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Bee Friendly



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# THE ACTION PLAN FOR POLLINATORS

## SUGGESTED PLANT LIST FOR POLLINATORS

Part 1 – A concise list of suggested garden plants that are attractive to pollinating insects

This is a list of suggested garden plants. We have only selected flowers which are garden-worthy, easily obtainable, well-known, and widely acknowledged as being attractive to pollinating insects. In some case we have given extra comments about garden-worthiness. This is intended as a clear and concise short list to help gardeners; it is not intended to be comprehensive and we have avoided suggesting plants which are difficult to grow or obtain, or whose benefit to pollinators is still a matter for debate. We have omitted several plants that are considered to have invasive potential, and have qualified some others on the list with comments advising readers how to avoid invasive forms.

### PLANT



#### ANGELICA

(*Angelica* species).

Attractive to a range of insects, especially hoverflies and solitary bees.

#### AUBRETIA

(*Aubrieta deltoides* hybrids). An important early nectar for insects coming out of hibernation.

#### BELLFLOWER

(*Campanula* species and cultivars). Forage for bumblebees and some solitary bees.

#### BETONY

(*Stachys officinalis*). Attractive to bumblebees.

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Butterfly Conversation's  
Top Butterflies  
Nectar Plants.



Awarded the Royal Horticultural  
Society's 'Award of Garden  
Merit'.

# PLANT



## BIRD'S FOOT TREFOIL

(*Lotus corniculatus*). Larval food plant for Common Blue, Dingy Skipper and several moths. Also an important pollen source for bumblebees. Can be grown in gravel or planted in a lawn that is mowed with blades set high during the flowering period.

## BOWLES' WALLFLOWER

(*Erysimum Bowles Mauve*). Mauve perennial wallflower, long season nectar for butterflies, moths and many bee species.

## BLACK KNAPWDWEED OR HARDHEADS

(*Centaurea nigra*). This wild flower can be grown in flower borders, or in a gravel garden. It is very variable in the wild and ideally should be grown from seeds of local provenance. Attracts a wide range of insects.

## BUGLE

(*Ajuga reptans*). Species and cultivars. Early forage for bees. Can be grown in a 'spring meadow' area in a lawn.

## BUTTERFLY BUSH

(*Buddleja*). Note that forms of *B. davidii* seed freely and can be invasive. They are not recommended to plant near sensitive wildlife areas. The following two hybrids do not produce seed:

*Buddleja* 'Lochinch'. Resembles *B. davidii*, flowering in mid-summer. Attractive to butterflies.

*Buddleja* x *weyeriana*\* 'Golden Glow'. This is a cross between *B. davidii* and *B. globosa*, late flowering. Attractive to a of insects.

*Buddleja globosa* has yellow or orange ball-shaped flowers in May that are attractive to bumblebees.

## CALAMINT

(*Calamintha* species). Forage for bumblebees and some solitary bees

## CARDOON AND GLOBE ARTICHOKE

(*Cynara cardunculus*). Forage for a range of insects. A tall 'architectural' perennial.

## CATMINT

(*Nepeta*\* species and cultivars). Attractive to a range of insects.

## CHIVES

(*Allium schoenoprasum*). Attractive to a range of insects.

## COMFREY

(*Symphytum* species). All are attractive to various species of bees, and are the larval food plant of the Scarlet Tiger moth. S. 'Hidcote Blue' is early forage for bumblebees and the solitary bee *Anthophora plumipes*.



# PLANT



## COMMON FLEABANE

(*Pulicaria dysenterica*). For boggy areas. Similar to marigolds (*Calendula*) but more attractive to a wide range of insects.



## COMMON IVY

(*Hedera helix*). An important late nectar source, a larval food plant for the Holly Blue butterfly and for several moths, plus a hibernation site for many insects. Needs space to climb in order to reach flowering size.



## COSMOS

(*Cosmos bipinnatus*). Single-flowered hybrids only. Forage for a range of insects.



## CRANESBIL

(*Geranium* species). Single-flowered species and cultivars. Nectar source for bumblebees.

## CURRANTS

Blackcurrant, Gooseberry, and Flowering Currant (*Ribes sanguineum*). Nectar for bumblebees.

## DAHLIA

(*Dahlia* species and cultivars). Single-flowered forms only. Forage for a range of insects.



## DAME'S VIOLET OR SWEET ROCKET

(*Hesperis matronalis*). Nectar source for butterflies, also larval food of Orange Tip butterfly.



## DEAD NETTLE

(*Lamium* species). All species and cultivars are forage for bumblebees and some solitary bees.

## DWARF BUGLOSS

(*Echium plantagineum* 'Blue Bedder').

A smaller counterpart of Viper's Bugloss, (*E. vulgare*) easier to accommodate in gardens, with many vivid blue flowers all summer long that attract a range of insects.

## DYER'S CHAMOMILE

(*Anthemis tinctoria*). Attractive to solitary bees, and hoverflies.

## EVENING PRIMROSE

(*Oenothera biennis* and *O. glazoviana*). Nectar for moths.

# PLANT



## FENNEL

(*Foeniculum vulgare*). Attractive to a wide range of insects, especially hoverflies and solitary bees. The bronze-leaved form 'Purpureum' is particularly ornamental as a garden plant.

## FOXGLOVES

(*Digitalis*)

### COMMON FOXGLOVE

(*Digitalis purpurea*). Forage for long-tongued bumblebees. Smaller flowered species are forage for short-tongued bumblebees and some solitary bees.

## GLOBE THISTLE

(*Echinops* species and cultivars). Attractive to a range of insects.

## GOLDEN HOP

(*Humulus lupulus* 'Aureus'). A climbing foliage plant which is a larval food for Buttoned Snout moth and Comma butterfly.

## GOLDENROD

(*Solidago* species and hybrids). Attractive to a range of insects in late summer. Some hybrids are very invasive and produce copious seed; instead grow the native *S. virgaurea*, or obtain non-invasive cultivars from nurseries or garden centres.

## HEATH

(*Erica* species and cultivars). Close relatives of heathers that are important forage for bees and a nectar source for butterflies. Some species are lime-tolerant.

## HEATHER

(*Calluna vulgaris* cultivars). Acid-soil loving heathers are important for late season forage. Choose single-flowered forms with visible stamens and accessible nectar; many cultivars currently sold in garden centres have flowers that are not accessible to insects.

## HEBE OR SHRUBBY VERONICA

Hebe 'Midsummer Beauty'. Nectar for butterflies, moths and bees in mid-summer.  
Hebe 'Great Orme'. Nectar for butterflies, moths and bees in late summer.

## HEMP AGRIMONY

(*Eupatorium cannabinum*). Late summer nectar for butterflies and moths, and forage for bees and other insects. Prefers damp soil and needs plenty of space. Avoid the double-flowered form as it does not produce nectar.



# PLANT



## HOLLY

(*Ilex aquifolium*, species and cultivars). Male trees produce nectar. Also a larval food plant of Holly blue butterfly.

## HONESTY

(*Lunaria annua*). Source of nectar for butterflies, also larval food plant for Orange Tip and Green-veined White.

## ICE PLANT

(*Sedum spectabile*). Late summer nectar source for butterflies and bees.

## JOE PYE WEED

(*Eupatorium purpureum* and cultivars). A large counterpart of Hemp Agrimony from N. America, providing late nectar for butterflies, and forage for bees and other insects.

## KIDNEY VETCH

(*Anthyllis vulneraria*). Larval food plant for Small Blue, also nectar for Common Blue, etc. and forage for bumblebees. Grow in gravel garden or a rockery.

## LADY'S SMOCK OR CUCKOO FLOWER

(*Cardamine pratensis*). Food plant for Orange Tip and Green-veined White larvae. Needs boggy conditions. Can be grown in a 'spring meadow' area in a lawn together with early flowering bulbs.

## LAMB'S EAR

(*Stachys byzantina*). Attractive to bumblebees and the Wool Carder Bee. Avoid the non-flowering forms commonly sold as ground cover in garden centres.

## LAVENDER

(*Lavendula*\* *angustifolia* and *L. X intermedia* cultivars). Attractive to wide range of insects. Recent research suggests that the taller 'Old English' types provide the best forage for insects.

## LUNGWORT

(*Pulmonaria* species). Early spring nectar source for bumblebees and the solitary bee *Anthophora plumipes*.

## MEXICAN HEMP AGRIMONY

(*Eupatorium ligustrinum*, syn. *Ageratina ligustrina*). Scented patio shrub, nectar for butterflies in late summer and early autumn. Protect from hard frost in winter.



# PLANT



## MICHAELMAS DAISIES

Many kinds provide forage for insects in late summer, however some are invasive and do not make good garden plants. The following are non-invasive:

### STARWORT

(*Aster amellus* cultivars). Attractive to a range of insects.

### NEW ENGLAND MICHAELMAS DAISY

(*Symphotrichum novae-angliae* cultivars). Attractive to a range of insects.

### MICHAELMAS DAISY HYBRID 'MONCH'

(*Aster* X '*Frikartii* 'Monch'). Particularly recommended for butterflies, attractive to a range of insects.

### MINTS

(*Mentha* species). Attractive to a range of insects.

### MOUNTAIN CORNFLOWER

(*Centaurea montana*). Forage for bumblebees and some solitary bees.

### MULLEINS

(*Verbascum* species). A pollen source for bumblebees and some solitary bees. Larval food plant of Mullein Moth.

### OREGON GRAPE

(*Mahonia aquifolium*). Shrub that provides an early forage source for bees.

### PRIVET

(*Ligustrum ovalifolium* and *L. vulgare*). Nectar from the scented flowers is very attractive to butterflies and moths, so long as this shrub is allowed to flower before cutting. Golden leaved forms of privet provide the same benefit to pollinators if allowed to flower.

### POPPIES

Single flowered forms of *Papaver rhoeas*, *P.somniferum*, and *Meconopsis cambrica* are a pollen source for bumblebees and some solitary bees.

### PURPLE CONEFLOWER

(*Echinacea* species and cultivars). A late summer nectar source for most insects.

### PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE

(*Lythrum salicaria*). For boggy ground. Attractive to a range of insects.

### PURPLE TOADFLAX

(*Linaria purpurea*). Forage for bumblebees and some solitary bees.

### PURPLE TOP

(*Verbena bonariensis*). Nectar source for butterflies.

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# PLANT



## RASPBERRY

(*Rubus idaeus*). Flowers are attractive to a range of insects.

## RED CLOVER

(*Trifolium pratense*). High-protein pollen important for Bumblebees, as well as nectar for butterflies and larval food for many moths. Can be planted in a lawn that is mowed with blades set high during the flowering period.

## ROSEMARY

(*Rosmarinus officinalis*). Early spring forage for bumblebees and some solitary bees.

## ROSES

### (ROSA)

Single-flowered roses, both species and cultivars, are a pollen source for bumblebees and some solitary bees.

## ROUND-HEADED LEEK

(*Allium sphaerocephalon*). Attractive to a range of insects.

## SAGES

(*Salvia officinalis*, *S. x superba*, *S. x sylvestris*, *S. nemorosa*, and cultivars. Forage for bumblebees.

## SCABIOUSES

(*Scabiosa*, *Knautia*, *Succisa*). Species and cultivars. Forage for a range of insects, especially butterflies and bees.



## SEA HOLLY, MOUNTAIN HOLLY

(*Eryngium* species and cultivars). All are attractive to a range of insects.



## SHRUBBY HARE'S EAR

(*Bupleurum fruticosum*). An evergreen shrub with yellow flowers attractive to a range of insects, especially solitary bees and hoverflies.

## SNAKESHEAD FRITILLARY

(*Fritillaria melagris*). An early spring bulb that is used as forage by bumblebees. Prefers boggy conditions. Can be grown in a 'spring meadow' area in a lawn.

## SWEET TOBACCO

*Nicotiana affinis* cultivars. Annual with scented flowers attractive to the migrant *Convolvulus* Hawkmoth.

## SWEET WILLIAM

(*Dianthus barbatus*). Nectar source for butterflies.

## PLANT



### TANSY

(*Tanacetum vulgare* species and cultivars). Forage for solitary bees.

### THYMES

(*Thymus* species and cultivars). Attractive to a range of insects.

### WILD MARJORAM

(*Origanum vulgare*). All forms are attractive to a range of insects.

### WILLOWS

(*Salix* spp). Shrubs or trees. Provide early nectar for insects, and are used as an early pollen source by queen bumblebees coming out of hibernation. Many species and cultivars grow very large, but can be coppiced. Smaller species and cultivars also provide forage for insects.



Part 2 – Plants native to, or naturalised in, Wales that are valuable for butterflies, moths, wild bees and other pollinators, for planting in field margins and verges.

The second part is a list of wildflowers native to Britain that have benefits for pollinating insects. This list is particularly relevant for planting in managed field margin, hedgerow and verge meadow settings. Some of these plants are too unruly to be grown in gardens, however others make good garden plants and a few are therefore listed in both the lists. We would recommend that landowners use seed or plants of local provenance and that they seek advice from their local Wildlife Trust or similar local groups or local wildflower nurseries if they are intending to plant wildflowers on their land.

## PLANT



### ALDER

(*Alnus glutinosa*). An early season source of pollen. Will grow in damp ground.

### ALDER BUCKTHORN

(*Frangula alnus*). One of only two larval food plants of Brimstone butterfly.

### ASPEN

(*Populus tremula*).

### BARREN STRAWBERRY

(*Potentilla sterilis*). Food plant for Grizzled Skipper.

### BIRD'S FOOT TREFOIL

(*Lotus corniculatus*). Larval food plant for Common Blue, Dingy Skipper and several moths. Also an important pollen source for bumblebees.





**BIRD'S FOOT TREFOIL, GREATER**

(*Lotus pedunculatus*, syn. *L. uliginosus*). Favourite nectar plant for Blues and Skippers, plus larval food for some species. Good bee forage. Likes boggy conditions.

**BLACK KNAPWEED OR HARDHEADS**

(*Centaurea nigra*). Very variable in the wild and ideally should be grown from seeds of local provenance. Attractive to a wide range of insects.



**BLACK POPLAR**

(*Populus nigra*). A rare native tree, larval food for several moths.

**BLACKTHORN OR SLOE**

(*Prunus spinosa*). Larval food for several Lepidoptera, forage for early solitary bees.

**BRAMBLE OR BLACKBERRY**

(*Rubus fruticosus*). Nectar for several butterflies that don't come to garden flowers, plus larval food for many moths, and forage for bumblebees and some solitary bees. Dead stems a nest site for some solitary bees.

**BUR-REED**

(*Sparganium erectum*). Larval food for several moths. Needs damp or wet ground.

**COCK'S FOOT GRASS**

(*Dactylis glomerata*). Larval food of several species of butterflies and moths.

**COLTSFOOT**

(*Tussilago farfara*). One of the very earliest spring nectar flowers.

**COMFREY**

(*Symphytum* species). Very attractive to all bees. Larval food plant of Scarlet Tiger moth.

**COMMON FLEABANE**

(*Pulicaria dysenterica*). Similar to marigolds (*Calendula*) but more attractive to a wide range of insects.



**COW PARSLEY**

(*Anthriscus sylvestris*). Nectar for lacewings, beetles and hoverflies.

**CREEPING THISTLE**

(*Cirsium arvense*). Larval food of Painted Lady. Nectar for all insects. Note that this species is subject to the Weeds act 1959 and landowners may be required to control its spread.

**DAME'S VIOLET OR SWEET ROCKET**

(*Hesperis matronalis*). Larval food plant for Orange Tip butterfly.



# PLANT



## DOG VIOLET

(*Viola riviniana*). Larval food plant for several rare Fritillary butterflies.

## DOVE'S FOOT CRANESBILL

(*Geranium molle*). Larval food plant for some moths and butterflies, and nectar for bees and butterflies. Flowers again soon after being mown short.

## DYER'S CHAMOMILE

(*Anthemis tinctoria*). Nectar and dye plant (yellow). Attractive to solitary bees, and hoverflies.

## DYER'S WELD

(*Reseda luteola*). Attractive to bumblebees and the White-faced Bee (*Hylaeus signatus*).

## ELDER

(*Sambucus nigra*). Flowers attract hoverflies, beetles and other insects and berries good for birds. Dead stems a nest site for some solitary bees.

## ELM

(*Ulmus* species). Larval food for White-letter Hairstreak butterfly.

## FIELD SCABIOUS

(*Knautia arvensis*). Forage for bees and butterflies.



## GARLIC MUSTARD

(*Alliaria petiolata*). Biennial, larval food of Orange Tip butterfly.

## GOAT WILLOW

(*Salix caprea*). Larval food plant for many species of moth, plus early spring nectar for bumblebees, moths, butterflies, honey bees, coming out of hibernation.

## GREAT MULLEIN

(*Verbascum thapsus*). Pollen for bees. Larval food of Mullein moth.

## GREATER CELANDINE

(*Chelidonium majus*). Nectar and pollen for bees.

## GREEN ALKANET

(*Pentaglottis sempervirens*). Very attractive to a range of bees.

## HAWTHORN

(*Crataegus monogyna*). Larval food plant for many species of moth, plus important early summer nectar for some insects.



**HEMP AGRIMONY**

(*Eupatorium cannabinum*). Late summer nectar for butterflies and moths, and forage for bees and other insects. Prefers damp soil.



**HEMP NETTLE**

(*Galiopsis tetrahit*). Forage for bees.

**HERB ROBERT**

(*Geranium robertianum*). Grows in shade. Nectar source for butterflies and some bees.

**HONEYSUCKLE**

(*Lonicera periclymenum*). Larval food plant for White Admiral plus many moths. Nectar attractive to hawkmoths and long-tongued bumblebees.

**KIDNEY VETCH**

(*Anthyllis vulneraria*). Larval food plant for Small Blue, also nectar for Common Blue, etc. and forage for bumblebees.

**LADY'S SMOCK OR CUCKOO FLOWER**

(*Cardamine pratensis*). Food plant for Orange Tip and Green-veined White larvae. Needs boggy conditions.

**LUCERNE OR ALFALFA**

(*Medicago sativa*). Larval food for the Clouded yellow, plus nectar, also a source of pollen for bumblebees.

**MARSH VIOLET**

(*Viola palustris*). Larval food for Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary.

**MEADOW CRANESBILL**

(*Geranium pratense*). Blue flowers, competes well in tall grass meadow, nectar for bumblebees.

**MEADOWSWEET**

(*Filipendula ulmaria*). Nectar source for various insects.

**MEADOW VETCHLING**

(*Lathyrus pratensis*). Pollen and nectar source for bumblebees and solitary bees.

**NATIVE PRIVET**

(*Ligustrum vulgare*). Nectar source, and larval food for many moths.

**NOTTINGHAM CATCHFLY**

(*Silene nutans*). Nectar for moths.



**PURGING BUCKTHORN**

(*Rhamnus catharticus*). One of only two food plants of Brimstone butterfly larvae, also the Garden Tiger moth and others.

**PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE**

(*Lythrum salicaria*). Forage for bumblebees. Likes boggy conditions.

**RAMSONS OR WILD GARLIC**

(*Allium ursinum*).

**RED CAMPION**

(*Silene dioica*). Early forage for bumblebees

**RED CLOVER**

(*Trifolium pratense*). High-protein pollen important for Bumblebees, as well as nectar for butterflies and larval food for many moths.

**RED FESCUE**

(*Festuca rubra*). A grass; larval food for several species of lepidoptera.

**RIBWORT PLANTAIN**

*Plantago lanceolata*). Larval food for many moths.

**ROCK ROSE**

(*Helianthemum nummularium*). Larval food plant for Brown Argus, and Silver-studded Blue. A pollen source for solitary bees.

**ROSEBAY WILLOWHERB**

(*Chamerion angustifolium*, syn. *Epilobium angustifolium*). Larval food plant of Elephant Hawkmoth and nectar for many other moths, also forage for bumblebees.

**SHEEP'S FESCUE**

(*Festuca ovina*). A grass; larval food for several species of Lepidoptera.

**SHEEP'S SORREL**

(*Rumex acetosella*). Food plant for Small Copper butterfly larvae.

**SHINING CRANESBILL**

(*Geranium lucidum*). Nectar for bees and butterflies. Flowers again soon after being mown short.

**SMALL SCABIOUS**

(*Scabiosa columbaria*). Attractive to bumblebees and some solitary bees.





**SPEAR THISTLE**

(*Cirsium vulgare*). Larval food of Painted Lady. Nectar for bees and butterflies. Note that this species is subject to the Weeds act 1959 and landowners may be required to control its spread.

**TEASEL**

(*Dipsacus fullonum*). Nectar and pollen for many insects, then favourite seed heads for Goldfinches.

**TIMOTHY**

(*Phleum pratense*). A grass; larval food for a number of Lepidoptera.

**TUFTED VETCH**

(*Vicia cracca*). Nectar for bees.

**VIPER'S BUGLOSS**

(*Echium vulgare*). Upright spires of brilliant blue that are beloved of bees.

**WATER MINT**

(*Mentha aquatica*). Nectar for butterflies and bees.



**WHITE CLOVER**

(*Trifolium repens*). Nectar and pollen for bumblebees.

**WILD MARJORAM**

(*Origanum vulgare*). Nectar for butterflies and bees.



**WILD CARROT, QUEEN ANNE'S LACE**

(*Daucus carota*). Nectar for bees, lacewings, hoverflies, various beetles.

**WILD STRAWBERRY**

(*Fragaria vesca*). Food plant for Grizzled Skipper.

**WILD IVY**

(*Hedera helix*). Important late nectar source for honeybees, larval food plant for Holly Blue and for several moths, plus important hibernation site for Brimstone butterfly and others.



**WOUNDWORT**

(*Stachys sylvatica*). Forage for wool-carder bee (*Anthidium manicatum*) and bumblebees.

**YARROW**

(*Achillea millefolium*). Attractive to hoverflies.

**YORKSHIRE FOG**

(*Holcus lanatus*) A grass; larval food of several species of butterfly.

# NOTES

This list has been produced by Jan Miller on behalf of the North Wales Wildlife Trust and Marc Carlton on behalf of the Wildlife Gardening Forum, at the request of the Welsh Government's Pollinator Task Force.

The authors recognise that producing planting lists for pollinators is not a straightforward exercise. There are still many areas where further research is required in order to improve our understanding of the needs of pollinating insects and the best planting schemes to cater for them. One of the Wildlife Gardening Forum's aims is to promote more evidence-based research to increase our knowledge and understanding of this subject.

This list is based on the compilers' personal experience over many years as gardeners and naturalists, and incorporates Jan's work investigating plants for butterflies on behalf of Butterfly Conservation and uses their data sent in by members over twenty years. The list includes a selection of forage plants useful for adult butterflies, moths, hoverflies, bumblebees and solitary bees, which together make up the vast majority of pollinators in Wales. Plants recommended as larval food plants for butterflies and some moths have also been included.

Specialised lists of flowers that are recommended as forage for honeybees have been published for many years within the beekeeping community and so we have not specifically covered honeybees in our list, although many of the flowers on our list will be used by honeybees.

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