

Planting Guide for ‘Flowering Party’ – Front Gardens Festival

Some guidance for creating a pollinator-rich growing space and suggested late season plants for late flowering.

Quick tips for helping pollinators:

- Avoid using pesticides and never spray open flowers
- Allow lawn ‘weeds’ to flower by mowing less often. Dandelions for instance are an invaluable food source for many pollinators
- Provide water for pollinators
- Provide nest sites for wild bees

Set up a ‘nectar café’ by planting flowers for pollinating insects like bees and butterflies.

Many of our prettiest insects feed on nectar, so need flowering plants for their survival. Butterflies, moths, bees and hoverflies all need sources of nectar and pollen to thrive. As they travel from flower to flower, they also pollinate them, enabling them to set seed or bear fruit. So, setting up a nectar café benefits both your plants and you, allowing you to enjoy the flitting and fluttering of beautiful butterflies.

Setting up your nectar café:

- Choose a sheltered sunny spot
- Place each plant in groups or drifts so that the colour and scent are easy to detect
- Prolong the flowering season – select plants so that you have a show of flowers from early spring to late autumn
- Choose flowers with a simple (often flat) structure, like old cottage varieties, as they are the easiest for insects to feed from
- Add herbs to the mix as they are highly attractive to insects, or design a dedicated herb garden

Late season nectar plant suggestions:

1. Coneflower - Echinacea spp.
2. French marigold - Tagetes patula
3. Golden rod - Solidago spp.
4. Honeysuckle - Lonicera periclymenum
5. Ice plant - Sedum spectabile
6. Ivy - Hedera helix
7. Meadow saffron - Colchicum autumnale
8. Michaelmas daisy - Aster pyrenaicus
9. Common sunflower - Helianthus annuus
10. Red valerian - Centranthus ruber

Wildflowers that are suitable to be sown in May for an August/Sept flowering:

1. Anchusa - flowers June to Sept
2. Blue Bedder /Echium - flowers June to Oct
3. Borage - flowers August to Sept
4. Chrysanthemum - flowers from May to Sept depending on when sown
5. Cornflower - flowers from June to Sept depending on when sown
6. Cosimidium - flowers from June to Oct depending on when sown
7. Cosmos - flowers from July to Oct depending on when sown
8. Dianthus - flowers June to Oct
9. Evening Primrose - flowers June to Oct - biennial
10. Fennel - flowers June to Oct
11. Flax - flowers June to Oct
12. Californian Poppy - flowers June to Sept
13. Mirabilis - flowers July to Oct
14. Sweet Alyssum - flowers June to Oct
15. Tickseed/ Coreopsis - flowers July to Oct
16. Wallflowers - flowers May to Nov
17. Yarrow - flowers June to Oct

Most wildflowers enjoy poor sandy soil and lots of sun. All of the above are good for Bees, Butterflies and other pollinators.

Top tips for supporting pollinators in small spaces:

- When space is tight, sneak some pollinator-friendly bulbs such as ornamental alliums into your pots
- Have a bare wall? Cover it with a honeysuckle for the bees and moths
- Let ivy flower on walls and trees for a late-season pollen and nectar bonanza
- Save a patch of bare soil for solitary bees to nest in
- A 1x1 metre square of long grass is enough room for a bumblebee to make a nest

Suggested pollinator plants for window boxes:

1. English lavender 'Hidcote
2. Fuchsia 'Tom Thumb'
3. Armenian grape hyacinth
4. Catmint 'Summer Magic'
5. *Allium* 'Farreri'