

Garden Plants for Honey Bees

Compiled by Anne Schatz

Updated 27 June 2018

BLOOM		COMMON NAME	BLOOM PERIOD	5 is best 5 is best		POLLEN COLOR	PLANT TYPE	COMMENTS	
MONTH	LATIN NAME			POLLEN SCORE	NECTAR SCORE				
2	Feb	<i>Helleborus foetidus</i>	Hellebore	10-14 days	3	3	yellow	perennial	Of all the Hellebores, this is the only one that that meets the list criteria.
2	Feb	<i>Galanthus nivalis</i>	Snowdrops	2-4 wks	3	2	yellowish-orange	perennial	Early blooming bulb.
2	Feb	<i>Eranthis hyemalis</i>	Winter Aconite	2-3 wks	3	3	yellow	perennial	Early blooming bulb.
2	Feb	<i>Sarcococca rustifolia</i>	Sweet Box	2-3 wks	2	3	creamy white	shrub	Needs summer shade, but winter sun to assist bees. Very Fragrant.
2	Feb	<i>Lonicera fragrantissima</i>	Winter Honeysuckle		4	3	yellow	shrub	Very fragrant.
2	Feb	<i>Corylus americana</i>	American Hazelnut	2 wks	4	0	green-yellowish	tree	
3	Mar	<i>Crocus spp.</i>	Crocus	7-10 days	3	2	bright orange	perennial	By choosing species, you can extend bloom over a couple months.
3	Mar	<i>Salix spp.</i>	Pussy Willow	4-5 wks	4	2	yellow	perennial	Male plants have t pollen, some varieties bloom earlier.
3	Mar	<i>Scilla siberica</i>	Siberian Squill	10-14 days	3	2	blue	perennial	Bulb.
3	Mar	<i>Berberis lolagensis</i>	Barberry	7-10 days	3	2	yellow	shrub	Good for hedges; thorny, evergreen
3	Mar	<i>Chaenomeles japonica</i>	flowering quince	2-3 wks +	2	3	yellow green	shrub	
3	Mar	<i>Enkianthus perulatus</i>	Enkianthus	1 wk	2	3	creamy white	shrub	
3	Mar	<i>Salix spp.</i>	Pussy Willow	1-2 wks	4	2	yellow	tree	Some are native; male plants for pollen.
4	Apr	<i>Acer negundo</i>	Box Elder	7-10 days	3	0	yellowish-green	perennial	
4	Apr	<i>Crocus vernus</i>	Dutch Crocus	1-2 wks	3	2	yellowish-orange	perennial	
4	Apr	<i>Acer platanoides</i>	Norway Maple	7-14 days	2	3	light yellow	perennial	
4	Apr	<i>Prunus tomentosa</i>	Manchu Cherry	4-7 days	2	3	yellowish brown	shrub	
4	Apr	<i>Ribes grossularia</i>	Gooseberry	5-7 days	3	4	greenish	shrub	
4	Apr	<i>Acer macrophyllum</i>	Big Leaf Maple		x	x	light yellow	tree	Native; important early season forage source.
4	Apr	<i>Malus floribunda</i>	Crabapple	1 wk	3	4	greenish to yellow	tree	
4	Apr	<i>Prunus spp.</i>	Ornamental Cherry	1 wk	2	3	yellow-brown	tree	
4	Apr	<i>Prunus avium</i>	Sweet Cherry	1 wk	3	4	brownish	tree	
4	Apr	<i>Borago officinalis</i>	Borage	whole summer	3	3	yellow-green to gray	annual	Other sources (and my observations) say pollen is blueish gray.
5	May	<i>Limnanthus ssp</i>	Meadowfoam	6-8 wks		5	off white	annual	Blooms in May-June when fall planted or self seeded.
5	May	<i>Vitis vinifera</i>	Grape	5-8 days	3	2	creamy white	climber	
5	May	<i>Allium giganteum var. Globemaster</i>	Giant Onion	14-18 days	2	3	yellowish-green	perennial	
5	May	<i>Anchusa azurea</i>	Italian Bugloss	7-14 days	2	3	not given	perennial	
5	May	<i>Salvia officinalis</i>	Sage	2-3 wks	2	3	creamy-white	perennial	Culinary sage.
5	May	<i>Tradescantia virginiana</i>	Spiderwort	2-3 wks	3	3	bright yellow	perennial	
5	May	<i>Vaccinium corymbosum</i>	Highbush Blueberry	2-3 wks	3	3	yellow	perennial	
5	May	<i>Cotoneaster dammeri</i>	Cotoneaster	1-2 wks	3	3	green	shrub	
5	May	<i>Kolkwitzia amabilis</i>	Beauty Bush	7-10 days	3	2	yellow	shrub	
5	May	<i>Lonicera tatarica</i>	Honeysuckle	2-3 wks	3	2	bright yellow	shrub	
5	May	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>	Blackberry	1-2 wks	3	3	grey	shrub	
5	May	<i>Rubus idaeus</i>	Raspberry	2-3 wks	2	4	yellowish-grey	shrub	
5	May	<i>Vaccinium corymbosum</i>	Highbush Blueberry	2-3 wks	3	3	yellow	shrub	
5	May	<i>Robinia pseudoaccacia</i>	Black Locust	1 wk	3	5	yellowish-green	tree	Nitrogen fixer.
5	May	<i>Malus domestica</i>	Apple	5-10 days	3	3	yellowish-green	tree	
5	May	<i>Acer circinatum</i>	Vine Maple		x	x	light yellow	tree	Native, important early season source.

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MONTH	LATIN NAME	COMMON NAME	PERIOD	SCORE	SCORE	COLOR	TYPE	COMMENTS	
5	May	<i>Ilex opaca</i>	American Holly	6-10 days	3	3	yellow	tree	
5	May	<i>Liriodendron chinense</i>	Chinese Tulip Tree	7-10 days	3	3	creamy-white	tree	
5	May	<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	Tulip Tree	7-10 days	3	5	creamy-white	tree	
5	May	<i>Sorbus amurensis</i>	Mountain Ash	5-7 days	3	3	yellowish-green	tree	
5	May	<i>Sorbus rufoferruginea</i>	Mountain Ash	5-7 days	3	3	lt green to yellow	tree	
6	Jun	<i>Alcea rosea</i>	Hollyhock	2-3 wks	3	2	creamy white	biennial	Only single flowers significant for bees.
6	Jun	<i>Fagopyrum sagittatum</i>	Buckwheat	2-3 wks	2	3	yellow-green	annual	Blooms four wks after sowing, poor soil okay.
6	Jun	<i>Phacelia tanacetifolia</i>	Tansey Phacelia	whole summer	3	5	dark blue	annual	Six weeks from sowing to blossom,
6	Jun	<i>Ampelopsis brevipedunculata</i>	Porcelain Ivy	3-4 wks	2	3	yellow	climber	
6	Jun	<i>Celastrus scandens</i>	Bittersweet	5-8 days	2	3	yellow	climber	Showy red to orange fruit in fall.
6	Jun	<i>Alcea rosea</i>	Hollyhock	2-3 wks	3	2	creamy-white	perennial	
6	Jun	<i>Allium tuberosum</i>	Chinese Chives		3	4	brownish-green	perennial	AKA garlic chives.
6	Jun	<i>Cynoglossum amabile</i> var. <i>Blue Showers</i>	Hound's Tongue	2-3 wks	2	3		perennial	
6	Jun	<i>Geranium</i> spp. ' <i>Johnson Blue</i> '	Cranesbill	10-18 days	2	3	dark teal	perennial	Blooms for months on the coast.
6	Jun	<i>Hyssopus officinalis</i>	Hyssop	3-4 wks	2	3	greenish-yellow	perennial	
6	Jun	<i>Leonus cardiaca</i>	Motherwort	2 months	3	4	white	perennial	Great for dry conditions.
6	Jun	<i>Mentha x spicata</i>	Spearmint	2-3 wks	2	4	white	perennial	
6	Jun	<i>Nepeta mussinii</i>	Catmint	3-4 wks	2	3	not given	perennial	
6	Jun	<i>Salvia x superba</i>	Salvia	3-4 wks	2	3	not given	perennial	
6	Jun	<i>Amorpha fruticosa</i>	False Indigo	7-10 days	3	2	orange	shrub	
6	Jun	<i>Callicarpa dichotoma</i>	Beauty Berry	3-4 wks	1	4	yellow	shrub	
6	Jun	<i>Ilex verticulata</i>	Winterberry	7-10 days	4	4	yellow	shrub	
6	Jun	<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	Privet	10-14 days	2	3	yellowish green	shrub	
6	Jun	<i>Photinia orientalis</i>	Photinia		2	3	yellow to brown	shrub	
6	Jun	<i>Rosa</i> spp.	Rose	3-5 days	3	2	dk yellow	shrub	
6	Jun	<i>Rhus typhina</i>	Stag Horn Sumac	5-10 days	2	4	yellow brown	shrub	Dioecious, use female (berry producing) plants
6	Jun	<i>Castanea crenata</i>	Japanese Chestnuts	6-10 days	3	3	light yellow	tree	
6	Jun	<i>Crataegus phaenopyrum</i>	Washington Hawthorn	7-10 days	3	3	creamy white	tree	
6	Jun	<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>	Tupelo	7-10 days	2	4	yellow	tree	
6	Jun	<i>Rhamnus frangula</i>	Alder Buckthorn	7-10 days	4	5		tree	
6	Jun	<i>Rhus typhina</i>	Stag's Horn Sumac	5-10 days	2	4	yellowish-brown	tree	
6	Jun	<i>Tilia cordata</i>	Small Leaf Linden	7-10 days	3	5	yellowish-orange	tree	
7	Jul	<i>Reseda odorata</i>	Mignonette	Jun-Dec	3	4	brick red	annual	Very fragrant.
7	Jul	<i>Majorana hortensis</i>	Sweet Marjoram	2-3 wks	2	3	lt green	annual	Can be perennial in mild years.
7	Jul	<i>Ocimum basilicum</i>	Basil	4-6 wks	2	3		annual	"African Blue" blooms in August.
7	Jul	<i>Phaseolus lunatus</i>	Lima Bean	whole summer	1	3	creamy white	annual	
7	Jul	<i>Zea mays</i>	Sweet Corn	7-10 days	4	0	yellow	annual	
7	Jul	<i>Parthenocissus tricuspidata</i>	Boston Ivy	1-2 wks	4	4	lt yellow green	climber	
7	Jul	<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>	Button Bush	2-3 wks	2	3	yellow	shrub	
7	Jul	<i>Clethra alnifolia</i>	Sweet Pepper Bush	8-14 days	2	3	yellow	shrub	
7	Jul	<i>Clethra barbinervis</i>	Clethra	2-3 wks	3	3	yellowish brown	shrub	

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7	Jul	<i>Ilex glabra</i>	Inkberry	3-4 wks	2	4	yellowish green	shrub	
7	Jul	<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	Snowberry	3-4 months	2	4	brown	shrub	Native
7	Jul	<i>Evodia daniellii</i>	Korean Bee Bee Tree	2-3 wks	5	5	yellow	tree	Male plants are better
7	Jul	<i>Koelreuteria paniculata</i>	Golden Rain Tree	2 weeks	3	3	yellow	tree	
7	Jul	<i>Oxydendrum arboreum</i>	Sourwood	2-3 wks	2	4	creamy-white	tree	
4	Apr	<i>Borago officinalis</i>	Borage	whole summer	3	3	yellow-green to gray	annual	Other sources say pollen is blueish gray
8	Aug	<i>Helianthus annuus</i>	Sunflower	10-14 days	4	3	bright yellow	annual	
8	Aug	<i>Clematis x joubiniana</i>	Clematis	2--3 wks	2	3	greenish yellow	climber	
8	Aug	<i>Abelia floribunda</i>	Mexican Abelia	Jun-Nov	2	3	yellow	shrub	
8	Aug	<i>Actinomeris alternifolia</i>	Golden Honey Plant	4-5 wks	3	4	yellow	shrub	
8	Aug	<i>Caryopteris clandonensis</i>	Bluebeard	3-4 wks	2	4	unk	shrub	
8	Aug	<i>Caryopteris incana</i>	Bluebeard	3-4 wks	2	4	unk	shrub	
8	Aug	<i>Lagerstroemia indica</i>	Crape Myrtle	3-4 wks	3	2	bright yellow	shrub	
8	Aug	<i>Perovskia abroyanooides</i>	Russian Sage	4-5 wks	2	3	unk	shrub	
8	Aug	<i>Rhus copallina</i>	Shiny Sumac	2-3 wks	2	5	yellow	shrub	
8	Aug	<i>Vernonia altissima</i>	Ironweed	Jun-Aug	2	3	unk	shrub	
8	Aug	<i>Vitex agnus castus</i>	Chaste Tree	3-4 wks	2	3	unk	shrub	
8	Aug	<i>Aralia elata</i>	Japanese Angelica Tree	3-4 wks	5	3	creamy-white	tree	
8	Aug	<i>Sophora japonica</i>	Japanese Pagoda Tree	2 wks	4	4	creamy-white	tree	
8	Aug	<i>Rhus copallina</i>	Shiny Sumac	2-3 wks	2	5	yellow	tree	
9	Sep	<i>Chrysanthemum maximum x superbum</i>	Shasta Daisy	2-3 wks	3	2	yellow-orange	annual	
9	Sep	<i>Hedera helix</i>	English Ivy	1-2 mo	3	3	yellow-orange	climber	Huge nectar flow into Nov on Coast!
9	Sep	<i>Ipomea purpurea</i>	Morning Glory	4-5 wks	3	2	white	climber	
9	Sep	<i>Heptacodium miconioides</i>	Seven Son Flower	2-3 wks	3	3	yellow	shrub	
9	Sep	<i>Hydrangia paniculata</i>	Pee Gee Hydrangia	2-3 wks	3	3	yellow	shrub	
9	Sep	<i>Polygonum cuspidatum</i>	Japanese Knotweed	2-3 wks	2	2	creamy white	shrub	
9	Sep	<i>Rhus chinensis</i>	Chinese Sumac	2-3 wks	3	3	yellow	shrub	
9	Sep	<i>Maackia amurensis</i>	Maackia	10-14 days	2	4	creamy-white	tree	
10	Oct	<i>Elaeagnus pungens</i>	Thorny Elaeagnus	2-3 wks	3	3	yellow	shrub	Very fragrant; shade, wind & salt tolerant
10	Oct	<i>Lespedeza thunbergii</i>	Bush Clover	3 wks	4	4	unk	shrub	
11	Nov	<i>Osmanthus armatus</i>	Osmanthus	3 wks	3	3	yellow	shrub	
11	Nov	<i>Osmanthus fragrans</i>	Fragrant Osmanthus	2-4 wks	4	3	yellow	shrub	
11	Nov	<i>Viburnum tinus</i>	Spring Bouquet	5 months	4	4	off white	shrub	Salt & wind tolerant, evergreen, good hedge

Based on [Garden Plants for Honey Bees](#) by Peter Lindtner and personal observations by Anne Schatz; only plants rated 3 or better (out of 5) are included.

This is a living document that I frequently adjust, based on new knowledge and observations. Contact me at rapsallion.retiree@gmail.com for the latest version.