitat loss, insect population decline, predation from cats, climate change and the most concerning of all, the introduction of White Nose Syndrome.



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WOW! Bats sound amazing! What changes can I make in my own yard to help support bats?

Providing food

Planting native plants and night-blooming light-coloured flowers with a heavy scent will help attract night-flying insects to your garden. Some studies have shown that bats going into hibernation with excess body fat may have a better chance of surviving WNS so let's make our bats fat!

What to plant

Native plants - Insect populations have evolved with native plants as hosts. Planting native plants allows native insects to thrive in your garden. Oak trees, in particular, are highly beneficial to all wildlife, but there are lots of plant choices for gardens of all sizes, including Oceanspray, Nootka Rose, Pearly Everlasting and Common Yarrow.

Herbs - many herbs are strongly aromatic and attract a wide range of insects.

Non-invasive ornamental plants - Moonflower, Night-Scented Stocks, Evening Primrose and Four O'Clocks are all great garden choices.



Provide shelter

Trees are natural roosting sites. Consider adding a few trees to your garden. Dead trees are valuable habitats for bats and other wildlife. If you have a dead tree on your property that requires removal, consider leaving a portion of it as a wildlife stump. You can also contact your local BC Community Bat Program representative to see if adding a bat box is a good choice for your garden.

Provide water

Consider adding a small pond to your garden. It can benefit all types of wildlife, but be sure to provide easy exit points for any small animals that fall in.

For more information visit <https://bcbats.ca/>

Avoid excessive lighting

Although garden lighting can be attractive, it also affects wildlife. Lighting makes bats more visible to predators like owls and cats and may affect when and where they hunt.

Reduce the use of pesticides.

Pesticide use kills the insects that our bats are relying on to survive.

Remove invasive plants from your garden.

Keep your cat inside at night.

The best part is that gardening for bats doesn't just help the bats!

With these simple guidelines, you are also transforming your garden into valuable habitat for bees, butterflies and birds and contributing to a healthy ecosystem.

