

# **BEE-FRIENDLY NATIVE PLANTS**

## Theodore Payne Foundation for Wild Flowers and Native Plants

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California is home to 1,600 native bee species! Native bees are important and effective pollinators and essential to a healthy ecosystem. The best way to support these and other beneficial insects in your garden is to provide them with native plants.

ANNUALS (best sown from seed in fall)

- *Clarkia unguiculata* (elegant clarkia)—4' H x 1' W—Showy white, pink or magenta flowers on tall upright stems. Foliage is used by sphinx moth caterpillars (also called hummingbird moths!).
- *Eschscholzia californica* (California poppy)—18" H x 1' W—Favored by small sweat bees and our smallest bees, *Perdita* spp.

*Gilia capitata* (globe gilia)—4' H x 1' W—Late-spring bloomer loved by long-horned bees. *Layia platyglossa* (tidy tips)—2' H x 1' W—Cheerful yellow and white daisy-like flowers.

*Lupinus succulentus* (arroyo lupine) and other species—2' H x 1' W—Blue-purple flowers attract bumblebees.

*Mentzelia lindleyi* (Lindley's blazing star)—2' H x 1' W—Golden yellow flowers attract digger bees *Nemophila menziesii* (baby blue eyes)—6" H x 1' W—Charming little plant with blue flowers. Grows well in part sun to shade.

*Phacelia tanacetifolia* (tansy-leaved phacelia)—3' H x 3' W—A must-have for any bee garden.

## PERENNIALS

- *Calystegia macrostegia* (morning glory)—15' H x 15' W—Climbing vine attracts the specialist digger bee, *Diadasia bituberculata*, which forages only on this flower.
- Helianthus annuus (common sunflower), Baileya multiradiata (desert marigold) and other Aster family species—Attract many pollinators, including sweat bees, mason bees and bumble bees.
- *Monardella* spp. (coyote mint)—Fragrant foliage and showy, nectar-rich flowers attract bees, flower flies and butterflies.
- *Penstemon spectabilis* (showy penstemon)—5' H x 4' W—Large tubular flowers are foraged by bees and pollen wasps.
- *Salvia apiana, S. clevelandii, S. leucophylla* (sages)—Attract many bees, including carpenter bees, bumble bees, digger bees and long-horned bees (as well as hummingbirds).
- Solanum xanti (blue witch)—3' H x 3' W—Flowers are buzz pollinated by bumble bees.
- *Sphaeralcea ambigua* (apricot mallow)—3' H x 3' W—Favored by mallow-loving digger bees, *Diadasia ochracea*.

## SHRUBS

- *Arctostaphylos* spp. (manzanita)—Urn-shaped flowers attract bumble bees, as well as flower flies, butterflies and hummingbirds.
- Berberis aquifolium, B. nevinii (barberry)—6' H x 8' W—Yellow flowers favored by mason bees.

#### SHRUBS (cont'd)

- *Ceanothus* spp. (California lilac)—Popular with bumblebees, mining bees, mason bees and sweat bees.
- *Encelia californica* (bush sunflower)—4' H x 5' W—Visited by many pollinators including bees, butterflies, moths and beetles.
- *Eriogonum* spp. (buckwheat)—Leaf cutter bees, sweat bees, butterflies, and beetles are some of the many pollinators that visit native buckwheats.
- *Fremontodendron californicum* (California flannelbush)—15' H x 8' W—Carpenter bees adore these large open flowers.
- *Heteromeles arbutifolia* (toyon)—15' H x 15' W—Summer flowers are visited by small, fast-flying leaf cutter bees.

Malacothamnus fasciculatus (chaparral mallow)—6' H x 12' W—Favored by digger bees.

#### TREES

*Cercis occidentalis* (western redbud)—15' H x 12' W—Mason bees use leaves for nesting material. *Parkinsonia florida, P. microphylla* (palo verde)—Flowers are loved by carpenter bees.

## NATIVE BEE FACTS

- Native bees are more docile than honey bees, and they rarely sting. Many native bees are so tiny that they cannot sting humans.
- Most native bees are solitary—they do not live in colonies or produce honey.
- Solitary native bees nest in the ground or in wood cavities. Leave some sunny patches of garden free of mulch to invite ground-nesting bees.
- Some native bee species only visit certain flowers or families of plants, such as mallows (*Malacothamnus, Sphaeralcea, Abutilon*), California poppy (Eschscholzia californica), California lilac (Ceanothus) or native morning glories (*Calystegia*). Plant these to support our specialist pollinators!

## COMMON NATIVE BEE PROFILES

- Mining bees (Andrenidae)—soil nesters; active February to June; preferred flowers include *Ceanothus* and *Phacelia*.
- **Bumble bees** (Apidae)—social, nesting in small annual colonies; active January through October; preferred flowers include *Salvia*, *Ceanothus*, *Arctostaphylos*, *Solanum*.
- **Digger bees** (Apidae)—soil nesters; active March to June; preferred flowers include *Salvia* and *Phacelia*, with several species specializing on mallows, sunflowers, cacti and morning glories.
- Carpenter bees (Apidae)—cavity nesters; active year round, most active March to August; preferred flowers include *Parkinsonia*, *Cercis*, *Salvia* and *Phacelia tanacetifolia*.
- Sweat bees (Halictidae)—soil nesters; body often metallic; active March to October; preferred flowers include Eschscholzia californica, and many Aster family members, such as *Baileya multiradiata* and *Erigeron glaucus*.
- Leaf-cutting bees (Megachildae)—most are cavity nesters; active May to September; preferred flowers include many in the Aster family; use leaves of *Cercis* and other plants for nesting material.
- Mason bees (Megachilidae)—cavity nesters; active March to June; preferred flowers include many in the Aster family including *Encelia californica* and *Grindelia* spp.; certain species are known to favor *Penstemon*, *Phacelia*, *Cercis*, *Salvia* and *Berberis*.