

Online Extras

Greenhouse Cucumbers: Getting Plants to Produce Year-Round

by James W. Brown

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The difference between hand pollination and bumble pollination is quite significant and there are specific reasons for the use of one versus the other. Obviously hand pollination is much more tedious. It can also be quite complicated and time consuming on cucumbers as there are separate male and female flowers on the plant.

Hand Pollination

When natural pollination is insufficient or undesirable, hand pollination is the technique that must be used. When caring for a small scale garden, hand pollination is an option, although it is not recommended when using this system in a larger commercial set-up. Although some self fertile plants such as tomatoes may only require a simple shaking, others may need additional assistant with the help of an electric vibrator. Hand pollination may be used to control the parents of the seed to be produced in order to produce a uniform crop.

Procedure: Male and female flowers will need to be located and differentiated. For pepper and tomato plants, gently shake the

plant every couple days to advance pollination. For other plants require more attention, use a new Q-tip or small paint brush and transfer the pollen from the male to the female flower. Always clean the brush or use a new Q-tip when pollinating more than one type of the same plant.

Bumblebee Pollinators

Bumblebee pollinators tend to work best for commercial productions. It is an effective alternative as bumblebee pollinators save on labor and work on higher yields and high quality fruit.

Procedure: Use pesticides selectively as many of them will have a negative impact on the hive. Bumblebees perform best when used with natural enemies to control pests. Keep ants away from the hive. Honeybees are the most important pollinator of cucumbers. The bees collect pollen in the early morning and switch to nectar later in the morning.

