

Favorite Plants for Pollinators

Orton Botanical Garden – Twin Falls, Idaho

Prepared by LaMar Orton

Shrubs



1. Bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*) – This Idaho native shrub produces fragrant yellow flowers in May. The flowers attract a large variety of native bee species.



2. Mexican cliff rose (*Purshia mexicana*) – This 6-10 foot tall shrub blooms in May. It is a relative of bitterbrush, and also attracts a variety of native bee species.



3. Fern bush (*Chamaebatiaria millefolium*) – This Idaho native blooms in July and August. Every gardener should grow this plant! The nectar-rich flowers attract native bees, bumblebees, honeybees, moths, and butterflies.



4. Oregon grape (*Mahonia aquifolium*) – Upright to 10 ft high, this Idaho native blooms in April and is evergreen. Flowers attract mason bees, bumblebees, mining bees, and hummingbird moths.



5. Creeping Oregon grape (*Mahonia repens*) – This evergreen, low-growing Idaho native is good for shady sites. Flowering in April, it is known to attract mason bees, bumblebees, and mining bees.



6. Apache plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*) – This heavy May bloomer can produce flowers off and on throughout the summer. The pink-tinged seed heads are highly attractive. Flowers attract a variety of native bees and other beneficial insects.



7. Rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus, Ericameria*) – Several species of this late summer/fall blooming shrub are native to southern Idaho. Flowers attract furrow bees, honeybees (especially rich in pollen for honeybees), other native bees, and they are especially important for butterflies (as illustrated by the photo).



8. Silver buffaloberry (*Shepherdia argentea*) – The plant above is in bloom in March before the leaves come out. Although the flowers are tiny, they attract many pollinators, including bees and butterflies. This plant blooms when there are few other flowers available in early spring.

Flowers



1. Penstemon – There are many species that bloom at different times of the spring and summer. Penstemons attract bumblebees, leafcutter bees, sweat bees, carpenter bees and mason bees.

Some Examples of Penstemon

- a. For early spring – Low penstemon (*P. humilis*) and Owens Valley penstemon (*P. confusus*).
- b. For midsummer – Rocky Mountain penstemon (*P. strictus*), Hot Rock penstemon (*P. deustus*), Dark Blue penstemon (*P. cyaneus*).
- c. For late summer – Bridge’s Penstemon (*P. rostriflorus*), Richardson’s penstemon (*P. richardsonii*).



2. Buckwheat (*Eriogonum*) – There are many native species that bloom at different times of the spring and summer. Buckwheats are excellent pollinator attractors. Numerous butterflies and native bees frequent their flowers.

Some Buckwheat Examples

- a. For early spring – Matted buckwheat (*E. caespitosum*), Cushion buckwheat (*E. ovalifolium*), Sulphur flower buckwheat (*E. umbellatum* var. *aureum*).
- b. For midsummer – Arrowleaf buckwheat (*E. compositum*), Sulphur flower buckwheat (*E. umbellatum* var. *nevadense*), Parsnipflower buckwheat (*E. heracleoides*).
- c. For late summer – Sulphur flower buckwheat (*E. umbellatum* var. *ellipticum*), Strict buckwheat (*E. strictum*).



3. Catmint (*Nepeta*) – Often blooms twice during the summer, if cut back after the first bloom. This plant attracts bumblebees and honeybees.



4. Blanket flower (*Gaillardia aristata*) – If plants are regularly deadheaded, they will bloom much of the summer. Blanket flower attracts the Gaillardia flower moth, Painted schinia butterfly, bumblebees, furrowbees, mason bees, leafcutter bees, and sweat bees.



5. Dorr's sage (*Salvia dorrii*) – This southern Idaho native blooms in May. Like most *Salvias*, it is attractive to a variety of native bee species.



6. Woodland sage (*Salvia nemerosa*) - Native to central Europe and western Asia, several cultivars of this plant are available. Their early summer bloom is lengthy, and plants will rebloom if cut back.



7. Rocky Mountain bee plant (*Cleome serrulata*) – This tall annual blooms in midsummer. Bees love the flowers and birds relish the seeds.



8. Annual sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*) – A mid to late summer bloomer. Sunflowers present a nectar and pollen load for bees of all kinds, especially bumblebees. Bumblebees sleep in the center of flowers at night.



9. Prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia*) – There are many species and flower colors. Flowers bloom from late May through early July. They produce highly nutritious pollen for a variety of native bee species.



10. Milkweed (*Asclepias*) – Showy milkweed (*A. speciosa*), narrow-leaf milkweed (*A. fascicularis* – shown above) and swamp milkweed (*A. incarnata*) are all native to southern Idaho. Showy milkweed is rhizomatous and can spread quickly. The milkweeds are an essential food source for monarch butterfly larvae.



11. Globemallow (*Sphaeralcea*) – There are several species native to southern Idaho. Plants bloom in May and June and will rebloom if cut back. Globemallow flowers attract a large variety of bee species.



12. Tufted evening-primrose (*Oenothera caespitosa*) – This Idaho native and early spring bloomer attracts hawk moths and a variety of native bees.



13. Lavender (*Lavandula*) – This midsummer bloomer attracts honeybees and bumblebees alike.



14. 'Rotkugel' Ornamental Oregano – This late summer bloomer is especially attractive to butterflies as well as many bees.

For Hummingbirds



1. Red yucca (*Hesperaloe parviflora* var. *parviflora*) – This long-lived perennial, native to Texas, grows best if provided with well-drained soil. Flowers bloom all summer long.



2. Desert willow (*Chilopsis linearis*) – This shrub to small tree is native to southern Arizona, southern Nevada and southern California. In Idaho it flowers from mid-summer until frost. Hummingbirds and a variety of butterflies and bees are drawn to its fragrant, showy flowers.



3. Firecracker penstemon (*Penstemon eatonii*) – This bright red flower blooms in May and June, and is a big hit with hummingbirds and bumblebees alike.



4. Orange carpet (*Epilobium canum* ssp. *garrettii*) – This low-growing plant is native to southeast Idaho. The orange trumpet flowers appear in late June and flowering lasts until our first frost. Bumblebees also love these showy flowers.



5. Claret cup cactus (*Echinocereus coccineus* and *E. triglochidiatus*) – The brilliant red flowers of these clump-forming cacti bloom in May into June. Native bees, in addition to hummingbirds, are attracted to their flowers.



Hummingbird mint (*Agastache rupestris*) – This late summer bloomer is busy with hummingbirds all day long.