

Trees for Bees

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Bee-attractive trees and shrubs that bloom in spring and early summer.

Common name	Scientific name	Native or nonnative	Tree or shrub	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Cornelian cherry	<i>Cornus mas</i>	nonnative	tree	✿			
Dwarf fothergilla	<i>Fothergilla gardenia</i>	native	shrub	✿	✿		
Winter honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera fragrantissima</i>	native	shrub	✿	✿		
Higan cherry	<i>Prunus subhirtella</i>	nonnative	tree	✿	✿		
Flowering cherry	<i>Prunus</i> spp.	varies	tree	✿	✿		
Flowering crabapple	<i>Malus</i> spp.	varies	tree	✿	✿		
Red maple ^P	<i>Acer rubrum</i>	native	tree	✿	✿		
Sugar maple ^P	<i>Acer saccharum</i>	native	tree	✿	✿		
Pussy willow	<i>Salix discolor</i>	native	both	✿	✿		
American filbert ^P	<i>Corylus americana</i>	native	both	✿	✿		
Fragrant sumac	<i>Rhus aromatica</i>	native	shrub	✿	✿		
American elm ^P	<i>Ulmus americana</i>	native	tree	✿	✿		
Spicebush	<i>Lindera benzoin</i>	native	shrub	✿	✿		
Oaks (native) ^P	<i>Quercus</i> spp.	native	tree	✿	✿	✿	
Burkwood viburnum	<i>Viburnum burkwoodii</i>	nonnative	shrub		✿	✿	
Cherry laurel	<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>	nonnative	shrub		✿	✿	
Red horsechestnut	<i>Aesculus x carnea</i>	nonnative	tree		✿	✿	
American holly	<i>Ilex opaca</i>	native	tree		✿	✿	
Foster's holly	<i>Ilex x attenuata</i>	native	shrub		✿	✿	
Winter king hawthorn	<i>Crataegus viridis</i>	native	tree		✿	✿	
Serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier</i> spp.	native	both		✿	✿	
Eastern redbud	<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	native	tree		✿	✿	
Sycamore maple ^P	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>		tree		✿	✿	
Ohio buckeye	<i>Aesculus glabra</i>	native	tree		✿	✿	
Carolina silverbell	<i>Halesia carolina</i>	native	tree		✿	✿	
Black gum	<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>	native	tree		✿	✿	✿
Ninebark	<i>Physocarpus opulifolius</i>	native	shrub			✿	
Fuzzy deutzia	<i>Deutzia scabra</i>	nonnative	shrub			✿	
Pyracantha	<i>Pyracantha</i> spp.	nonnative	shrub			✿	
Japanese tree lilac	<i>Syringa reticulata</i>	nonnative	tree			✿	✿
American yellowwood	<i>Cladrastis kentukea</i>	native	tree			✿	✿
Mock orange	<i>Philadelphus</i> spp.	varies	shrub			✿	✿
Virginia spiraea	<i>Spiraea virginiana</i>	native	shrub			✿	✿
False indigo	<i>Amorpha fruticosa</i>	native	shrub			✿	✿
Pagoda dogwood	<i>Cornus alternifolia</i>	native	both			✿	✿
Red-osier dogwood	<i>Cornus sericea</i>	native	shrub			✿	✿
Black locust	<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>	native	tree			✿	✿
Kentucky coffeetree	<i>Gymnocladus dioicus</i>	native	tree			✿	✿
Tulip poplar	<i>Liriodendron tulipera</i>	native	tree			✿	✿
Black chokecherry	<i>Aronia melanocarpa</i>	native	shrub			✿	✿
American bladdernut	<i>Staphylea trifolia</i>	native	tree			✿	✿
Carolina rose	<i>Rosa carolina</i>	native	shrub			✿	✿
Northern catalpa	<i>Catalpa speciosa</i>	native	tree			✿	✿
New Jersey tea	<i>Cenothus americanus</i>	native	shrub			✿	✿

^Pdenotes wind-pollinated trees that provide pollen only. Most listed plants provide both pollen and nectar.

Based on Mach & Potter (2018) <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0208428> and other sources

Bee-attractive trees and shrubs that bloom in summer or autumn

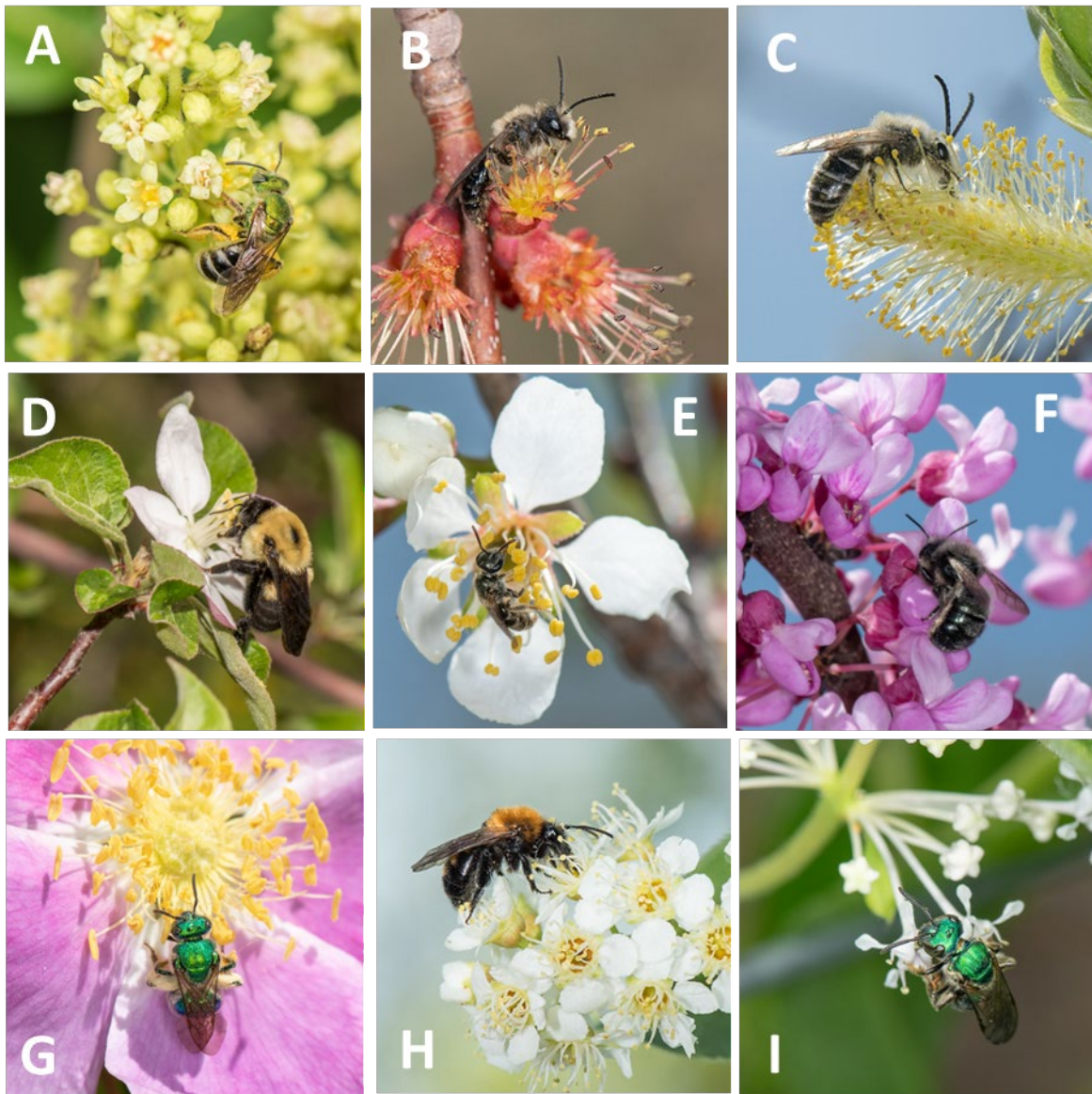
Common name	Scientific name	Native or nonnative	Tree or shrub	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
American elderberry	<i>Sambucus canadensis</i>	native	shrub	✿	✿				
Smooth sumac	<i>Rhus glabra</i>	native	both	✿	✿				
Leadplant	<i>Amorpha canescens</i>	native	shrub	✿	✿				
Sweetspire	<i>Itea virginica</i>	native	shrub	✿	✿				
Bottlebrush buckeye	<i>Aesculus parviflora</i>	native	shrub	✿	✿				
American linden	<i>Tilia americana</i>	native	tree	✿	✿				
Littleleaf linden	<i>Tilia cordata</i>	nonnative	tree	✿	✿				
Golden raintree	<i>Koelreuteria reticulata</i>	nonnative	tree	✿	✿				
St. John's wort	<i>Hypericum frondosum</i>	native	shrub	✿	✿	✿			
Devil's walking stick	<i>Aralia spinosa</i>	native	tree		✿	✿			
PeeGee hydrangea	<i>Hydrangea paniculata</i>	nonnative	shrub		✿	✿			
Summersweet clethra	<i>Clethra alnifolia</i>	native	shrub		✿	✿			
Bee bee tree	<i>Tetradium daniellii</i>	nonnative	tree		✿	✿			
Winged sumac	<i>Rhus copallinum</i>		tree		✿	✿			
Crape myrtle	<i>Lagerstroemia</i> spp.	nonnative	tree		✿	✿	✿		
Glossy abelia	<i>Abelia x grandiflora</i>	nonnative	shrub		✿	✿	✿		
Seven-son flower	<i>Heptacodium miconiodes</i>	nonnative	both			✿	✿	✿	
Chaste tree	<i>Vitex agnus-castus</i>	nonnative	tree			✿	✿	✿	
Common witchhazel	<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>	native	both					✿	✿

Why care about bees?

Bees are essential for sustaining agriculture and biodiversity worldwide. Bees pollinate about 80% of all flowering plants, including about 75% of the fruits, nuts, and vegetables grown in the USA. Urban bees pollinate crops grown in residential and community gardens, as well as wild and ornamental plants that provide food (seeds, fruit, and insect prey) for birds and other urban wildlife. Besides honey bees, which are nonnative, nearly 4,000 wild native bee species occur in the USA. In most crops, native bees are the main pollinators, or they significantly augment pollination by honey bees. Other native bees are specialist feeders on pollen from wild native plants whose pollination and seed set, in turn, depends on those bees' services. Hollies, hawthorns, crabapples and other ornamentals won't produce showy fruit without bee pollination.

Building a bee-friendly landscape

Many native bee species are declining in abundance or range, with habitat loss and shortage of floral resources among the main drivers. Flowering trees and shrubs can provide abundant, high-quality pollen and nectar for urban bees. Landscaping with a mix of woody plant species whose collective bloom periods extend from early spring to autumn can help buffer bee populations from seasonal gaps in resource availability. Emphasize natives, but including some non-invasive non-natives, which tend to bloom earlier or later than native plants, can help ensure a succession of overlapping bloom periods throughout the growing season.



Examples of bees on trees (all photos © Heather Holm, used with permission):

- A. Sweat bee (*Agapostemon* sp.) on sumac
- B. Mining bee (*Andrena* sp.) on red maple
- C. Cellophane bee (*Colletes* sp.) on willow
- D. Bumble bee (*Bombus* sp.) on crabapple
- E. Sweat bee (*Lasioglossum* sp.) on serviceberry
- F. Mason bee (*Osmia* sp.) on redbud
- G. Sweat bee (*Augochloropsis* sp.) on rose
- H. Mining bee (*Andrena* sp.) on chokecherry
- I. Sweat bee (*Augochlora* sp.) on New Jersey tea