

Gardening for Bees and Butterflies
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4-27-1011

Some types of pollinators in the Northwest are bees (native and honey) and butterflies. We can attract these wonderful beneficials to our yards easily, reaping the benefits of their natural feeding habits in our flower gardens, orchards and berry patches.

When designing bee and/or butterfly gardens, we should know a few things before starting. Remember, these creatures are cold-blooded and need flat, sunny surfaces to warm themselves. Shady spots are needed during warmer months. Flat surfaces can be rocks, stumps, garden art etc.

Providing a shallow watering hole or other type of water feature allows pollinating insects to “puddle”, sucking moisture and minerals to rehydrate. A shallow dish or basin lined with rocks to prevent drowning is ideal.

Offering a variety of pollen and nectar producing plants throughout the year is important. All creatures need a well balanced diet. Planting a variety of plant species allows them to maintain a healthy, natural diet. Bees and butterflies can't see true blue or red so they prefer yellow, white, purple and pink blossoms to feed from.

Bees like plants to have some space between them while butterflies prefer to have their buffet all crammed in together, cottage garden fashion. Bees can feed from wide open blooms such as an Aster or tight, cup or bell shaped flowers like Columbine and Foxglove. Butterflies and moths favor, blossoms that are open wide, rather than the longer, narrower flowers.

Here is a partial list of bee and butterfly attractors. These plants can also entice humming and other birds:

ANNUALS: Asters, Heliotrope, Cosmos, Fuschia, Dahlias, Marigolds, Poppies, Sunflowers, and Zinnias.

PERENNIALS: Clematis, Crocuses, Echinacea, Black-eyed Susan, Foxglove, Honeysuckle, Geraniums, Globe Thistle, Hollyhocks, Hyacinth, Rock Cress, Roses, Sedum, Snowdrops

FRUIT PRODUCING PLANTS AND TREES:

Blackberries, Cucumbers, Peppers, Pumpkins, Raspberries, Strawberries, Apple, Cherry, Plum, Hazel, Pear, Peach, Nectarine

HERBS: Bee Balm, Catnip, Cilantro, Dill, Fennel, Lavender, Lemon Balm, Mints, Rosemary, Sage, Thyme

SHRUBS: Blueberry, California lilac, Weigelia, Viburnum, Dogwood, Spirea, Ninebark, Salaal

TREES: Black Locust, Hawthorns, Redbud, Willow, Golden Rain Tree, Linden, Magnolia, Maples

More plant lists may be found on the Jefferson County Master Gardener website.