

Summer Nectar & Floral Sources

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In some parts of British Columbia, a “dearth period” occurs following initial spring bloom. This dearth period is marked by a decline in the availability of nectar and pollen sources typically in early to mid- summer in most areas. The seasonal shortage of food is often worse in agricultural areas where mono-cultural practices reduce floral diversity. While beekeepers can provide their colonies with supplemental feed, many wild bees suffer from the food shortage which can severely impact their nest and brood development as well as their survival. As a result, many wild pollinator populations experience reduced reproductive success which in the long term leads to low pollinator abundance and diversity.

Crop producers can effectively counteract food shortages for wild pollinators by dedicating small strips of land along the edge of fields, along ditches and berms to the planting of nectar and pollen-bearing plants that bloom during early to mid-summer. This factsheet provides a listing of plants that provide a valuable food source for wild pollinators without demanding significant management or cultivation input. Maintenance of a dedicated planting will result in an increase of pollinator abundance and species diversity after several years.

Name	Scientific Name	Description	Photo
Lupine	<i>Lupinus</i>	Bold perennial with beautifully fingered leaves and erect, cylindrical spikes of flowers in early summer. Blooms for few weeks only. Many cultivars with different colors. Attractive to bumble bees and long-tongued pollinators.	
Lavender	<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	Frost hardy. From early to late summer, long-stalked spikes with small, fragrant violet flowers rise above narrow gray-green leaves. Prefers well-drained soil. Highly attractive to all pollinators.	
Geranium	Johnson’s Blue Perennial Geranium	Attractive blue flowers from mid-summer onward. Frost tolerant. Excellent for borders and along hedge rows. Attracts all pollinators.	

<p>Geranium</p>	<p><i>Geranium macrorrhizum</i> Rock Crane's Bill, Bigroot Geranium</p>	<p>Widely cultivated ornamental for gardens. The herbaceous perennial is used as a groundcover, ranging in color from white through pink to magenta. Attracts all pollinators throughout early summer.</p>	
<p>Hyssop</p>	<p><i>Hyssopus officinalis</i></p>	<p>Member of the mint family with aromatic, narrow leaves. Small, scented blue flowers appear in mid-summer to fall and are highly attractive to bees. Produces large amount of seed which attracts birds in winter. Self-seeding.</p>	
<p>Phacelia</p>	<p><i>P. tanacetifolia</i></p>	<p>Upright annual with feathery deep green leaves and spikes of bell-shaped lavender-blue flowers. Blooms through much of the summer. Profuse nectar producer. Deep-purple pollen. Highly attractive to all pollinators. Propagates readily through seeds. Suitable along hedgerows, borders and farm fields.</p>	
<p>Catmint</p>	<p><i>Nepeta x faassenii</i></p>	<p>Perennial forms mounds of grayish green leaves with spikes of small lavender-blue flowers throughout the summer. Highly attractive nectar source for all pollinators and hummingbirds. Frost tolerant. Easily propagated through cuttings. Low maintenance, ideal for borders and edges of farm fields.</p>	
<p>Fringecups</p>	<p><i>Tellima grandiflora</i></p>	<p>Herbaceous perennial, native to the moist forests of western North America. Reseeds itself.</p>	

Fuchsia	<i>Fuchsia magellanica</i>	Attractive perennial. Select only frost hardy varieties. Attractive nectar source to bees and hummingbirds. Long blooming period. Needs pruning. Excellent for borders and hedges in gardens and along farm fields.	
Onion (family)	<i>Allium</i> spp. <i>Allium schoenoprasum</i> - Chives	Wide variety of edible and ornamental onions. Perennial. In bloom from May to July, most are highly attractive to pollinators.	
Bee Balm (Wild Bergamot)	<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	Wild bergamot is perennial and native to North America. It produces rhizomes and forms large clumps. Clusters of fragrant flowers produce copious nectar from June to September and are highly attractive to bees. Plants grow to about 1 m in height and are a source of oil of thyme. <i>Note: The natural lilac/blue colored variety appears far more attractive to bees than the red colored varieties.</i>	
White & Yellow Sweet Clover	<i>Melilotus albus</i> & <i>Melilotus officinalis</i>	Common in many different habitats and climates. Propagates rapidly and is drought resistant. Produces fragrant flowers attractive to all pollinators throughout the summer. Tolerant to poor, gravelly soils.	