

Api:Cultural Guide to Shrubs for Bees

Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* is a valuable forage plant for honey bees and grows in abundance along the city's network of railway lines and across brownfield sites. Both nectar and pollen are collected and can make a significant contribution to urban and rural honeys.

Flowering time: May to September.



Hebe. Shrubby members of the Veronica family originating from New Zealand. Many are highly attractive to bees. Honey bees visit them late in the season when other flowers are scarce and Bumble bees will visit them at most times. There are a great many varieties grown in parks and gardens but one of the most beneficial varieties are Great Orme and Autumn Glory which flower in summer through to autumn when few other plants are in bloom. Both Pollen and Nectar is collected.

Butterfly Bush *Buddleia sp.* Originate in the Far East but have spread throughout much of Europe. They are pioneering plants of cliff sides and so are well suited to growing on disturbed brownfield sites, crumbling old walls and railway verges. The common Buddleia with its long spikes of purple flowers is of limited use to honey bees but is visited by longer tongued butterflies and bumble bees. The orange globe shaped flowers of *Buddleia globulosa* is very attractive to honey bees however and makes a valuable forage plant in mid to late summer.



Escalonia. These handsome shrubs from South America with their trumpet shaped flowers which ooze nectar generously are popular with Honey bees and short tongued Bumble bees. They typically flower June to August but in the city microclimate can often be seen flowering up until the first frosts of autumn.

Rosa x Xanthina 'Canary Bird' is a delicate canary yellow thorn less rose with open flowers and a climbing habit. Its flowers in mid spring to early summer are a magnet for all manner of bees and hoverflies. Short tongued Bumble bees

will work it alongside Honey Bees, Mason Bees, Leafcutter Bees and Mining Bees. A must have for any garden!

In this picture an *Andrena haemorrhoa* is collecting pollen.

Lavender *Lavendula sp.* Are well known for being attractive to bees but recent studies have shown that they are more attractive to Bumble bees who's longer tongues can access the nectar from the deep flower tubes several seconds faster than the shorter tongued Honey bees can. The varieties most attractive to bees are the modern *Lavendula x intermedia* hybrids with the varieties 'Gross Bleu' and 'Edelweiss' being particularly attractive to bees.

Viburnum tinus is an evergreen relative of our native Geulder Rose. This attractive winter flowering shrub bears sweetly scented blooms in profusion from November to April. On warm autumn and winter days Honey bees and butterflies will visit its flowers for its sweet nectar.

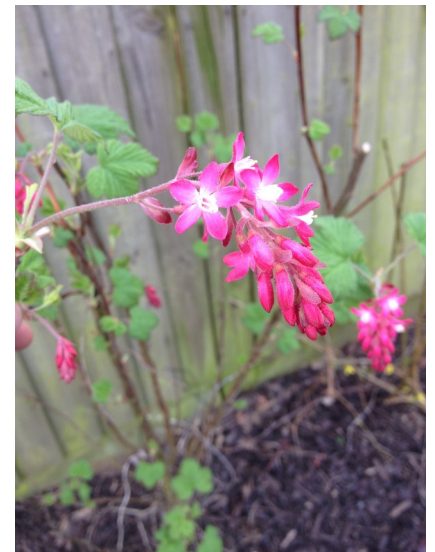
Oregon Grape *Mahonia* sp. Originate from the Western USA and are widely cultivated in the UK. In London they are a popular choice for amenity planting on Social Housing estates, Shopping centre car parks and city parks.



The variety 'Winter sun' is particularly attractive to bees flowering from Late October to February. The widespread planting of Mahonia in Southern towns and Cities like London have given rise to a behavioural change in urban Buff Tailed Bumble bees who are becoming increasingly active during the winter when other bees are dormant. Increasingly Buff Tailed Queens rather than going into hibernation in autumn are founding a third generation of the year and remain active throughout the cold winter feeding predominantly on Mahonia. Being large and furry

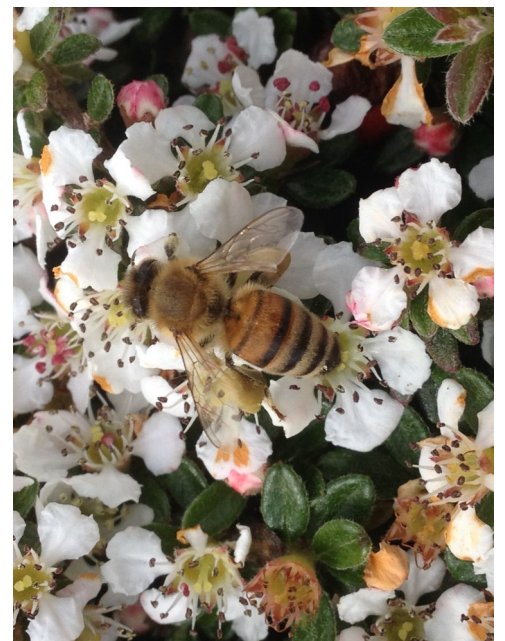
the bees are able to fly even in freezing temperatures when there is zero competition from other insects. 75% of all winter flower visitations in winter are to Mahonia making it an important winter plant.

Flowering Currant *Ribes sanguineum* is an attractive medium sized shrub which produces an abundance of pink blooms in early spring. It is one of the first nectar sources to appear after the cold winter and is highly sought after by Honey bees, Early Bumble bees and Common Carder bee. The Variety Kind Edward has very attractive deep pink flowers. Flowering time: April.



Fire Thorn *Pyracantha coccinea* is a plant popular with Honey bees, some solitary bees and the shorter tongued Bumble bees. This plant is frequently grown in city squares, parks, gardens and amenity areas. It is widely used in plantings on social housing estates particularly in front of ground floor apartments where its vicious thorns deter burglars. In the very centre of the city where there is little forage Pyracantha will be visited by every bee in the neighbourhood in May and June when it blooms.

Cotoneaster are a group of shrubby plants and dwarf trees originating in Asia. Their small insignificant flowers are produced in great quantity and are very popular with Honey bees, Short tongued Bumble bees and many solitary bees. The prostrate growing *Cotoneaster horizontalis* and creeping variety



Shrubby Honey suckle *Lonicera Sp.* There are several forms of shrubby Honey Suckle widely cultivated in our towns and cities. Among the most frequently planted are *Lonicera nitida* or box leaf Honey suckle which is frequently planted as a hedge around amenity areas. This shrub is highly attractive to Honey Bees which will swarm around its flowers. Sadly most shrubs are clipped hard regularly which prevents them from reaching their full flowering potential.

Hawthorn *Crateagus monogyna* is one of our most common and abundant native shrubs. Its white flowers (sometimes tinged pink) attract a large number of bees including Honey bees, Short tongued Bumble bees and many solitary bees. Of the solitary bees *Lasioglossum*, *Andrena* and *Halictus* species are most frequently attracted. It's said among some bee keepers that you can sit back and forget about the rest of the summer after your bees have had a good may on Hawthorn.



Hazel *Corylus avellana* produces long male catkins very early in the year which bear copious amounts of pollen. This plant is predominantly wind pollinated so the visiting bees play little contribution to its reproductive success but it is none the less a valuable pollen source. Flowers from January to March.

Ceanothus also known as **Californian Lilac** are a large group of mostly evergreen shrubs which produce large clusters of blue flowers. Some of the varieties popular with bees include the low growing early flowering form 'Blue Mound' and the late season blooming 'Autumnal Blue.' They are valuable to honey and bumble bees as a source of pollen.

Mexican Orange *Choisya ternate* is one of the most widely planted evergreen shrubs of amenity green spaces. This aromatic shrub produces an abundance of bright white blooms from May to mid summer which are attractive to Honey bees, Short tongued Bumble bees, *Andrena* and *Lasioglossum* solitary bees. It is also highly attractive to hoverflies. The plant often puts out a second show of blooms in late summer or early autumn but this second flush of flowers seldom attracts bees to visit presumably because they are too busy foraging on the abundant Ivy available at this time of year.

Caryopteris is a hardy compact shrub with aromatic leaves which in late summer and early autumn becomes smothered in clusters of Bright Blue flowers. The blooms are popular with Bumble Bees particularly the Buff Tailed Bumble Bee but they are also worked by Honey Bees.

Russian Sage *Perovskia sp.* Are aromatic shrubs which in high summer produce long spires of sky blue flowers. Unrelated to sage the plant has a strong sage like smell. The numerous small flowers are popular with honey bees and short tongued Bumble Bees. The cultivar 'blue spire' is most commonly grown.