

LIST OF COMMON BEE FORAGE PLANTS on CAPE COD

This is most definitely not a comprehensive list of plants that supply bees with either pollen, nectar, or both, but it is what grows in my minimally sunny yard in clay soil. You can probably do a lot better! There are many other bee plants that require >6 hours of sun (which I can't supply).

I should mention that several of these plants are on the invasive species list but the bees aren't reading that list and feed at whatever blossom supplies nectar with the highest sugar content.

For early spring buildup of the bee colony:

Heath

Skunk Cabbage!-Believe it!

Pussy Willow

Bulbs-including small bulbs such as squill, muscari, iris reticulata

Shadblow /Shadbush

Dandelion-1st important stimulus for brood rearing; provides both nectar and pollen

Forsythia

Redbud/ Judas Tree

Black Locust-the best and largest early nectar source on the Cape (despite of being an invasive)

Apples and Pears

Strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, blackberries

Bearberry

Horse Chestnut

Cranberry-not a bee favorite because of low sugar content so bee hives must be moved

to the bogs to ensure adequate pollination as the flowers open

Scotch Broom

Rhododendron

Kalmia

Rose

Poison Ivy and Oak—don't laugh !!! In CA and OR where Poison Oak honey has been

collected, it is reported to be a well flavored honey which is FREE OF POISONOUS PROPERTIES. Some believe eating it will eventually make one immune to the toxins in these plants.

Poppy

White Clover

Foxglove

Holly

Buckwheat (use as a groundcover)

Annuals such as cleome, cosmos, marigolds, nasturtiums, sweet alyssum, and zinnias

Almost all fruit, nut and grain crops e.g. squash, filberts

Clethra (Summersweet, Sweet Pepperbush) an excellent native and fragrant spreading shrub for mid season nectar when not many other major nectar sources are available or NSTAR isn't spraying it with herbicide...

Hydrangea

Purple Loosestrife—a wicked invasive but still an excellent source of nectar for bees

Elderberry

Globe Thistle

Monarda (beebalm)

Privet —provides nectar for bees but an unpleasant tasting honey to humans

Herbs— nearly all provide nectar but borage is a bee favorite

Hibiscus— both cultivated and wild

Staghorn Sumac

Bittersweet! another invasive the bees flock to.

Linden/Basswood

Sourwood/ Sorrel

For late season sources of nectar and pollen

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Aster

Goldenrod

Sweet Autumn Clematis