

The Best Bee Flowers --- Proven by Horticultural Research

This list includes plants proven by Dr. Gordon Frankie, University of California, and colleagues to be best at attracting bees. Native Oregon plants proven to attract native bees are based on research by Aaron Anderson, Oregon State University Garden Ecology Lab.

Sources: *California Bees & Blooms* by Frankie et al, blogs.oregonstate.edu/gardenecologylab/

Organized by Type of Plant

Tree/Shrub

Common Name	Scientific Name	Bee Food	Bloom Time	Notes
Bluebeard	<i>Caryopteris</i> species	nectar	midsummer, early fall	<i>Caryopteris</i> species include varieties with blue to purple flowers and green to golden foliage
California Lilac	<i>Ceanothus</i> 'Dark Star', 'Julia Phelps'	pollen	spring, early summer	Medium to large shrubs with blue flowers
Chaste Tree	<i>Vitex agnus-castus</i>	pollen&nectar	summer, early fall	Different flower colors to choose from
Manzanita	<i>Arctostaphylos densiflora</i> 'Sentinel'	pollen&nectar	late winter, early spring	<i>Arctostaphylos</i> species especially <i>A. densiflora</i> 'Howard McMinn' & <i>A. densiflora</i> 'Sentinel'
Rosemary	<i>Rosemarinus officinalis</i>	mostly nectar	summer	Many sizes, growth habits, flower colors, and flowering period

Perennial

Common Name	Scientific Name	Bee Food	Bloom Time	Notes
Aster	<i>Aster x frikartii</i>	pollen&nectar	summer, early fall	Also <i>Aster chilensis</i>
Baby Sage	<i>Salvia microphylla</i> 'Hotlips'	pollen&nectar	summer, fall	Other <i>Salvia</i> varieties are also attractive to bees
Black-eyed Susan	<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	pollen&nectar	summer	Varieties with the largest flower head with the deepest yellow petals and darkest center are most attractive to bees
Blanket Flower	<i>Gaillardia x grandiflora</i>	pollen&nectar	summer, early fall	
Bog Sage	<i>Salvia uliginosa</i>	pollen&nectar	summer, fall	Likes moisture
Cat Mint	<i>Nepeta x faassenii</i>	nectar	spring, summer	Flower color varies (white, blue, purple) with variety
Foothill Penstemon	<i>Penstemon heterophyllus</i>	pollen&nectar	summer	Other <i>Penstemons</i> are also attractive to bees
Globe Mallow	<i>Sphaeralcea ambigua</i>	pollen	summer, fall	
Goldenrod	<i>Solidago californica</i>	pollen&nectar	summer, early fall	

Hyssop	<i>Agastache rugosa</i> 'Golden Jubilee'	nectar	summer	<i>Agastache</i> species especially <i>A. rugosa</i> , <i>A. foeniculum</i>
Lamb's Ear	<i>Stachys byzantina</i>	mostly nectar	late spring to summer	Fuzzy grayish foliage is used by wool carder bees to line nests
Largeflower Tickseed	<i>Coreopsis grandiflora</i>	pollen&nectar	summer	Select varieties with the largest and simplest flowers, not ones with multiple layers of petals
Lavender	<i>Lavendula species</i>	nectar	late spring to early fall	Many species, each with different flowering time and color
Lesser Calamint	<i>Calamintha nepeta</i>	nectar	summer, early fall	
Oregano, Marjoram	<i>Origanum species</i>	nectar	summer, early fall	Flower colors vary with pink and purple being common and white is occasional
Pincushion Flower	<i>Scabiosa atropurpurea</i>	pollen&nectar	summer	Flower colors range from white to pink, rose to purple
Purple Toadflax	<i>Linaria purpurea</i>	nectar	spring to early fall	
Russian Sage	<i>Perovskia atriplicifolia</i>	nectar	summer to early fall	Once established needs no summer water
Sea Holly	<i>Eryngium species</i>	nectar	summer	
Seaside Daisy	<i>Erigeron glaucus</i>	pollen&nectar	spring to early fall	
Sneezeweed	<i>Helenium</i> 'Mardi Gras'	pollen&nectar	summer to early fall	Likes summer water for extended flowering
Sunflower (perennial)	<i>Helianthus</i> 'Lemon Queen'	pollen&nectar	summer to early fall	Annual sunflowers are also good bee flowers

Annual

Common Name	Scientific Name	Bee Food	Bloom Time	Notes
Bidens	<i>Bidens ferulifolia</i>	pollen&nectar	late spring to early fall	Not hardy in the Willamette Valley
Cosmos	<i>Cosmos bipinnatus</i>	pollen&nectar	summer to early fall	Flowers may be aster like or bowl shape
Phacelia	<i>Phacelia species</i>	pollen&nectar	spring	Great bee plants but not considered 'garden worthy'

Oregon Native

Common Name	Scientific Name	Bee Food	Bloom Time	Notes
California Poppy	<i>Eschscholzia californica</i>	pollen	spring to early fall	Annual
Clarkia	<i>Clarkia amoena</i>	pollen	summer	Annual
Douglas Aster	<i>Aster subspicatus</i>	pollen&nectar	summer, fall	Perennial
Globe Gilia	<i>Gillia capitata</i>	pollen&nectar	late spring, early summer	Annual
Goldenrod	<i>Solidago canadensis</i>	pollen&nectar	summer, early fall	Perennial
Varied-leaf Phacelia	<i>Phacelia heterophylla</i>	pollen&nectar	spring	Annual

Organized by Why It Attracts Bees

Blue/Purple Color Flower

Common Name	Scientific Name	Bee Food	Bloom Time	Notes
Bluebeard	<i>Caryopteris</i> species	nectar	midsummer, early fall	<i>Caryopteris</i> species include varieties with blue to purple flowers and green to golden foliage
Bog Sage	<i>Salvia uliginosa</i>	pollen&nectar	summer, fall	Likes moisture
California Lilac	<i>Ceanothus</i> 'Dark Star', 'Julia Phelps'	pollen	spring, early summer	Medium to large shrubs with blue flowers
Cat Mint	<i>Nepeta x faassenii</i>	nectar	spring, summer	Flower color varies (white, blue, purple) with variety
Globe Gilia	<i>Gillia capitata</i>	pollen&nectar	late spring, early summer	Oregon native. Annual.
Lavender	<i>Lavendula</i> species	nectar	late spring, summer, early fall	Many species, each with different flowering time and color
Purple Toadflax	<i>Linaria purpurea</i>	nectar	spring, summer, early fall	
Russian Sage	<i>Perovskia atriplicifolia</i>	nectar	summer, early fall	Once established needs no summer water
Sea Holly	<i>Eryngium</i> species	nectar	summer	

Open Platform Flower Shape

Common Name	Scientific Name	Bee Food	Bloom Time	Notes
Aster	<i>Aster x frikartii</i>	pollen&nectar	summer, early fall	Also good is <i>Aster chilensis</i>
Bidens	<i>Bidens ferulifolia</i>	pollen&nectar	late spring, summer, early fall	Not hardy in the Willamette Valley
Black-eyed Susan	<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	pollen&nectar	summer	Varieties with the largest flower head, deepest yellow petals and darkest center are most attractive to bees
Blanket Flower	<i>Gaillardia x grandiflora</i>	pollen&nectar	summer, early fall	
Cosmos	<i>Cosmos bipinnatus</i>	pollen&nectar	summer, early fall	Flowers may be aster like or bowl shape
Douglas Aster	<i>Aster subspicatus</i>	pollen&nectar	summer, fall	Oregon native. Perennial.
Goldenrod	<i>Solidago californica</i>	pollen&nectar	summer, early fall	
Goldenrod	<i>Solidago canadensis</i>	pollen&nectar	summer, early fall	Oregon native
Largeflower Tickseed	<i>Coreopsis grandiflora</i>	pollen&nectar	summer	Select varieties with the largest and simplest flowers, not ones with multiple layers of petals
Oregano, Marjoram	<i>Origanum</i> species	nectar	Summer, early fall	Flower colors vary with pink and purple being common
Phacelia	<i>Phacelia</i> species	pollen&nectar	spring	Not generally considered 'garden worthy'

Pincushion Flower	<i>Scabiosa atropurpurea</i>	pollen&nectar	summer	Flower colors range from white to pink, rose to purple
Seaside Daisy	<i>Erigeron glaucus</i>	pollen&nectar	spring, summer, early fall	
Sneezeweed	<i>Helenium</i> 'Mardi Gras'	pollen&nectar	summer, early fall	Likes summer water for extended flowering
Sunflower (perennial)	<i>Helianthus</i> 'Lemon Queen'	pollen&nectar	summer, early fall	Annual sunflowers are also good bee flowers
Varied-leaf Phacelia	<i>Phacelia heterophylla</i>	pollen&nectar	spring	Annual

Buzz-Pollinated Flower

Common Name	Scientific Name	Bee Food	Bloom Time	Notes
Foothill Penstemon	<i>Penstemon heterophyllus</i>	pollen&nectar	summer	Other <i>Penstemons</i> are also attractive to bees
Manzanita	<i>Arctostaphylos densiflora</i> 'Sentinel'	pollen&nectar	late winter, early spring	<i>Arctostaphylos</i> species especially <i>A. densiflora</i> 'Howard McMinn' & <i>A. densiflora</i> 'Sentinel'

Pollen Bowl Flower Shape

Common Name	Scientific Name	Bee Food	Bloom Time	Notes
California Poppy	<i>Eschscholzia californica</i>	pollen	spring, summer, early fall	Oregon native
Clarkia	<i>Clarkia amoena</i>	pollen	summer	Oregon native
Globe Mallow	<i>Sphaeralcea ambigua</i>	pollen	summer, fall	

Easy Bee Access

Common Name	Scientific Name	Bee Food	Bloom Time	Notes
Baby Sage	<i>Salvia microphylla</i> 'Hotlips'	pollen&nectar	summer, fall	Other <i>Salvia</i> varieties are also attractive to bees
Chaste Tree	<i>Vitex agnus-castus</i>	pollen&nectar	summer, early fall	Different flower colors to choose from
Hyssop	<i>Agastache rugosa</i> 'Golden Jubilee'	nectar	summer	<i>Agastache</i> species especially <i>A. rugosa</i> , <i>A. foeniculum</i> Most have blue/purple flowers
Lamb's Ear	<i>Stachys byzantina</i>	mostly nectar	late spring, summer	Fuzzy grayish foliage is used by wool carder bees to line nests
Lesser Calamint	<i>Calamintha nepeta</i>	nectar	summer, early fall	
Rosemary	<i>Rosemarinus officinalis</i>	mostly nectar	summer	Many sizes, growth habits, flower colors, and flowering period