

## Bee Forage Plants



**Mosquito Plant (*Agastache cana*)** This hardy perennial will provide you with sweetly scented foliage and large 1" rosy- purple flowers. It attracts hummingbirds, bees and butterflies. The crushed foliage rubbed on the skin is said to repel mosquitoes. Will flower first year if grown as an annual, but best flowering is in second year in zones 7-10.



**Borage (*Borago officinalis*)** Cucumber flavored leaves used in salads and summer drinks. Good bee plant.



**Purple Headed Gomphrena (*Gomphrena*)** Easy to grow plants that tolerate almost all types of weather. Beautiful ball shaped plants that bear large heads of purple flowers all season. A favorite of bees and butterflies. Globe amaranth will survive drought, but performs best with regular watering, especially during hot weather. Hardiness: Globe amaranth is an annual grown as a summer bedding plant. It cannot tolerate frost, but it is quite tolerant of summer heat.



**Lemon Balm (*Melissa officinalis*)** Lemon scented leaves and sprigs used to make teas and cool drinks. Good for potpourri and the flowers attract bees.



**Medico Alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*)** Alfalfa produces a large amount of nectar, which is highly attractive to many species of bees, and from which honey bees produce excellent crops of high quality honey. This strain of alfalfa can be made into a tea by placing two teaspoons of dried leaves in a cup of boiling water and soaking for 15 minutes. This tea is used to treat arthritis, boils, digestive disorders, urinary tract infections and bowel disorders. The chlorophyll in this brew will also dispatch of bad breath. Eating the sprouts in salads is also very beneficial.



**Purple Horse Mint (*Monarda Citriodora*)** A hardy annual growing 2-3 feet tall with deep purple to lavender blooms. Flowers are arranged in whorls stair-stepping up a single stem. Attracts bees and hummingbirds.



**Red Clover (*Trifolium pratense*)** Clover is highly attractive to bees, which visit it avidly for nectar and pollen. Red Clover has long had a reputation as a cancer fighter. The plant contains large amounts of tocopherol, a potent antioxidant form of vitamin E that has been shown to prevent tumor formation in animal studies. It may also provide effective relief for menopausal symptoms as elements of the plant behave like estrogen. A tea can be made by

boiling three teaspoons of dried flower tops per cup of water and steeping 15 minutes. Drink 3 cups a day.



**English Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*)** Seasoning for poultry chowders, stews, sauces and pickles. Good honey plant for bees.



**Vitex (*Vitex negundo*)** A magnificent garden plant, it blooms profusely all summer attracting bees and butterflies. The plants can achieve a height of 10 ft. or more. Plants are used medicinally to relieve headaches, dizziness, colds and mental problems.

### Preferred flowers

Most double flowers are of little use, because they're too elaborate. Some are bred without male and female parts, while others have so many petals bees can't get to the nectar and pollen to collect it. This is the main reason why single dahlias are popular with many bees, while doubles are usually ignored.

The single-flowered rose family, which includes crab apple, hawthorn and potentilla, seem to be irresistible to our buzzing friends, as are the flowers of fennel, angelica and cow parsley, and sedums.

Tubular-shaped flowers, such as foxgloves, snapdragons, penstemons and heathers, are also all-favorite feeding places for bees.

### Plants for life

It's vital you provide flowers throughout the bee's life-cycle, from March to September. It's also a good idea to have at least two nectar- or pollen-rich plants in flower at any one time during this period. The nectar feeds the adult bee, while the pollen is collected to feed the young. Of course, the more flowers you have, the more attractive your garden is to bees, so you can never have too many!

Try the following to attract more bees and bumblebees into your garden:



### Spring flowers

Bluebell, bugle, crab apple, daffodil, flowering cherry and currant, forget-me-not (*Myosotis*), hawthorn, hellebore (*Helleborus corsicus*, *H. foetidus*), pulmonaria, pussy willow, rhododendron, rosemary, viburnum, thrift (*Armeria maritima*).



### Early-summer flowers

Aquilegia, astilbe, campanula, comfrey, everlasting sweet pea (*Lathyrus latifolius*), fennel, foxglove, geranium, potentilla, snapdragon, stachys, teasel, thyme, verbascum.



**Late-summer flowers**

Angelica, aster, buddleia, cardoon, cornflower (*Centaurea*), dahlia (single-flowered), delphinium, eryngium, fuchsia, globe thistle (*Echinops*), heather, ivy, lavender, penstemon, scabious, sedum, *Verbena bonariensis*.

**In the following list, plants marked with:**

**An asterisk \* are EXCELLENT for bees**

**An “N” are good for nectar for bees**

**A “P” are good for pollen for bees**

**Abelia NP**

especially A. Chinensis & A. Schumanii, semi-evergreen or deciduous, flowers May-August.

**Acer NP**

Maple, Typically small trees, with often insignificant looking but valuable flowers.

**Achillea N**

Yarrow, various flower colors but often white or yellow from May to Sept. Wild form pernicious.

**Aesculus NP**

Horse Chestnut (Large tree) not suitable for most gardens.

**Alcea syn Althaea NP**

Hollyhock, Tall imposing spikes of flowers, July to September.

**Alchemilla NP**

**Alium NP**

**Alstromeria NP**

**Alyssum maritima NP**

**Alyssum saxatile NP**

**Amelanchier NP**

**Anchusa N**

**Anemone P**

**Anthemis NP**

**Arabis NP**

**Armeria NP**

**Aster \*NP**

Michaelmas Daisy, valuable source of pollen and nectar in autumn. Bright 'daisy' flowers Sept-Oct.

**Aubretia \*NP**

Spectacular small groundcover. Blue/white flowers March-May.

**Berberis \*NP**

Barberry, Especially B. buxifolia, B. Darwinii, B. thunbergii Excellent shrub, frequently with red foliage. Flowers April...July, berries. Excellent also for birds.

**Bergenia P**

**Borago officinalis \*NP**

Borage, gentian blue flowers April to October. Young leaves and flowers in salads and fruit cups, flowers can be candied.

**Buddleia N**

especially globosa. Large quick growing shrubs with typically purple (davidii, alternifolia) or orange (globosa) flowers around June July.

**Calluna vulgaris \*NP**

**Ling Heather, (not on chalk) Ground cover woody perennial flowering in July to November.**

**Caltha palustris NP**

**Campanula \*NP**  
**Bell Flower. Free flowering usually blue herbaceous plant. Robust alpine flowering June to September**

**Castanea sativa NP**  
**Sweet Chestnut (Large tree)**

**Ceanothus \*NP**  
**especially C. thyrisiflorus, half hardy evergreen & deciduous shrub. Blue flowers May to September.**

**Centaurea \*NP**  
**e.g. cornflower etc., Mostly white, pink, blue 'powder puff' flowers June to October.**

**Cersis Siliquastrum NP**

**Chaenomeles NP**

**Cheiranthus \*NP**  
**Wallflower. Pretty, highly fragrant flowers May to September. Some would fill a garden with these alone.**

**Chionodoxa NP**

**Choisya ternata P**

**Cirsium NP**

**Cistus NP**

**Clematis P**

**Colutea NP**

**Coreopsis NP**

**Cornus NP**

**Corylus P**

**Cotinus N**

**Cotoneaster \*NP**  
**especially C. horizontalis & C. simonsii. Flowers May to July, prolific berries in winter if the birds leave some.**

**Crataegus NP**

**Crocus \*NP**  
**Important nectar & pollen source very early in the year.**

**Cynoglossum NP**

**Cytisus \*NP**  
**Broom. Wonderfully scented bushy shrub flowering April to June.**

**Daphne NP**

**Deutzia P**

**Doronicum \*NP**  
**Leopards Bane. Large bright yellow flowers March to May. If cut, give a second showing in autumn.**

**Echinops N**

**Echium NP**

**Eranthis NP**

**Erica \*NP**  
**Heath heather, E. carnea o.k. on chalk, various flowering seasons including late autumn.**

**Eryngium N**

**Escallonia NP**  
**especially E. bifida. Half hardy shrub, flowers June to October.**

**Eucryphia \*NP**  
**especially E. glutinosa. Pretty white flowers July to September.**

**Filipendula P**

**Forsythia NP**

**Fuchsia NP**

**Gaillardia \*NP**  
Blanket flower. Striking orange/red flowers June to November.

**Galanthus \*NP**  
Snowdrop, Important source of winter nectar and pollen.

**Gentiana NP**

**Geranium \*NP**  
Crane's bill (not to be confused with pelargonium). Saucer shaped flowers ranging from pink through blue, May to September.

**Geum NP**

**Gypsophilla N**

**Hamamelis P**

**Hebe \*N**  
Veronica, huge range of half-hardy shrubs and woody perennials.

**Hedera \*NP**  
Ivy. Important source of nectar and pollen in late autumn. Birds love the berries and nesting places.

**Helianthemum NP**

**Helleborus NP**

**Hydrangea NP**

**Hypericum \*P**  
Rose of Sharon or St. John's Wort. Easy shrub with large cup-shaped golden yellow flowers carried in profusion June to September.

**Iberis NP**

**Ilex NP**

**Impatiens \*NP**  
Busy Lizzie and Balsam. Lovely flowers in a large range of bold colors, June to September

**Kniphophia \*NP**  
Red Hot |Poker, Hardy perennial with spectacular fiery 'torches' of flowers June to October.

**Lamium \*NP**  
Dead nettle, Many varieties, often with superb mottled foliar markings. Can be invasive.

**Laurus nobilis N**

**Lavandula \*NP**  
Lavender, July to August.

**Lavatera \*NP**  
Mallow. Annual (most) and woody perennial (olbia). Large, usually pink, trumpet shaped flowers in profusion spring to frosts.

**Limnanthes \*NP**  
Poached egg plant. Named after the appearance of their 1" across blooms with bright yellow centers edged in white, May to September.

**Linaria NP**

**Lithospermum \*N**  
not on chalk; mat forming: "cascading over rocks like a blue waterfall", April to July.

**Lobelia N**

**Lonicera NP**

**Lysimachia NP**

**Lythrum NP**

**Magnolia P**

**Mahonia \*NP**  
Spiky architectural leaves, heavenly scented yellow flowers borne in racemes. A must!

**Malus \*NP**  
Crab apple, Make crab apple jelly too if the birds don't take all the fruits first.

**Malva NP**

**Meconopsis NP**  
**Melissa NP**  
**Mentha \*N**  
 Mint. Tubular purple flowers, August to October.  
**Muscari \*NP**  
 Grape hyacinth. Pink through Blue upright spikes of densely packed, highly scented flowers, March to May.  
**Nemophila \*N**  
 Baby Blue Eyes, Sky blue flowers with a white centre, June to August.  
**Nepeta \*NP**  
 Catmint, Cats love this even more than bees. May need protection in the early years (from the cat).  
**Nigella P**  
**Oenothera P**  
**Olearia NP**  
**Origanum \*NP**  
 Oregano or Marjoram, Bees love it, great herb, flowers white through purple July to October.  
**Osmanthus NP**  
**Papaver \*P**  
 Poppy, Curious jet black pollen from this favorite.  
**Philadelphus \*NP**  
 Mock orange. Clusters of creamy white, orange-scented flowers in June & July.  
**Phlox P**  
**Potentilla NP**  
**Prunus \*NP**  
 The flowering cherries, almonds and apricots etc. Early flowering trees. Please remember to get single flowered varieties!  
**Pyracantha \*NP**  
 Firethorn. Profuse white flowers in June & July, orange or red berries, loved by birds, in winter.  
**Ribes \*NP**  
 Blackcurrant, and flowering currant, redcurrant, white currant, gooseberry. We're talking serious wine and jam making here!  
**Romneya coulteri \*NP**  
 Tree Poppy. Herbaceous shrubby perennials with huge white & and yellow flowers (up to 6" across) July to October.  
**Rosa P**  
**Rosmarinus Officinalis \*NP**  
 Rosemary. White through mauve flowers on this popular herb. Planted in Mediterranean gardens as a welcome to visitors.  
**Rubus \*NP**  
 Blackberry, Raspberry, Bramble. More jam and wine!  
**Salix \*NP especially S. alba**  
 Willow. Important source of early pollen and nectar from the male plants.  
**Salvia NP**  
**Saxifraga NP**  
**Scabiosa NP**  
**Scilla NP**  
**Sedum \*N**  
 Ice plant, Stonecrop. Tiny flowers borne in vast profusion, often late autumn and early spring. Important nectar source.  
**Sidalcea NP**  
**Skimmia NP**  
**Sorbus NP**  
**Stachys NP**

**Stranvaesia \*NP**

White hawthorn-like flowers in June, berries August/September.

**Symphoricarpos NP**

**Syringia NP**

**Thymus \*N**

Thyme. Popular herb bears flowers June to August.

**Tilia \*NP**

Lime tree (Large)

**Tradescantia NP**

**Tricyrtis N**

**Tulipa P**

**Ulex NP**

**Verbascum NP**

**Veronica NP**

**Viburnum \*NP**

Many varieties, some flowering on bare stems in winter. V. Farreri and V. Bodnantense highly scented through winter.

**Viola N**

**Weigela N**

**Trees**

**Catalpa**

**Maple**

**Linden**

**Crab Apple**

**All fruit trees**

**"A Beekeeper's Garden" by Ted Hooper & Mike Taylor. ISBN 0 7136 3023**

**For Beekeepers, F. N. Howes "Plants and Beekeeping" is a useful guide to agricultural crops etc. as well. ISBN 0 571 11358 3**