

Great Wildflowers for Bees and Other Beneficial Insects

Common name	Scientific name	Light	Bloom color	Bloom season	Soil moisture	Region	Growth habit
Pink swamp milkweed	<i>Asclepias incarnata</i>					N C S	2-6 ft
Butterfly milkweed ¹	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>					N C S	1-3 ft
Wild indigo	<i>Baptisia alba</i>					N C	2-3 ft
Florida greeneyes	<i>Berlandiera subacaulis</i>					N C S	1-2 ft
Chaffhead ²	<i>Carphephorus</i> spp.					N C S	2-4 ft
Partridge pea ³	<i>Chamaecrista fasciculata</i>					N C S	3 ft
Thistle ⁴	<i>Cirsium</i> spp.					N C S	2-3 ft
False rosemary	<i>Conradina</i> spp.					N C	2-3 ft
Lanceleaf tickseed	<i>Coreopsis lanceolata</i>					N C	1-3 ft
Purple coneflower	<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>					N C	18 in
Rattlesnakemaster ⁵	<i>Eryngium</i> spp.					N C S	1-3 ft
Wild geranium	<i>Geranium carolinianum</i>					N C S	1-2 ft
Sneezeweed ⁶	<i>Helenium</i> spp.					N C S	1-3 ft
Sunflower	<i>Helianthus</i> spp.					N C S	2-6 ft
Dune sunflower ⁷	<i>Helianthus debilis</i>					N C S	1-2 ft
Blazing star	<i>Liatris</i> spp.					N C S	2-4 ft
Snow squarestem	<i>Melanthera nivea</i>					N C S	2-6 ft
Sunshine mimosa ⁸	<i>Mimosa strigillosa</i>					N C S	2-9 in
Dotted horsemint ⁹	<i>Monarda punctata</i>					N C S	2-4 ft
Beardtongue ¹⁰	<i>Penstemon</i> spp.					N C S	1-4 ft
Frogfruit	<i>Phyla nodiflora</i>					N C S	4 in
Black-eyed susan ¹¹	<i>Rudbeckia</i> spp.					N C S	1-4 ft
Rosinweed	<i>Silphium</i> spp.					N C	2-6 ft
Blue-eyed grass ¹²	<i>Sisyrinchium</i> spp.					N C S	6-12 in
Goldenrod (cover image)	<i>Solidago</i> spp.					N C S	2-6 ft
Stokes' aster ¹³	<i>Stokesia laevis</i>					N C	18 in
Aster ¹⁴	<i>Symphotrichum</i> spp.					N C S	varies
Spiderwort ¹⁵	<i>Tradescantia ohiensis</i>					N C	15-24 in
Blue curls ¹⁶	<i>Trichostema dichotomum</i>					N C S	24-30 in
Frostweed ¹⁷	<i>Verbesina virginica</i>					N C	2-5 ft
Ironweed ¹⁸	<i>Vernonia</i> spp.					N C S	3-6 ft

Numbers next to species correspond to photos inside.

For more information on plant selection, flower bloom and growing tips, visit www.FlaWildflowers.org/planting.

This publication was produced with support from Florida Power & Light Company, through its charitable arm, the NextEra Energy Foundation.

Attracting Bees and Other Beneficial Insects with Florida's Native Wildflowers



TAKE ACTION

Help build native wildflower pathways for bees.



Florida's Bees

Florida is home to more than 300 species of bees. They are nature's most efficient pollinators, responsible for the pollination of more than 80 percent of our food crops and flowering plants. However, they are increasingly in peril due to habitat loss, pesticide use and climate change.

Bees are active most of the year in Florida. Some nest in well-drained soil that is sparsely vegetated. Others nest in trees or other sources of wood, or in plants with hollow stems. They may nest in spring and again in summer.

Some bees are specialists, relying on a single wildflower species or family for food. Most, however, are generalists that gather pollen and nectar from a wide range of flowers.

Most native bees are solitary and are not usually aggressive, because they have no hive to defend. However, they may sting if surprised or threatened.

While gathering pollen and nectar for food, bees carry pollen from one flower to another, ensuring plant reproduction. This pollination syndrome (process) has evolved over millions of years.



12

Planning Your Bee Garden

Your garden can help create a corridor between fragmented natural habitats for foraging bees and insects. Even small native wildflower plots can be stepping stones in a pollinator pathway that help insects reach parks, natural areas and roadside wildflowers. Increasing insect habitat also helps birds, 96% of which eat insects.

- Choose sunny open areas with well-drained soil.
- Plant 15–25 species for maximum diversity.
- Plan to have at least three species in bloom each season.
- Include flowers of different sizes and shapes to attract a variety of bees.
- Plant 5–7 of each wildflower species in clusters to maximize visibility to insects.
- Include blue, purple, violet, white and yellow flowers, which bees prefer.

Bee characteristics

- Hairy bodies with constricted waists
- Two pairs of wings
- Long antennae and long tongues
- Pollen-carrying structures on hind legs or lower abdomen



Gardening Practices

Avoid or minimize the use of pesticides. Use natural repellants like garlic or citrus oil, or pheromone traps to discourage pests. Be aware that broad application can harm beneficial insects.

Create nesting sites. Leave open sandy patches for ground-nesting species. Let hollow-stemmed plants remain during the winter. Leave brush piles and use clumping grasses such as Lovegrass (*Eragrostis* spp.), Wiregrass (*Aristida stricta*) and Muhlygrass (*Muhlenbergia capillaris*) for nesting sites and overwintering habitats.

Other insects. Wildflowers may attract other insects that provide natural pest control or pollination services, or serve as food for a variety of other organisms. Look for spiders, beetles, flies, wasps and true bugs in your garden and consider their duties in the ecosystem. They may provide pollination services or be a food source for lizards, birds or other insects.

© 2023 Florida Wildflower Foundation, Inc. Photos by Eleanor Dietrich, Dara Dobson, Mary Keim, Wayne Matchett, Bob Peterson and Peg Urban. Numbers correspond to species information on back of brochure.



14



9

18

1

8

17

15

6

4

13

3

10

7

2

11

16

5