

Top 10 Plants for Bees and Butterflies

If you're just starting to think what you might plant in your garden to attract bees, butterflies and other insects, or if you're new to gardening and want to add a few pollinator friendly plants, but don't know what to buy, here are 10 plants to consider. These plants will help you create a wildlife friendly garden and will also look fabulous.

Common Knapweed is a firm favourite of our pollinating insects, being a native wildflower and a source of good quality nectar. As well as supporting our bees, butterflies and beetles, its seeds provide food for many birds.

Lavender is a perfect plant for pollinators. It looks good all year, has an incredible scent that persists when dried and is rich in pollen and nectar for much of summer, so bees and butterflies love it.

Phacelia is a beautiful plant, ideal as a cut flower, beloved by bees and very attractive to lots of beneficial insects like lacewings and ladybirds. The hungry larvae of these insects then munch away on less welcome aphids.

Pot Marigold, or *Calendula officinalis*, is a must have. The variety 'Indian Prince' is a good one, deep orange with crimson backs which match the crimson centre of the flower. It attracts insects and is also edible.

Foxglove is one of the very best cottage garden plants of early summer. If you pick the 'king' flower – the main spire – you will create lots of 'prince' flowers and the plants will then go on flowering for longer.

Cornflowers are magnets for beneficial insects that feed on many pest insects. These garden helpers include lacewings, parasitic wasps, tachinid flies and hoverflies. They provide free pollination services too. Cornflower is one of the prettiest wildflowers, used to populate entire fields with its lovely blue hue.

Wallflowers flower in the spring and come in the most wonderful rich colours. With one of the best ever scents, they are great for bees.

Scabious flowers constantly throughout the summer months, making it the perfect plant for when little else is flowering. It's a great choice for any wildlife garden, its steady supply of nectar rich flowers attracting pollinating insects, like Butterflies and Bees.

Marjoram has pretty pink flowers and is an excellent food source for all kinds of insects, as well as a herb that lends itself to many dishes.

Fennel is rich in nectar and pollen and attracts many kinds of bees including yellow faced, mining, honey and bumblebees.

