

Plants to Attract Bees

With cultivated varieties, generally only single flowered types are suitable, most double flowered varieties are sterile and are frequently of little use to anything but aphids. Double and more complex flowers are almost the norm in Prunus & Rosa for example. Single flowered prunus and rosa have only five petals and have a delicate open flower

Some plants (e.g. mahonia) are especially important because they are a source of pollen or nectar in the autumn, winter or very early spring when honeybees are still active and may be raising young.

Bees are not the only beneficial insects, there are many others (including wasps although they can be a nuisance). As a rule, native plants are a better choice for wildlife than 'exotics' -- but you don't have to be a martyr. Oak trees are of little use to bees but are probably the best all-round tree for wildlife as a whole. Weeds, or wildflowers as we prefer to call them, are generally good if you can live with them.

Some of these plants are large and not suitable for the small garden -- check first that they suit both you and your garden before you buy.

The plants listed are almost entirely from the book "A Beekeeper's Garden" by Ted Hooper & Mike Taylor. We would recommend the book not just for bees but for its generally wildlife-aware attitude. It also gives far more information in its 152 pages than we can in this leaflet! 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

The Nature Conservancy Council publish several excellent leaflets of plants and the environment. Nature Conservancy Council, Attingham Park, Shrewesbury, SY4 4TW.

The British Beekeepers' Association publish leaflets on plants and trees for bees. The Sales Secretary, Jill Chernside, Bryn y Pant Cottage, Upper Llanover, Abergeveny, Gwent. NP9 7ES. (an SAE is appreciated).

Most plants that are good for bees are also good for many other insects including butterflies and moths. Many, particularly those with berries or dense foliage are also useful for birds. Finally, please try not to kill our bees when they visit your plants -- bees are insects and are easily killed by many pesticides. Always read the label, follow the instructions and be careful.

P -- good source of pollen

N -- good source of nectar

*** -- excellent 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 colours 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 (*dauidii*, *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. thyrsiflorus, 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. Lovelt flowers in a large range of bold colours, June to September

Kniphophia *NP

Red Hot |Poker, Hardy perennial with spectacular firey '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 centres 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 favourite.

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, whitecurrant, gooseberry.
We're talking serious wine and jam making here!

Romneya coulteri *NP

Tree Poppy. Herbacious 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

There are more than 250 species of native bee in Britain, including 19 species of bumblebee - 25% of which are now endangered. In the last four years or so, one species of bumblebee has been declared extinct and another has become extinct along the south coast. Today, only 6 out of 16 species are easily found and even these have declined in numbers. Bumblebees are beneficial to farmers because of their importance in pollination, although it is, ironically, the reduction in suitable farmland habitat by these farmers that has aided the decline of the bumblebee. The Bumblebee Working Group and English Nature are encouraging farmers to allow or provide White Deadnettle growth in hedgerows, establish Red Clover in field margins (very important bumblebee plant), and to leave field margins uncultivated for a few years in order to provide hibernation sites and forage areas. Gardeners can do their bit too by providing a small meadow area in their gardens and leaving an area of rough grass, preferably by a hedge, for mice or voles to nest in - what's this got to do with bees? Queen bumblebees like to nest in old mouse and vole nests. You can also buy bee nesting cylinders to attract Red Mason bees, who are excellent

pollinators and non-aggressive. You can also buy special boxes for bumblebees to nest in. Interesting fact - a bumblebee can carry up to 60% of its body weight in pollen.

Bee Plants

Agrimony (*agrimonia eupatoria*)
Angelica (*angelica archangelica*)
Anise Hyssop (*agastache foeniculum*)
Aubretia
Bergamot (*monarda didyma*)
Betony
Bird's Foot Trefoil (*lotus corniculatus*)
Black Horehound (*ballota nigra*)
Blackthorn (*prunus spinosa*)
Bloody Cranesbill
Bluebell (*hyacinthoides non-scripta*)
Borage (*borago officinalis*)
Bugle (*ajuga reptans*)
Butterbur
Cardoon (*cynara cardunculus*)
Catmint (*nepeta cataria*)
Chicory (*cichorium intybus*)
Chives (*allium schoenoprasum*)
Columbine (*aquilegia*)
Cornflower (*centaurea cyanus*)
Foxglove (*digitalis*)
Germander Speedwell (*veronica chamaedrys*)
Globe Flower (*trollius europaeus*)
Globe Thistle (*echinops ritro*)
Grape Hyacinth
Greater Knapweed (*centaurea scabiosa*)
Greater Stitchwort
Gypsywort
Hedge Woundwort (*stachys sylvestris*)
Herb Robert (*geranium robertianum*)
Hollyhock (*althaea rosea*)
Hound's Tongue (*Cynoglossum*)
Hyssop (*hyssopus officinalis*)
Ice Plant (*sedum*)
Lemon Bergamot
Lady's Smock (*cardamine pratensis*)
Lambs Ears (*stachys byzantine*)
Lavender (*lavendula*)
Lemon Balm (*melissa officinalis*)
Lesser Celandine
Lovage (*levisticum officinale*)
Marjoram (*origanum majorana*)
Marsh Marigold

Meadow Clary (*salvia pratensis*)
Meadowsweet (*filipendula ulmaria*)
Apple Mint
Mountain Mint
Mullein (*verbascum*)
Musk Mallow (*malva moschata*)
Oxlip
Painted sage (*slavia horminum*)
Pasque Flower (*pulsatilla vulgaris*)
Penstemon
Poached Egg (*limnanthes douglasii*)
Poppy (*papaver*)
Purple Loosestrife (*lythrum salicaria*)
Ragged Robin (*lychnis flos-cuculi*)
Red Clover (*trifolium pratense*)
Red Valerian (*centranthus ruber*)
Rock Rose (*helianthemum mummularium*)
Rosemary (*rosmarinus officinalis*)
Sainfoin (*onobrychis vicifolia*)
Selfheal (*prunella vulgaris*)
Small Scabious (*scabiosa columbaria*)
Spiked Speedwell (*veronica spicata*)
Sweet Cicely
Sweet William (*dianthus barbatus*)
Teasel (*dipsacus fullonum*)
Thyme (*thymus*)
Tickewwed (*coreopsis*)
Toadflax (*linaria vulgaris*)
Valerian (*valeriana officinalis*)
Viper's Bugloss (*echium vulgare*)
White Clover
Wild Basil (*clinopodium vulgaris*)
Wild Clematis (*clematis vitalba*)
Wild Mignonette (*reseda lutea*)
Wild Privet (*ligustrum vulgare*)
Yellow Archangel
Yellow Flag Iris (*iris pseudacorus*)
Yellow Loosestrife