



# 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)
- Aim to have native plants blooming all season



## Plant sources

A list of local sources for native plants is available here:

[https://figshare.com/articles/online\\_resource/Vermont\\_Native\\_Plant\\_Sources/24915069](https://figshare.com/articles/online_resource/Vermont_Native_Plant_Sources/24915069)

## 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.
- Plant local genotypes whenever possible, especially for rare plants. Plants with a variety name ie. *Crataegus viridis* ‘Winter King’ are cultivars that may not have the same characteristics and conservation value as the wild species.
- **Many nurseries treat plants with systemic pesticides, including neonicotinoids, which can be highly toxic to bees. Ask about pesticide use before buying. [More info here.](#)**
- Consult other references for more information, a few good ones:
  - <http://www.nativeplanttrust.org/>
  - <https://xerces.org/pollinator-resource-center/northeast>

🏆 = easy choice | 🐝 = supports a specialist bee | 🦌 = deer resistant | month = bloom period  
 🏠 = provides habitat for cavity-nesting bees | ⚠️ = genus contains non-native species

## Trees

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

## Shrubs

**Willows** (*Salix* sp.) 🐝 🏆 ⚠️ 🦌 - April + May, damp soils  
**Serviceberries** (*Amelanchier* sp.) 🏆 ⚠️ - May, birds love the fruit  
**Currants** (*Ribes* sp.) ⚠️ - May, shade tolerant  
**Blueberries** (*Vaccinium* sp.) 🐝 🏆 - May + June  
**Early Azalea** (*Rhododendron prinophyllum*) 🐝 - May + June, shade tolerant, local in VT  
**Dogwoods** (*Cornus* - \**Swida* group\*) 🐝 🏆 - May + June. \*Doesn't include Flowering Dogwood (*C. florida*)  
**Chokecherry** (*Prunus virginiana*) - May  
**Hawthorns** (*Crataegus* sp.) ⚠️ 🦌 - May + June  
**Sumac** (*Rhus* sp.) 🐝 🏠 🦌 - Flowering dates and associated bees are species specific  
**Winterberry Holly** (*Ilex verticillata*) 🐝 🏆 - June + July, specialist bee likely needs sand  
**New Jersey Tea** (*Ceanothus americanus*) 🐝 🏆 - June + July, dry woods  
**Sheep Laurel** (*Kalmia angustifolia*) 🐝 - June + July, bogs and dry, rocky sites  
**He-Huckleberry** (*Lyonia ligustrina*) 🐝 - June, shade tolerant, local in VT  
**Spiraea** (*Spiraea alba* and *S. tomentosa*) (🐝?) 🏆 ⚠️ - July + August

## Herbaceous plants

**Spring Beauties** (*Claytonia* sp.) 🐝 - April + May, shade tolerant  
**Trout Lily** (*Erythronium americanum*) 🐝 - April + May, shade tolerant  
**Strawberries** (*Fragaria* sp.) 🐝 ⚠️ - May, tasty!  
**Virginia Waterleaf** (*Hydrophyllum virginianum*) 🐝 - June, rich soils, shade tolerant  
**Violets** (*Viola* sp.) 🐝 ⚠️ - May, specialist bee only known from Windsor County  
**Wild Geranium** (*Geranium maculatum*) 🐝 - May + June, shade tolerant  
**Golden Alexander** (*Zizia aurea*) 🐝 🏆 - June, wet meadows  
**Loosestrifes** - (*Lysimachia quadrifolia* + *L. terrestris*) 🐝 🏆 ⚠️ - June + July, damp soil, shade tolerant  
**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.  
**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. Easy to grow.  
**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** (*Symphyotrichum* sp.) 🐝 🏆 - August - October. Common  
**Bur Marigolds** (*Bidens* sp.) 🏠 - September, damp soil

