



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. nevini* (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** (Megachilidae)—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*.