Bee Squad

Bee Lab

PLANTS FOR MINNESOTA BEES

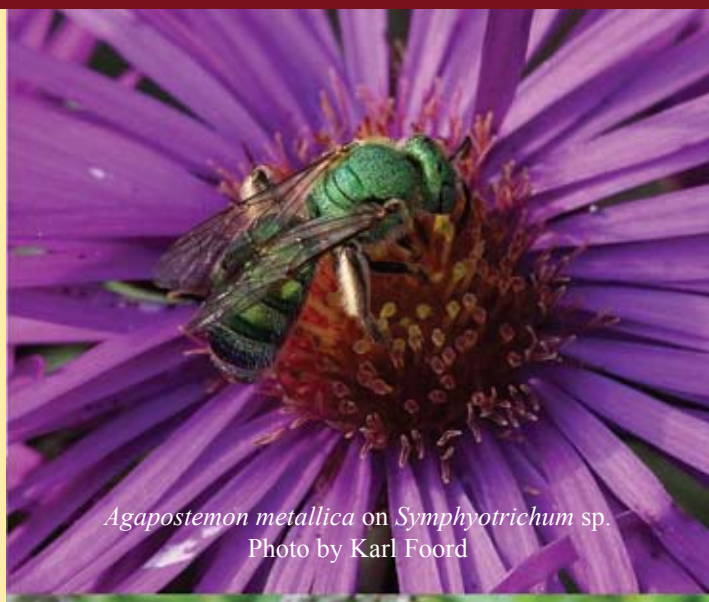
Bees rely on flowers to supply them with the food they need to survive. Some flowers (e.g. tomatoes) provide only pollen, the main source of protein for bees. Other flowers (e.g. clovers) provide both nectar and pollen, thus providing both protein and carbohydrates.

There are hundreds of different bee species in Minnesota. Different types of bees prefer different flowers. Some of these preferences are due to the physical size or shape of the bees and the flowers. Some flowers have long tubes with nectar at the bottom. Long-tongued bees are the only bees able to reach the nectar. Other preferences are based on nutritional needs. Some bees are only able to raise their young with pollen from particular plants. These bees are called "specialists". Other bees are "generalists" and will collect pollen from a wide range of plants.

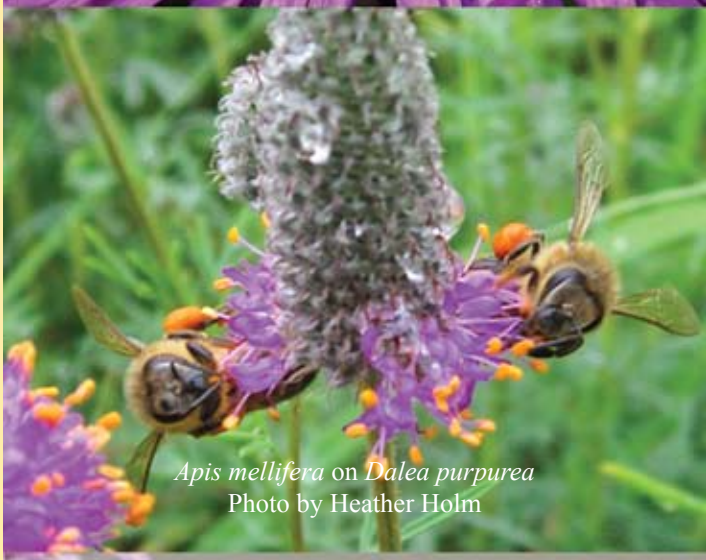
There are also seasonal differences in the activity of different bee species. Many bee species forage as adults for only a few weeks out of the year, with different species emerging throughout the spring and summer, into early fall. The rest of the year, the young are developing in nests that are underground or in cavities. Each bee was provided with a pollen ball, a mixture of pollen and nectar, left there by their mother. They will emerge the following season. Many other bee species, including honey bees and bumble bees, are present through the entire spring, summer and early fall.

Providing a diverse array of plants will help ensure that you support a diverse array of bee species. Do your best to provide blooming flowers from April to September.

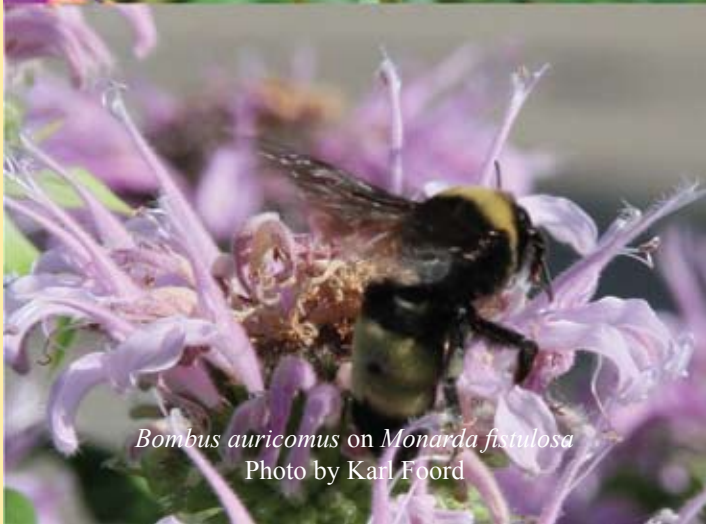
www.beelab.umn.edu



Agapostemon metallica on *Symphyotrichum* sp.
Photo by Karl Foord



Apis mellifera on *Dalea purpurea*
Photo by Heather Holm



Bombus auricomus on *Monarda fistulosa*
Photo by Karl Foord

This list is not inclusive of all plants that bees will visit in Minnesota. These are flowers that are particularly attractive to bees and can be easily integrated into most landscapes.

= Tree = Herbaceous plant = Shrub ○ = Full sun ◑ = Part-shade ● = Shade

Early=March to May Mid=June to July Late=August to September

Scientific name	Common name	Habit	Sun	Native	Bloom time	Honey bees	Other bees
Crataegus crus-galli	Hawthorn		○	X	Early	X	X
Geranium maculatum	Wild geranium		◑ ●	X	Early		X
Penstemon grandiflorus	Large beardtounge		○	X	Early		X
Salix discolor	Pussy willow		○	X	Early	X	X
Coreopsis lanceolata	Lanceleaf coreopsis		○ ◑ ●	X	Early to Mid	X	X
Hydrophyllum virginianum	Virginia waterleaf		○ ◑ ●	X	Early to Mid	X	X
Lupinus perennis	Wild lupine		○ ◑	X	Early to Mid		X
Aruncus dioecus	Goatsbeard		○ ◑ ●	X	Mid	X	X
Echinacea angustifolia	Purple coneflower		○	X	Mid	X	X
Lobelia siphilitica	Blue lobelia		○ ◑	X	Mid		X
Pycnanthemum tenuifolium	Slender mountain mint		○	X	Mid	X	X
Agastache foeniculum	Anise hyssop		○ ◑	X	Mid to Late	X	X
Asclepias incarnata	Swamp milkweed		○ ◑	X	Mid to Late	X	X
Borago officinalis	Borage		○ ◑		Mid to Late	X	X
Chamaecrista fasciculata	Partridge pea		○	X	Mid to Late	X	X
Cirsium discolor	Bicolor thistle		○	X	Mid to Late	X	X
Dalea purpurea	Purple prairie clover		○	X	Mid to Late	X	X
Eupatorium maculatum	Joe-pye weed		○ ◑	X	Mid to Late	X	X
Eupatorium perfoliatum	Common boneset		○ ◑	X	Mid to Late	X	X
Helianthus spp.	Sunflowers		○ ◑ ●	X	Mid to Late	X	X
Hylotelephium telephium	Autumn joy sedum		◑ ●		Mid to Late	X	X
Impatiens capensis	Jewelweed		○	X	Mid to Late	X	X
Liatris aspera	Rough blazingstar		○ ◑	X	Mid to Late	X	X
Monarda fistulosa	Beebalm		○	X	Mid to Late	X	X
Nepeta x faassenii	Catmint		○ ◑		Mid to Late	X	X
Origanum vulgare	Oregano		○ ◑		Mid to Late	X	X
Ratibida pinnata	Yellow coneflower		○	X	Mid to Late		X
Silphium perfoliatum	Cup plant		○	X	Mid to Late	X	X
Trifolium hybridum	Alsike clover		○ ◑		Mid to Late	X	X
Vernonia fasiculata	Ironweed		○	X	Mid to Late	X	X
Veronicastrum virginicum	Culver's root		○ ◑	X	Mid to Late		X
Solidago rigida	Stiff goldenrod		○ ◑	X	Late	X	X
Symphyotrichum lateriflorum	Calico aster		○	X	Late	X	X

Content and design by Elaine Evans