

Bee Friendly! Plants for Bees and other Pollinators

Pollination: The Love Connection

Plants need love too! They have boy parts and girl parts that must get together to form seeds. Since plants can't go looking for love, they have enlisted pollinators to carry the male pollen from one flower to another flower of the same species. Pollinators don't know that they are the love connection for plants, so the flower must first attract them with color, fragrance and/or shape. They then bribe the pollinators to return by repeatedly dispensing small doses of delectable nectar.

Guidelines for a Pollinator Garden

- Full sun
- **NO** insecticides
- Native flowering plants are the safest choice
- Be cautious of hybrids--they are often sterile
- Heirloom flowers please both you and pollinators
- Plant to maintain continuous blooms from early March to Thanksgiving

Beware of Plants that Poison Pollinators!

The nectar and pollen of plants containing systemic insecticides (Neonicotinoids) will poison your bees and butterflies. Most of the plants sold at big box stores are poisonous. Even large nurseries may be selling plants treated with systemic insecticides, so you need to ask. If the manager of the store doesn't know or can't assure you that their stock is grown organically without systemics, do NOT purchase their plants. You risk poisoning your pollinators.

The following lists include some examples. Most pollinators are not flower-species specific so there are literally thousands of pollinator friendly plants. What matters? Accessibility, rich nectar and copious pollen.

In the Herb Garden	In the Orchard	In the Ornamental Garden	Heirloom Flowers
<p>Many herbs are pollinator magnets, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All mints (Mentha) • All sages (Salvia) • Anise Hyssop (Agastache) • Basil • Beebalm (Monarda) • Borage • Catmint (Nepeta) • Comfrey • Coriander • Hyssop • Lavender • Rosemary • Oregano • Thyme 	<p>Flowering fruit trees provide early spring nectar.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apple Trees • Apricot • Cherry • Peach • Pear • Plum <p>Ornamental Trees/ Shrubs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Butterfly Bush • Caryopteris • Chaste Tree • Lilac • Seven Sons Tree • Spirea 	<p>Look for the species rather than fancy (often sterile) hybrids.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alyssum • Blanket Flower (Gaillardia) • Coneflowers (Echinacea) • Coreopsis • Dianthus • Penta • Phlox • Pincushion (Scabiosa) • Rudbeckia • Russian Sage • Salvia • Sedum • Sunflower: Helianthus, Helium • Verbena 	<p>These annuals bloom for months and often self-seed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calendula • Cleome • Cosmos • Four o'clock • Marigolds • Tithonia (Mexican Sunflower) • Zinnia <p>Nectar-rich "Weeds"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brassica (Mustards) • Clovers • Dandelion • Henbit • Native Thistles

Selected Native Plants

- Achillea (Yarrow)
- Aquilegia (Columbine)
- Asclepias (Milkweeds)
- Aster (Symphotrichum)
- Amorpha (Lead Plant & False Indigo & Nana)
- Baptisia (Wild Indigo)
- Coreopsis
- Dalea purpurea (Prairie Clover)
- Echinacea
- Eupatorium

Selected Native Plants, continued

- Lonicera sempervirens (Honeysuckle)
- Monarda fistulosa
- Partridge Pea
- Penstemon
- Pycnanthemum (Mountain Mint)
- Rudbeckia
- Salvia
- Silphium
- Solidago (Goldenrods)
- Verbena & Vernonia
- Veronicastrum

Is a Pollinator Garden the same as a Butterfly Garden? Usually Not.

Flowers meet all of a bee's needs since the adults eat nectar & pollen and feed this mixture to their larvae. In contrast, each species of butterfly lays its eggs on a specific host plant for its caterpillar to eat. If there are no host plants, it is not a butterfly garden. However, some plants like Milkweeds and Sennas are both great pollinator nectar sources and specific butterfly host plants. (for Monarchs and Sulphurs, respectively.)