

Honey Plants



Joli Winer

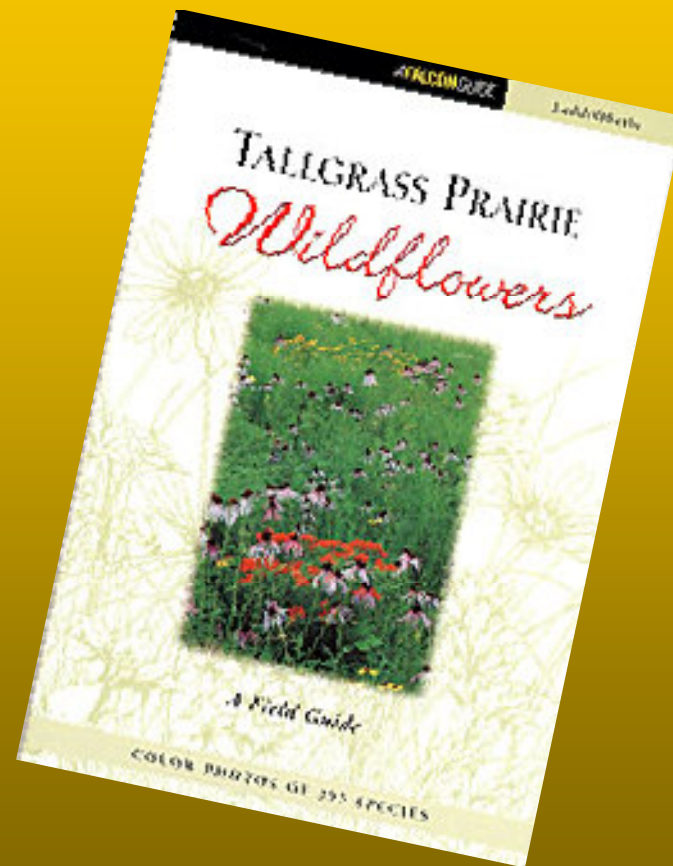
There is no subject of more importance to the beekeeper, nor is there one that gives him more pleasure, than the study of the honey producing flowers. -----

Doolittle



Identifying Plants

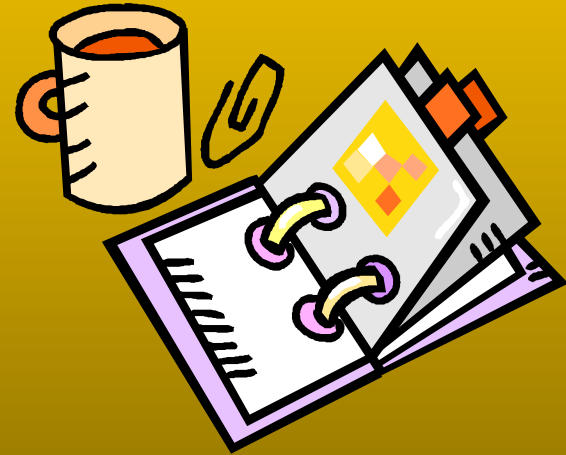
- By Season
 - For build up
 - For honey production
 - For winter stores
- Nectar Production
- Pollen Production



Seasonal Identification

Keep a record

- Dates
- Time of day
- Temperature
- Location
- Color of Pollen



Spring Build-Up

- Nectar and pollen producing plants
 - Promote brood rearing
 - Promote wax production



Red Maple

- Early February
- Nectar
- Pollen, tan



Pussy Willow

- February
- Early March
- Nectar & Pollen
- Host plant for Viceroy & Red-Spotted Purple Butterflies



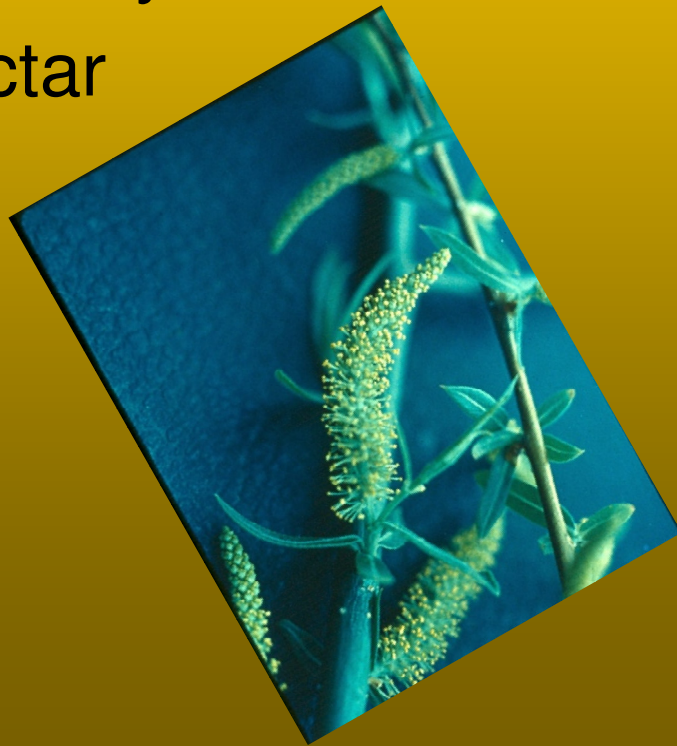
Elm

- February
- Pollen, white to grey



Weeping Willow

- February
- Early March
- Pollen, yellow
- Nectar



Forsythia

- Early March
- No value to the bees
- Beekeeper starts thinking of spring



Dandelion

- March to November
- Nectar & Pollen
- Pollen color produces very yellow wax on new foundation



Henbit

- End of March & Early April
- Nectar
- Pollen-red to purple



Mustard or Yellow Rocket



- March to early April
- Nectar
- Pollen, yellow
- Good for spring build up

Redbuds

- March & April
- Nectar and Pollen



Redbuds & Wild Plums



- End of March
- Beginning of April
- Nectar
- Pollen, brown
- Spring Build up

Wild Cherry



- April to May
- Nectar very bitter
- Pollen, brown



Redbud and Flowering Crab



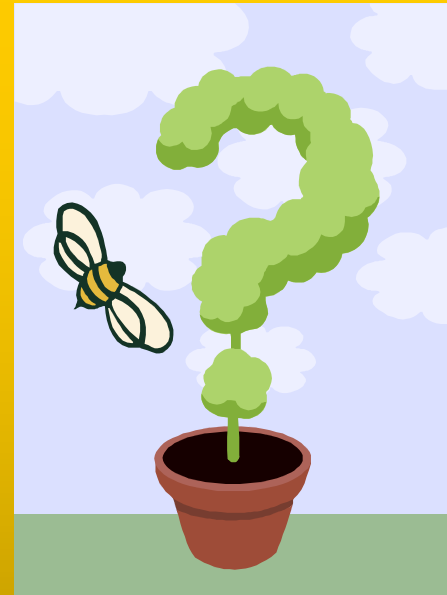
- End of March
- Early April
- Nectar
- Spring build up—multiple trees in bloom

Columbines



How do the bees do it?

- Efficient
- Age of bees
- Need within nest
- Flowers visited
- Visit when sugar concentration is highest
- Communication in hive-where to get it
- Weather



Domestic Fruit Trees - Apple



- April
- 2-5 hives needed per acre of trees
- Nectar stimulates brood rearing
- Pollen

Pollen



- Needed for brood rearing
- Increases with the needs in the colony
- Colors represent different flowers
- Value-added product

Brambles



- Brambles include blackberries & raspberries
- May
- “Blackberry Winter”
- Nectar

Vegetable Gardens

Cucurbits

- Cucumbers – pollen
 - Insects transfer pollen from male to female flowers
- Squash, Pumpkins, Melons - pollen & nectar



Herbs

- Aren't honey plants but provide minor nectar
- Mints, sages, oregano, thyme, lavender, borage,



Honey Production



The Pedigree of Honey
Does not concern the Bee—
A Clover, any time, to him,
Is Aristocracy—

From "The pedigree of honey" by Emily Dickinson

Black Locust

- May
- Nectar, light & mild tasting
- Flowers very fragrant
- Short bloom period, 10 days
- Poor weather
 - Usually rains
 - Hails
 - Heavy winds



Alfalfa & Scurfy Pea

- Several cuttings, hay
- Seed Production
- Nectar & Pollen
- Quickly granulates
- Florets have a tripping mechanism



Hairy Vetch



- May-July
- Nectar
- Work later in season
- Sometimes planted with rye to hold rye up

Crown Vetch

- Bees don't work this
- Commonly seen along roadsides & planted by highway dept.



Basswood or Linden Tree

- Early June
- Light colored, strong tasting honey
- Pollen, green



Common Milkweed



- **May, June, July**
- **Nectar**
- **Sticky flower parts**
- **Host to Monarch or Milkweed Butterflies**
- **Butterfly nectar source**

Common Dogbane

Host for Milkweed & Monarch Butterflies



Butterfly Weed

Nectar source for butterflies



Wild Bergamot & Horsemint

Butterfly nectar source



Do you hate non-native species?



- Bees are non-native
 - Introduced into North America in the 1600's
- Therefore---- the bees prefer non-native plants

There's the same sweet clover-smell in the
breeze;

And the June sun warm

Tangles his wings of fire in the trees,
Setting, as then, over Fernside farm.

From "Telling the Bees"
by John Greenleaf Whittier



Earliest Clovers



- Many varieties of clover
- Alsike & White Dutch Clover
- Long bloom periods
- Late April-August
- Nectar, very light
- Pollen, brown

Yellow Sweet Clover

- Mid-May through June
- Nectar & Pollen



White Sweet Clover



- Mid-May until Mid-July
- Nectar & Pollen



Red Clover



- Myth
- Very deep flower
- Can be a valuable honey plant in a very dry year
- Or third or fourth cutting
- Pollen

Purple Prairie Clover—native

Host& nectar source to Dogface Butterfly



Birds Foot Trefoil



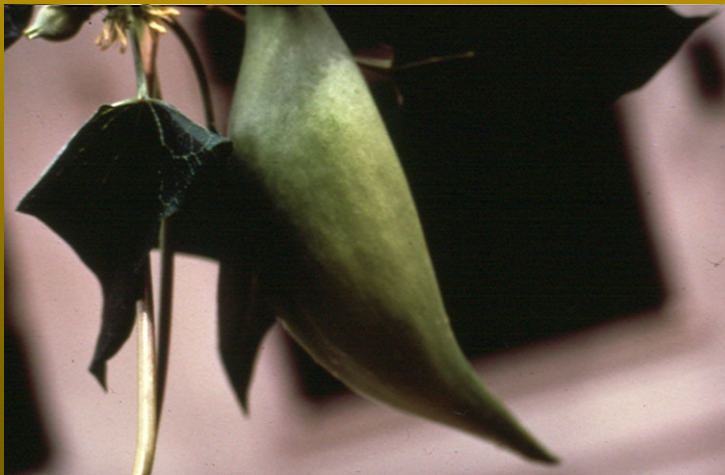
- June-July
- Light clover flavor honey
- Planted as highway ground cover



Bluevine



- Late June through August
- Honey, white & cloudy
- Herbicides



Cotton

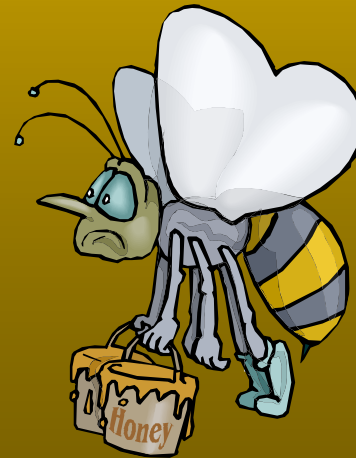
- In Kansas?
- Light honey
- Pesticides



Buckwheat



- Dark, heavy, strong tasting honey
- Worked in early morning
- Flowers quickly



Fall Honey and Winter Stores

- Mid-August through the first freeze
- Usually darker, stronger flavored honey
- Many customers prefer its taste
- Some beekeepers let the bees have all the dark honey as their winter stores
 - Some beekeepers choose to start their varroa mite treatments in early fall

Sage

- Produces some nectar
- August-September



Smartweed (Heartsease)



- August until frost
- Nectar

Sunflower

- Amber colored honey
- Genetically engineered
- Attracts numerous species of insects



Jerusalem Artichoke



- August & September
- Nectar

Spanish Needle

- August & September
- Nectar & Pollen
- “Orange juice” honey



Maximilian Sunflower



- August & September
- Nectar & pollen
- Amber honey

Annual Sunflower

- August & September
- Amber Honey
- Pollen



Goldenrod

- August - October
- Nectar & Pollen
- Nectar source for butterflies
- Granulates with a coarse grain
- Excellent winter feed for bees



New England Aster

- September to frost
- Nectar
- Granulates quickly
- Very strong smell in hives





Crowds of bees are giddy with clover
Crowds of grasshoppers skip at our
feet,
Crowds of larks at their matins hang over,
Thanking the Lord for a life so sweet.

• ***Jean Ingelow***

Special thanks to:

- My friend Betsy Betros –she took most of the photos

