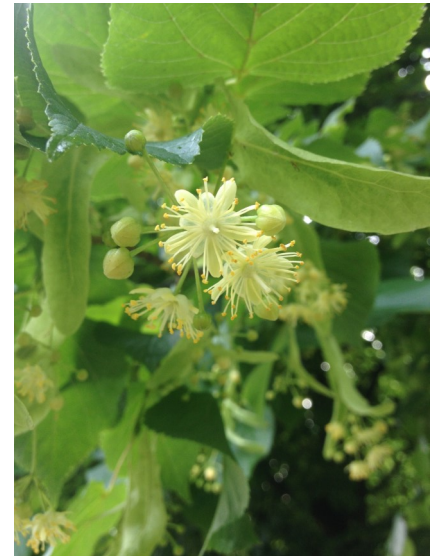


The Api:Cultural Guide to Trees for Bees

Lime Trees *Tilia sp.* Are a main constituent of City honeys and give the honey a citrus, minty after taste. Much of the honey produced in London comes from Lime trees. In addition to collecting nectar from the trees flowers the bees will also collect honey dew secreted by aphids on the trees leaves. This produces a very dark treacly like honey. Flowering time: Late June / Early July. Moist soil and sultry conditions are needed to induce nectar production.



White Beam *Sorbus aria* and its cousin the **Sweedish White Beam *Sorbus intermedia*** are widely planted in city parks, gardens and as street trees. These medium sized trees produce masses of creamy white blooms in May and June which develop into bright red berries by autumn.



Horse Chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum* originate from Continental Europe and are widely grown in towns and cities as street or parkland trees. Their blooms change colour once pollinated to inform the bees that there is no longer nectar to be had. Pollen from this tree can be identified on the bees Scopa as brick red. Flowering time: April to May.

Indian Chestnut *Aesculus indica* originate in the Far East but are widely planted as garden or parkland trees in cities. Very much like their relative the Horse Chestnut in appearance but with narrower glossy leaves. This tree is an important late summer source of nectar and pollen flowering at a time of year when most native trees are displaying semi ripe fruits. Flowering time: Late July through August.

Tree of Heaven *Aithanthus altissima* is a large tree resembling our native Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) though it is unrelated. This tree produces large bracts of Green to yellow flowers from Mid-June to Late July (roughly at the same time our lime trees bloom). In dry years when Limes yield little or no nectar this tree can become a main source for urban honeys.

Acers (Maples and Sycamores) include the native Field Maple *Acer campetris* and the introduced Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* are visited by honey bees for their early supply of pollen and nectar. Bees may also collect honey dew from aphids feeding on Sycamore leaves. Flowering time: March to April but usually a short bloom period of just 2-3 weeks.

Willows *Salix sp.* Willows flower early in the year and are particularly important for bees as a source of nutritious pollen. Among the best are Goat Willows *Salix caprea* which include many dwarf forms suitable for small city gardens.



Cherry *Prunus* sp. Include many flowering trees including the native wild Cherry *Prunus avium*, the Bird Cherry *Prunus padus* and the evergreen shrub Cherry Laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*. These trees and large shrubs flower from early April to late May and provide both pollen and nectar. Large specimens can produce 2 litres or more of nectar per day. These plants also secrete nectar from extra-floral nectaries at the base of their leaves which honey bees will forage on after the trees have flowered. There smaller relative the Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* flowers very early in the year, In London this may be as early as February/March time and is usually in bloom when it is still too cold for honey bees to work its blooms



Chinese Privet *Ligustrum sinense* is a large shrub or small tree related to the common hedge privet grown in domestic gardens. It is frequently planted as a small specimen tree in city parks, gardens and streets where its abundant fragrant blooms attract honey bees in their droves in Late summer. A useful late summer forage source when little else is flowering in abundance. Flowering time: July and August.

False Acacia *Robina Pseudoacacia* also known as Black Locust bean tree is native to the USA and was one of the first North American trees to be introduced to the UK in 1640. It is a popular source of nectar with honey bees but will only yield nectar in years when the summer is very hot and sultry. This tree grows well in poor dry soils so is well suited to life as a city street tree. The cultivar 'Semperflorens' is particularly useful as it flowers virtually all summer whereas the species type tends to only flower for a few weeks in June.

Tulip Poplar *Liriodendron tulipifera* is a large Tree native to the Eastern United States. In its native lands it is an important nectar source for bees often representing the largest potential for a good honey crop in US cities. In good growing conditions it can equal the Lime trees in value for its honey. The tree produces masses of large yellow – orange flowers in June and July. Each flower only produces nectar for a brief period, usually 24-48 hours but the sheer mass of blooms means a single tree can provide nectar for several weeks. The flowers produce large droplets of nectar at the base of the petals. Each bloom may produce an entire tea spoon of nectar. It has been estimated that a mature tree can produce 4kg of nectar per day which equates to 1kg of honey. Unfortunately in the UK our climate is not usually hot enough to encourage copious nectar production but in the city microclimate these trees can be a valuable source of nectar. They are being planted increasingly around new housing developments as street trees because of their attractive leaf shape and colourful blooms.



Indian Bean Tree *Catalpa Bignoniodes* is a valuable late summer nectar source when other trees have finished flowering. The large bell shaped flowers attract honey and Bumble Bees.

Honey bees will also collect nectar from extra floral nectaries on the leaf surface.
Flowers: July through August.