

Norfolk Beekeepers

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Early - Spring

Pansies - *Full sun. Blooms early Spring - Fall.* Whimsy, joy, colors - pansies have it all, and bees love them. They are great for containers or ground cover, but are often treated as annuals because of their ability to spread quickly. Bred from their predecessor the wild pansy, the many types of pansies can bloom in early spring or later in autumn.

Pussy Willow - *Full to partial sun. Blooms early Spring.* These North American wetland shrubs have a beautiful greyish hue and fur-like blooms. Their blooms mark the arrival of spring, making them a perfect treat for early foraging bees. Humans may also enjoy using their dried stems as decorations.

Spring - Summer

Peony - *Full to partial sun. Blooms in Spring.* With their colors and sweet scents, these flowers will attract bees, hummingbirds, and possibly your neighbors too. Peonies benefit from cold winters to aid their bud formation. Try to place them in loamy soil in a spot protected from wind.

Milkweed - *Prefers sun. Blooms Spring - Fall, depending on variety.* Milkweed not only serves as food to bees, but it is also the only host to monarch butterflies. These plants are great food sources for bees, but beware of their complex flower structures, for bees can get trapped or lose a leg in them. Many varieties are drought-resistant and prefer sun.

Bee Balm - *Full to partial sun, but shade tolerant. Blooms Summer.* As you may guess from the name, bees love these North American prairie flowers. The blooms almost resemble little fireworks, and come in befittingly vibrant shades too. Favoring warm climates, you can enjoy these perennials' lush, colorful blooms year after year, and so will bees and other winged things.

Lavender - *Full to partial sun. Blooms Spring, Summer.* Bees love them for their nectar, humans love them for their scent and flavor. Everyone wins, and with many different varieties of lavender to choose from, you'll likely find one that will settle happily in your garden. The plant can do well in many climates, but prefers warm climates and well-drained soil. It is rather drought resistant once established.

Phlox - *Full to partial sun. Blooms Spring, Summer.* With their star-shaped blooms, these plants are a beautiful addition to any garden, and can make a great ground cover. There are several different varieties, including the wild ground phlox. This variety bears its pink blooms in early spring, which is the reason Native Americans dubbed the April full moon the "Full Pink Moon."

Zinnias - *Annual. Full sun. Blooms Summer.* Zinnias come in many colors and will attract both bees and butterflies to your space. They are relatively easy to plant and will bloom in abundance all summer long if dead flowers are removed.

Marigolds - *Annual. Full sun. Blooms Summer.* Like zinnias, marigolds are annuals that can bloom all summer long if properly groomed. Their edible blooms can brighten up your salads as well as your garden, and they are even known to repel pests and animals, such as nematodes.

Goldenrod - *Full to partial sun. Blooms in Summer.* These flowers are sometimes considered weeds because of their ability to spread easily, but kept in check, they are an invaluable resource for bees and have medicinal value as well. To keep their spread in check, just cut off the dead flower heads before they re-seed.

Chives - *Full sun. Blooms late Spring, Summer.* Resist eating their tasty purple flowers and the bees will thank you! This perennial tolerates cold climates rather well, and is a great way to add a fresh, oniony taste to salads, dishes, or eggs.

Late Summer - Fall

Liatris - *Full to partial sun. Blooms late Summer.* These flowers, found in purple, pink, and white, bloom on grass-like spiky leaves that can grow 1 - 5 feet tall. They are relatively low maintenance, and are rather tolerant of drought, pests, and cold weather. Butterflies will also thank you for having liatris in your garden.

Mint - *Full sun, but tolerates some shade. Blooms Spring through Summer.* Mint is invigorating with its fragrance and flavor - and bees go crazy on their flowers too. Mint is a great choice if you're looking for an herb that's low maintenance. They make good ground cover and a tasty kitchen ingredient. Easy to grow, but easy to lose control of too, so be careful about their spread.

Sage - *Full sun. Blooms Spring, Summer, Fall.* It's great in stuffing, sauces, and herb pots! Bees love sage's beautiful flowers, and these perennials are rather easy to grow. Of all the flowers that attract bees, make sure to incorporate this one into your autumn squash dishes.

Nasturtium - *Full sun. Blooms Summer through Fall.* Nasturtiums can keep bees buzzing in your garden well into autumn. Their edible blooms will bring a burst of color to your outdoor space. To maximize the amount of blooms they have, water them regularly and opt for poorer soils. Most nasturtiums are annuals.

Black-eyed Susans - *Full to partial sun. Blooms late Summer, Fall.* These are flowers that attract bees, butterflies, and bring a burst of yellow to your garden. As members of the sunflower family, they can grow up to three feet tall! They make excellent borders, but spread very easily, so be careful about placing them in - or letting them grow into - other plants' space.

Borage - *Full to partial sun. Blooms Summer, Fall.* Also known as starflower, borage's star-shaped blooms start out pink and mature into a beautiful blue. Borage is considered a good neighbor for tomatoes, which bees also love. These plants are annuals, but they re-seed readily, so keep an eye on their spread.

Thyme - *Full sun. Blooms Summer, Fall.* Irresistible to bees and pun-lovers alike, placing one of these shrubs by a walkway will prove to be a wonderful way to pass the thyme. These perennials bear bee-loving flowers in pink or purple, and can grow up to one foot tall.

Oregano - *Full sun. Blooms mid-Summer, Fall.* This perennial has pink, purple, or white flowers, and its late blooms will be appreciated by your bee friends. Oregano provides excellent ground cover and is rather hardy. Harvest its leaves for cooking or medicinal purposes. Drying them will help you make use of its reported immune-boosting properties throughout winter.

Honey Bee Friendly Plants. Attract and nourish honey bees with nectar producing plants. Wild flowers, including asters, goldenrod, sunflowers, even dandelions will provide food for the managed honeybee colony, and the native bee population as well.

Plant Long Blooming Flowers or a variety of plants that will bloom at different times throughout the spring and fall. Honey bees need to eat until they retreat to their hives for the winter. Try to group at least ten bee plants in a bunch or grouping.

Native bees will make their homes in sand. Provide a space in your garden for native bees to make their home. Native bees do not live in hives, but in single living units underground. Leave a space in your garden un-mulched for them to gain access and set up housekeeping. A pile of undisturbed sand will work as well.

No Pesticides or Herbicides: Do not use, or limit pesticides and herbicides. Some of them are toxic to bees, and some aren't. Many of them will leave a toxic residue for days or weeks. It is better to introduce good bugs to provide natural protection against pests. Pick off undesirable insects with a gloved hand and throw them into a soapy (use dish detergent) pail of water. Weed by hand or with hand tools as much as possible.

