



# Plants & Habitat Tips for Bees And Other Pollinators

Bees and Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) have been in the news a lot recently. While the causes of CCD are still being studied and evaluated, we know part of the problem is pesticide use and habitat loss. But, it's not just about honeybees. There are over 4,000 wild bee species in North America, many of them important pollinators, and they need help, too, as do other pollinators such as bats, birds, and butterflies. Here is a simple guide to get you started in providing a welcoming habitat to bees and other pollinators. For more information, look up **The Xerces Society** and **Pollinator Partnership** online, as well as the excellent guidebook from The Xerces Society, *100 Plants to Feed the Bees*. Our guide is aimed for the ecoregion known as Southern Mixed Forest to which most of the Piedmont of NC belongs. **Plants are listed here are often for providing nectar but also forage (meaning the insect eats the plant, as with fennel and parsley) and habitat/nesting (as with ornamental grasses).**

## Annual Flowers, Herbs, & Vegetables for Pollinators

*(an annual dies at the end of the season as will the following herbs & veggies)*

- Alyssum** - bees, butterflies
- Basil** - bees, butterflies
- Begonia** - hummingbirds
- Breadseed Poppy** - bees
- California poppy** - bees
- Catnip** - bees
- Cigar Plant** - hummingbirds
- Cleome** - bees, butterflies, hummingbirds
- Cosmos** - bees, butterflies
- Eggplant** - bees
- Gazania** - bees, butterflies
- Green beans** - bees
- Heliotrope** - bees, butterflies
- Impatiens** - bees
- Lantana** - bees, butterflies
- Marigolds** - bees, butterflies
- Mexican Heather/Cuphea** - bees
- Morning Glory** (vine) - bees
- Parsley** - butterflies
- Peas/Beans/Legumes** - bees
- Pentas** - bees, butterflies, hummingbirds
- Petunia** - butterflies
- Phlox** - bees, butterflies
- Portulaca** - bees
- Salvia** - bees, hummingbirds
- Squash** - bees
- Sunflowers** - bees, butterflies
- Sweet William** (biennial) - bees
- Verbena** - bees, butterflies
- Zinnias** - bees, butterflies



## Perennial Flowers & Herbs for Pollinators

*Perennials can live for several years or more.*

- Anise hyssop** (*Agastache*) - bees, butterflies, hummingbirds
- Asters** - bees, butterflies
- Beebalm** - bees, butterflies, hummingbirds
- Black-eyed Susan** - bees, butterflies
- Blanketflower** (*Gaillardia*) - bees
- Blue Mist/Blue Beard** - bees, butterflies
- Calamint & Catmint** - bees, butterflies
- Columbine** - bees, hummingbirds
- Comfrey** - bees
- Coneflower** - bees, butterflies
- Coreopsis** - bees, butterflies
- Cornflower** (*Centaurea*) - bees
- Cranesbill** (*Geranium*) - bees
- Daylily** - butterflies
- Dianthus** - butterflies
- Eastern Bluestar** (*Amsonia*) - moth, butterfly, hummingbird
- Evening Primrose** - bees, hummingbirds
- Foamflower** - bees, butterflies
- Foxglove** - bees, hummingbirds
- Hellebore/Lenten rose** - bees
- Heuchera** - bees, hummingbirds
- Hollyhock** - butterflies, hummingbirds
- Iris** - bees
- Ironweed** - bees, butterflies
- Gaura** - bees, butterflies
- Germander** - bees,
- Green 'n Gold** (*Chrysogonum*) - bees
- Goldenrod** - bees, butterflies
- Helenium** - bees (many)
- Joe Pye Weed** - bees, butterflies, caterpillar host
- Lamb's Ear** - bees
- Lantana** - bees, butterflies
- Lavender** - bees, butterflies
- Lemon Balm** - bees, butterflies
- Liatris** - bees, butterflies, hummingbirds
- Milkweed/Butterfly weed** - bees, butterflies
- Mountain Mint** - bees (a favorite)
- Obedient Plant** - bees, butterflies
- Oregano** - bees
- Passionflower** - bees
- Penstemon** - bees
- Phlox** - bees, butterflies
- Pincushion Flower** (*Scabiosa*) - butterflies
- Pink Muhly Grass** - bees (habitat)
- Pink Turtlehead** - bees
- Poker Plant** (*Kniphofia*) - bees, butterflies, hummingbirds
- Sage** (Flowering)- bees, butterflies, hummingbirds
- Sage** (Culinary) - bees
- Sedum** - bees, butterflies
- Shasta Daisy** - bees, butterflies
- Spiderwort** - bees
- Stoke's Aster** - bees
- Sunflower** (*Helianthus*) - bees, caterpillar host
- Switchgrass** - bees (habitat)

More plants plus Tips on next page

## Perennials, continued

**Little Bluestem** (*Schizachryium*) - bees

**Verbena** - bees, butterflies

**Virginia bluebells** - bees

**Veronica/Spike Speedwell** - bees, butterflies

**Wallflower** - bees, butterflies

**Wild Indigo** (*Baptisia*) - bees, butterflies

**Yarrow** - bees, butterflies

**Yucca** - hummingbirds

**Herbs** - Basil, borage, chives, dandelion, dill, savory, bronze fennel, lavender, lemon balm, oregano, marjoram, mint, parsley, rosemary, thyme. Parsley and fennel are caterpillar host plants for Eastern swallowtail butterflies.



## Basic Garden Tips for Encouraging Pollinators

- Provide **shelter and water** in addition to food sources.
- **Plant in groups at least four feet in diameter** to maximize efficiency for pollinators who can visit many flowers of the same species more easily that way.
- **Use as little pesticide as possible**, or none at all. Carefully manage pesticides used by observing label restrictions and **always spray at before dawn or at dusk (or after dusk)** to avoid times when bees are foraging.
- **Minimize soil disturbance** (i.e. tilling) to protect ground-nesting bees.
- **Plant a variety** of trees, shrubs, and flowers that bloom at different times and also those which also provide shelter.
- Look for **flowers in different colors and shapes** which will attract more and different pollinators.
- **Leave dead snags and stems** of dormant plants for bee nesting sites.
- Incorporate **native plants** into your landscape. Bees often prefer native plants to hybrids.
- **Provide water** via birdbaths, shallow dishes, ponds, etc. Ensure there is a shallow or sloping side to the water feature so that pollinators may approach without drowning.

## Shrubs for Pollinators

**Abelia** - bees, butterflies

**Beautyberry** - bees

**Blackberry** - bees, moths

**Blueberry** - bees

**Bottlebrush Buckeye** - bees, butterflies, hummingbirds

**Butterflybush** - bees, butterflies, moths

**Chinese redbud** - bees, butterflies

**Citrus** - bees, caterpillar host

**Crepemyrtle** - bees, hummingbirds

**Fatsia** - beneficial wasps

**Fothergilla** - bees

**Inkberry** - bees, caterpillar host

**Lilac** - butterflies

**Ninebark** - bees, butterflies, birds

**PeeGee hydrangea** - bees

**Pepperbush** (*Clethra*) - bees, butterflies

**Raspberry** - bees, moths

**Rose-of-Sharon** - butterflies

**Serviceberry** - bees, butterflies, caterpillar host

**Spirea** - bees

**St. Johnswort** - bees

**Sumac** - bees, butterflies

**Sweetspire** - bees

**Viburnum** - butterflies

**Winterberry** - bees

## Trees for Pollinators

**American Yellowwood** - bees

**Black Locust** (*Robinia*) - bees, hummingbirds, moths

**Buckeye/Horsechestnut** - bees, hummingbirds

**Chaste Tree** (*Vitex*) - bees, butterflies

**Corneliancherry dogwood**

**Crepemyrtle** - bees, hummingbirds

**Flowering apricot, cherry, crabapple, plum, peach** (Except Kwanzan cherry) - bees

**Goldenrain tree** - bees

\* **Groundsel** (*Baccharis*) - bees\*

**Pussy Willow** (*S. caprea*) - bees, caterpillar host

**Redbud** - bees, caterpillar host, bee nesting

**Sourwood** - bees

**Magnolia** - bees, caterpillar host

**Mimosa** - bees, hummingbirds

**Tulip Poplar** - bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, caterpillar host

\* Groundsel grows in the wild in our area and is not sold in nurseries. It is listed so that you know it is a beneficial plant for bees should some seed itself on your property, or someone offers it to you to dig from their yard. The white flowers in fall are a showy counterpoint to fall leaf colors.

- Consider that **some types of plant damage to plants are made by pollinators** gathering nesting material or by the larval stage of a butterfly or moth that pollinates flowers. Perhaps the 15 Foot Rule can be used in your garden. If you can't see the damage from 15 or more feet away, consider whether you want to try to control it in the first place. Some types of plant damage do not affect the long-term health of the plant. This may allow you to forego pesticides more often.
- **Amend and top-dress garden beds with plenty of organic matter** and compost to encourage healthy plants with plentiful blooms.
- **Butterflies love mud puddles** which provide them with essential nutrients. A bird bath can be used for this purpose if you prefer not to have a puddle on the ground.
- **Pieces of fruit** left out will also attract butterflies.
- **Early-blooming plants help pollinators** through the lean part of the year when spring is coming. A succession of flowering plants that lasts from spring through fall will support a range of bee species.

