

The best garden plants to attract a broad variety of pollinators

by Mark Patterson of Api:Cultural

Plant variety	Flowering period	Pollinators attracted Specialist species in bold
* <i>Helenium autumnale</i>	July to October	Honey Bee, <i>Lasioglossum</i> bees, Hoverflies, 4 species of butterfly
** <i>Oreganum vulgare</i> or <i>Oreganum onites</i>	June to October	Honey Bee, <i>Lasioglossum</i> bees, <i>Andrena</i> bees, bumblebees, <i>Melitta</i> bees, <i>Hylaeus</i> bees, Hoverflies, 9 species of butterfly
*** <i>Agastache foeniculum</i>	July to September	Honey Bee, bumblebees, 4 species of butterfly, Hummingbird Hawkmoth, hoverflies, flower bees,
Calamint	July to August	Honey Bee, bumblebees, <i>Megachile</i> bees
Lavender "Gross Bleu"	July to September	Honey Bee, bumblebees, <i>Lasioglossum</i> bees, butterflies
<i>Nepeta</i>	June to September	Honey Bee, bumblebees, <i>Megachile</i> bees, Wool Carder Bee, flower bees, butterflies, Mint Moth, <i>Osmia</i> bees
<i>Echium vulgare</i>	June to September	Honey Bee, bumblebees, <i>Megachile</i> bees, <i>Osmia</i> bees, Wool Carder Bee, flower bees, <i>Hoplitis adunca</i> , <i>Lasioglossum</i> bees, pollen beetles
<i>Veronica spicata</i>	June to September	Honey Bee, bumblebees, <i>Lasioglossum</i> bees, <i>Hylaeus</i> bees, hoverflies, butterflies
<i>Teucrium hiricanum</i>	June to October	Honey Bee, bumblebees, flower bees, <i>Lasioglossum</i> bees, hoverflies, butterflies, Mint Moth, Swollen Thigh Beetle, pollen beetles, Wool Carder Bee
<i>Sedum spectabile</i>	August to October	Honey Bee, bumblebees, <i>Lasioglossum</i> bees, butterflies
(*) <i>Solidago</i> Golden Rod	July to October	Honey Bee, bumblebees, <i>Xylocopa</i> bees, <i>Coelioxys</i> bees, <i>Lasioglossum</i> bees, butterflies, beetles.
<i>Hyssopus</i>	June to September	Honey Bee, bumblebees, <i>Lasioglossum</i> bees,
<i>Eryngium</i>	June to September	Honey Bee, bumblebees, <i>Lasioglossum</i> bees, <i>Hylaeus</i> bees, butterflies, hoverflies, pollen beetles, solitary wasps
<i>Echinops</i>	June to September	Honey Bee, bumblebees, <i>Lasioglossum</i> bees, <i>Hylaeus</i> Bees, solitary wasps
**** <i>Centaurea</i> (knapweeds and Perennial Cornflower)	May to November	bumblebees, <i>Lasioglossum</i> bees, <i>Megachile</i> bees, <i>Osmia</i> bees, hoverflies, butterflies, pollen beetles
***** <i>Cirsium</i> (thistles)	June to September	bumblebees, Honey Bee, <i>Andrena</i> bees, <i>Halictus</i> bees, <i>Colletes</i> bees, flower bees, long horn beetles, Swollen Thigh Beetle, pollen beetles, butterflies, solitary wasps

These suggestions are based on several years of data collection in studies into flower attractiveness to pollinators conducted by the Laboratory of Apiculture and Social Insects (LASI) and Rosybee Plants, supplemented with results from the Agriland Project along with my own observations over the years in my London garden.

(*) *Solidago* was shown by [Rosybee trials](#) not to be very attractive to bees however in my own garden I have 3 varieties which attract large numbers of predominantly solitary bees, blue butterflies, solitary wasps, hoverflies and pollinating beetles. On regular visits to the prairie plantings in London's Burgess Park and on my regular travels around North America I have witnessed Golden Rod visited by an extraordinary range of pollinators. *Solidago* is the only plant in my garden on which I have seen sharp tailed bees visit.

*The most attractive garden plant for bees in 4 years of trials By Rosybee.

** The most attractive plant for butterflies by LASI and top 10 plants for bees by both LASI and Rosybee trials.

*** The most attractive plant for bees in trials by LASI.

**** *Centaurea nigra* (Black Knapweed) ranked 4th by Agriland project for abundance of nectar produced per Ha and *Centaurea montana* (Perennial Cornflower) consistently in top 20 most attractive plants by Rosybee – in addition *Centaurea* species have long flower season and prolonged usefulness to bees.

***** UK native Plant producing the most nectar according to Agriland Project.

Some examples of plants which are beneficial to specialist species and are a good way to provide for fussy flower visitors to your garden.

Plant variety	Flowering period	Main benefitting pollinator
Everlasting Pea	May to August	Megachile bees
<i>Stachys</i>	May to September	Wool Carder Bee (collects hairs from the plant to carder its nest) Fork tailed flower bee
<i>Campanula</i> Bellflowers	May to September	<i>Chelostoma campanularum</i>, <i>Melitta haemorrhoidalis</i> , bumblebees, Honey Bee
<i>Achillea</i> (Yarrow)	May to September	Wool Carder Bee (collects hairs from the plant to carder its nest)
<i>Allium</i>	April to September	<i>Hylaeus</i> bees Honey Bee, bumblebees
<i>Lamium maculatum</i>	March to November	Bumblebees, Hairy-footed Flower Bee
<i>Pulmonaria</i>	March to May	Hairy-footed Flower Bee
<i>Astrantia</i>	April to August	<i>Hylaeus</i> bees
Asteraceae (daisies)	April to October	<i>Hylaeus</i> bees, <i>Colletes</i> bees, Swollen Thigh Beetle
Foxglove	April to July	Garden Bumblebee
Yellow Loosestrife	June to August	Yellow Loosestrife Bee <i>Macropis europaeus</i>
Hawksbeard	June to September	Pantaloan Bee <i>Dasypoda hirtipes</i>, Red Tailed Bumblebee, Honey Bee, <i>Andrena</i> bees, <i>Osmia</i> bees

There are lots more planting suggestions on the “plants for pollinators pages” of the [Api:Cultural website](#), along with download guides for plants for different types of bees. There are also lots of resources on the [London Bee Keepers Association website](#).

Mark Patterson, Api:Cultural <http://www.apicultural.co.uk/contact>.