



Habitat Recommendations for Bee Friendly Landscaping in Vermont

Many bees are considered specialists - meaning they only visit a small number of plant species for all their food needs. These species in particular can benefit from small backyard plantings of their favorite foods. Generalists (and other organisms) will also benefit from an increased diversity of native plants, especially if flowers are available through the entire growing season. Most of the species on this list are visited by specialist bees that occur in Vermont and could visit your yard if their food is there.

Guidelines

- **Mow a smaller area - every little bit helps!**
- Plant native species or **encourage those already growing in the area**
- Avoid using pesticides or buying treated nursery plants (see disclaimer)
- “Leave the leaves” - Leaf litter and dead plant stalks are important nesting and overwintering habitat for many insects (including bees)



Plant sources

- **East Hill Tree Farm** - Plainfield, VT. Primarily trees and shrubs. Pickup only
- **Northeast Pollinator Plants** - Fairfax, VT. Primarily small perennials. Mail order young plants
- **Full Circle Garden** - Essex VT, focusing on pollinator plants
- **Nasami Farm** - Whately Mass. Neonic free
- **Wild Seed Project** - Maine
- **The Farm Upstream** - Wholesale shrubs from local genotypes (available starting in 2024)

Disclaimers

- Many of the genera (plant groups) listed on this card contain non-native species. Avoid planting non-native, and particularly invasive species, whenever possible.
- **Many nurseries treat plants with systemic pesticides, including neonicotinoids, which can be highly toxic to bees. Ask about pesticide use before buying.**
- Plant local genotypes whenever possible, especially for rare plants
- Consult other references for more specific growing information, <http://www.nativeplanttrust.org/> is a good one.

🐝 = easy choice | ☀️ = full sun | 🌤️ = partial shade | ☁️ = shade | 🦌 = deer resistant
 ⚠️ = genus contains non-native species | 🐝 = provides habitat for cavity-nesting bees
 month = blooming period



Trees

Black Willow (*Salix nigra*) ⚠️ 🦌 - May, damp soil
Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*) - April
Basswood (*Tilia americana*) ⚠️ - July
Chestnut (*Castanea dentata*) ⚠️ - Early July

Shrubs

Willows (*Salix* sp.) 🐝 ⚠️ 🦌 - April + May, damp soils
Currants (*Ribes* sp.) 🌤️ ⚠️ - May
Blueberries (*Vaccinium* sp.) 🐝 ☀️ - May + June
Early Azalea (*Rhododendron prinophyllum*) - May + June, specialist bee only known from Bennington County
Dogwoods (*Cornus* - **Swida* group*) 🐝 - May + June. *Doesn't include Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*)
Brambles (*Rubus* sp.) 🐝 ⚠️ 🦌 - May - August depending on species
Sumac (*Rhus* sp.) 🐝 🌤️ 🦌 - Flowering dates and associated bees are species specific
Winterberry Holly (*Ilex verticillata*) 🐝 - June + July, specialist bee likely needs sand
Sheep Laurel (*Kalmia angustifolia*) - June + July, bogs and dry, rocky sites
He-Huckleberry (*Lyonia ligustrina*) 🌤️ - Specialist bee only known from Bennington County

Flowers

Spring Beauties (*Claytonia* sp.) 🌤️ - April + May, hardwood forests
Trout Lily (*Erythronium americanum*) 🌤️ - April + May, hardwood forests
Strawberries (*Fragaria* sp.) ☀️ 🦌 - May, tasty!
Virginia Waterleaf (*Hydrophyllum virginianum*) 🌤️ - June, rich soils, partial shade
Violets (*Viola* sp.) ⚠️ - May, specialist bee only known from Windsor County
Wild Geranium (*Geranium maculatum*) 🌤️ - May + June
Golden Alexander (*Zizia aurea*) 🐝 ☀️ - June, wet meadows
Loosestrifes - (*Lysimachia quadrifolia* + *L. terrestris*) 🐝 🌤️ ⚠️ - June + July, damp soil
Dogbane (*Apocynum* sp.) ☀️ 🦌 - June + July. *Poisonous to dogs and some livestock*
Clammy Ground Cherry (*Physalis heterophylla*) ☀️ ⚠️ - July - September, sandy soils
Evening Primroses (*Oenothera* sp.) 🐝 ⚠️ - June - September. Species preference of specialist bee uncertain
Fireweed (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*) ☀️ - July and August, disturbed sites
Pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*) - July + August, shallow wetlands
Water lilies (*Nymphaeaceae* sp.) - June - August, shallow wetlands
Wild Bergamot - (*Monarda fistulosa*) - 🐝 🐝 July + August.
Vervain - (*Verbena* sp.) 🦌 🐝 ⚠️ - July + August, moist soils
Sunflowers (*Helianthus* sp.) ⚠️ 🐝 - July + August, native perennial species preferred
Fen Grass of Parnassus (*Parnassia glauca*) - August + September. Fens and rich shorelines
Thistles (*Cirsium* sp.) ⚠️ 🐝 🦌 - July + August. *Most common species are non-native*.
Goldenrods (*Solidago* sp.) 🐝 🐝 🦌 - July - September. Common
Asters (*Symphotrichum* sp.) 🐝 - August - October. Common
Bur Marigolds (*Bidens* sp.) 🐝 - September, damp soil



Learn more: <https://val.vtecostudies.org/projects/vtbees/specialists/>
 Questions? Email Spencer Hardy shardy@vtecostudies.org