



Gardening for Bees



Megachile bee on aster



Bombus fervidus on common milkweed

Things to Consider

Before deciding what plants to include in a pollinator garden, consider which bees or other pollinators are already living in or visiting the area already, and then think about the pollinators that you may want to attract. Not all plants, sites and soils may be suitable for all bees, especially those that require specific nesting sites or materials plus seasonal bloom times.

Plant for the longest bloom periods having flowers available from early spring through fall. Native and non-native plants that will provide nectar and pollen at different times of the year should be incorporated to ensure the greatest number of species can find food, both for themselves and for their offspring. Native plants have bloom periods that coincide with the seasonal periods of activity of the different species of native bees, so including native trees, shrubs and perennials will complement non- native plants.

Many native bees nest in the ground, in holes bored in wood or inside pithy plant stems. Leaving small areas of bare soil in the lawn, along wood lines or near the bases of shrubs will help certain ground nesting bees to find a suitable place to create underground nests for egg laying.

See if a few weeds can be tolerated in lawns, especially weeds that flower early- dandelions, dead nettle, ground ivy and violets. Both native and honey bees use these plants as food sources.

Insecticides and some other pesticides may be toxic to bees. If you must use a pesticide, apply at night, if possible, Avoid broad-spectrum insecticides on plants in flower. Never spray flowers. Choose products that are not harmful to bees.

Tips on Choosing Flowering Plants for New England

Choose plants that flower in early spring for bumblebee queens, honey bees and native bees that are out very early in the year. Native willows, dandelions, ground ivy and dead nettle are important nectar and pollen sources for many bees. Also, red maples bloom very early and although wind pollinated, many bees will still use their flowers as food sources. For late fall, witch hazels may bloom from October through late November and are a source of food for bees that are still active in the colder weather.

Plant in drifts, using three or more plants of the same genus in a small group, rather than just using one type of plant but in several spots. An example would be to plant three purple coneflowers together rather than using three coneflowers but separately in the garden. Bees will find easier access to favorite flowers when they are located near each other.

Shrubs and Trees for Attracting Bees

Common name	Latin Name	Bloom time
Azalea	<i>Rhododendron</i>	Spring
Basswood, Linden	<i>Tilia americana</i>	Summer
Blackhaw, Viburnum	<i>Viburnum</i>	Summer
<u>Blueberry</u>	<i>Vaccinium</i>	Spring
Butterfly bush	<i>Buddleia</i>	Summer
Catalpa	<i>Catalpa</i>	Spring
Cherry (native, ornamental)	<i>Prunus</i>	Spring
Chokeberry	<i>Aronia</i>	Spring
Crabapple	<i>Malus</i>	Spring
Currant	<i>Ribes</i>	Spring
Dogwoods	<i>Cornus</i>	Spring
Dogwoods (shrub)	<i>Cornus</i>	Summer
Elderberry	<i>Sambucus</i>	Spring
Fothergilla	<i>Fothergilla</i>	Spring
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus</i>	Spring
Honeysuckle (native)	<i>Lonicera</i>	Spring
<u>Hydrangea (tree)</u>	<i>Hydrangea paniculatum</i>	Summer
Ninebark	<i>Physocarpus</i>	Summer
Red maple	<i>Acer rubrum</i>	Spring
Redbud	<i>Cercis</i>	Spring
Rhododendron	<i>Rhododendron</i>	Summer
Rose-of-Sharon	<i>Hibiscus</i>	Summer
Shadbush	<i>Amalanchier</i>	Spring
Virginia sweetspire	<i>Itea virginica</i>	Summer
Willow (native)	<i>Salix</i>	Spring
Winterberry	<i>Ilex verticillata</i>	Spring
Witch-hazel (native)	<i>Hamamelis</i>	Fall

Annuals and Perennials for Attracting Bees

Common name	Latin Name	Bloom time	Annual/Perennial
Allium	<i>Allium</i>	Spring/Summer	Perennial

Alyssum	<i>Alyssum</i>	Summer	Annual
Anise hyssop	<i>Agastache foeniculum</i>	Summer	Perennial
Aster	<i>Aster</i>	Fall	Perennial
Black-eyed Susan	<i>Rudbeckia</i>	Summer	Perennial
Blazing star	<i>Liatris</i>	Summer	Perennial
Bluebeard	<i>Caryopteris</i>	Summer	Perennial
Bloodroot	<i>Sanguinaria</i>	Spring	Perennial
Boneset	<i>Eupatorium perfoliatum</i>	Summer/Fall	Perennial
Borage	<i>Borago</i>	Summer	Annual
Bugbane	<i>Cimicifuga</i>	Fall	Perennial
Clover	<i>Trifolium</i>	Spring/Summer	Annual
Comfrey	<i>Symphytum</i>	Summer	Perennial
Coneflower	<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	Summer	Perennial
Cosmos	<i>Cosmos</i>	Summer	Perennial
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum</i>	Summer	Perennial
Goldenrod	<i>Solidago</i>	Summer	Perennial
Herbs (assorted)		Summer	Perennial
Heliotrope	<i>Heliotropium</i>	Summer	Annual
Joe-pye weed	<i>Eupatorium</i>	Summer	Perennial
Lantana	<i>Lantana</i>	Summer	Annual
Maximilian sunflower	<i>Helianthus</i>	Fall	Annual
Mexican sunflower	<i>Tithonia</i>	Summer/Fall	Annual
Milkweeds	<i>Asclepias</i>	Summer	Perennial
Mints	<i>Mentha</i>	Summer	Perennial
Montauk daisy	<i>Nipponanthemum</i>	Fall	Perennial
Mountain mints	<i>Pycnanthemum</i>	Summer	Perennial
Obedient plant	<i>Physostegia</i>	Summer	Perennial
Peppers	<i>Capsicum</i>	Summer	Perennial
Raspberries	<i>Rubus</i>	Spring/Summer	Perennial
Russian sage	<i>Perovskia</i>	Summer	Perennial
Salvia	<i>Salvia</i>	Summer	Perennial
Sedum/Stonecrop	<i>Sedum</i>	Summer	Perennial
Snakeroot	<i>Actaea</i>	Fall	Perennial
Spurge	<i>Euphorbia</i>	Summer	Annual
Sunflowers	<i>Helianthus</i>	Summer	Annual
Verbena	<i>Verbena</i>	Summer	Annual
Veronica	<i>Veronica</i>	Summer	Perennial
Violets	<i>Viola</i>	Spring	Perennial
Zinnia	<i>Zinnia</i>	Summer	Annual

Additional information on pollinator plants suitable for the Northeast:

Attracting Pollinators to Your Garden Using Native Plants

Pollinator Plants: Northeast Region

Leave small areas of bare ground for ground-nesting bees, especially where soils are sandy. Do not mulch directly up the base of shrubs as some bees, like *Andrena ssp.*, make nesting chambers in the ground under shrubs and they need access to some exposed soil. Provide a water source- a shallow dish with pebbles is a good choice, or a birdbath with a stone for bees to keep dry while sipping water.

Do not prune any plants with pithy or hollow stems until spring. These stems are used by some bees for nesting sites. Adults will emerge the following spring. If pruning is necessary, then tie stems together and hang from a branch until the following spring rather than composting or discarding them.



Ceratina sp. nesting chamber in shrub *Hydrangea* stem



Nesting house for bees using bamboo tubes sealed at one end

Despite good cultural practices, pests and diseases at times may appear. Chemical control should be used only after all other methods have failed.

For pesticide information or other questions please call toll free: 877-486-6271.

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