Pollinator Resources and Plant Suggestions for Specialist Bees

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Pollinator Resources

The following are a selection of print and online resources intended to help you learn more about native pollinators in the northeast, the plants they need, and how to create habitat for them in your yard.

Books

*The Bees in your Backyard* by Olivia Messinger Carril and Joseph Wilson

*Pollinators of Native Plants: Attract, Observe, and Identify Pollinators and Beneficial Insects with Native Plants* by Heather Holm

*Bringing Nature Home* by Doug Tallamy

*Bees: An Identification and Native Plant Forage Guide* by Heather Holm

*The Northeast Native Plant Primer* by Uli Lorimer, Native Plant Trust

*Native Plants of the Northeast* by Donald Leopold

*Native Ground Covers for Northeast Landscapes* by the Wild Seed Project

*Wasps: Their Biology, Diversity, and Role as Beneficial Insects and Pollinators of Native Plants* by Heather Holm

*Deer-resistant Plants for the Northeast* by Ruth Clausen and Gregory Tepper

*The Nature of Oaks* by Doug Tallamy

Online

Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation – https://xerces.org/pollinator-resource-center

Grow Native Massachusetts – https://grownativemass.org/

Vermont Wild Bee Survey (VTCE) – https://val.vtecostudies.org/projects/vtbees/

Danforth Lab @ Cornell: Creating a garden for native specialist bees pdf – http://tinyurl.com/3dyz24vs

Wild Seed Project – https://wildseedproject.net/ (a real treasure trove of info, AND native seed source)

Gegear Lab @ Umass Dartmouth – https://gegearlab.weebly.com/plant-list.html

Pollinator Pathway – https://www.pollinator-pathway.org/

Homegrown National Park – https://homegrownnationalpark.org/


SUNY ESF RSC Lawn to Meadows Program – https://www.esf.edu/research/restorationscience/lawn-to-meadows.php

SUNY ESF Bee Campus USA – https://www.esf.edu/sustainability/projects/bee_campus.php
Plant Suggestions for Specialist Bees

The plants that host pollen specialist bees in the northeast are diverse, and few native plants do not host some species of butterfly or moth. These are just a few suggestions for specialist bee host plants that can at least occasionally be found at native nurseries in New York. Use these alongside keystone species and other supporting staples that provide wildlife food, habitat structure, and bloom turnover. A wider selection of native plants can be purchased as seed online from reputable regional sellers.

**Spring**

Willows – *Salix* spp. (NOT weeping willow)
Shrubby dogwoods – *Cornus (Swida) racemosa, C. sericea, C. amomum*
Blueberries and deerberry – *Vaccinium* spp.
Maleberry – *Lyonia ligustrina*
Rhododendrons – *Rhododendron* spp.
Sheep laurel – *Kalmia angustifolia*
Wild strawberry – *Fragaria virginiana*

**Mid-Summer**

Native loosestrifes – *Lysimachia* spp.
Ground-cherry – *Physalis* spp.*
Sumacs – *Rhus* spp.
New Jersey tea – *Ceanothus americanus*
Dotted horsemint – *Monarda punctata*
Harebell – *Campanula rotundifolia*
Field thistle – *Cirsium discolor*
Meadowsweet – *Spiraea alba*

**Late Summer/Fall**

Goldenrods – *Solidago, Euthamia* spp.
Asters – *Symphyotrichum, Eurybia* spp.
Evening primrose – *Oenothera biennis*
Sunflowers – *Helianthus* spp., particularly perennial species
New York ironweed – *Vernonia noveboracensis*
Green-headed coneflower – *Rudbeckia laciniata*
Beggarticks – *Bidens* spp.*

*Native species not usually commercially available but are often volunteers in gardens and should be encouraged!*

**Some additional pollinator powerhouse plants:**

These may not host specialist bees but they go a long way to supporting caterpillars, adult pollinators, and wildlife like birds. They also add structure and four-season interest to gardens. Use these with keystone plants, plus native grasses, sedges, and ferns, to increase insect biomass in your local ecosystems.

Serviceberries – *Amelanchier* spp.
Cherries – *Prunus* spp. (native species only)
Brambles – *Rubus* spp.
Black elderberry – *Sambucus nigra* ssp. *canadensis*
Black chokeberry – *Aronia melanocarpa*
Red maple – *Acer rubrum*

Milkweds – *Asclepias* spp. (NOT tropical milkweed)
Mountain-mints – *Pycnanthemum* spp.
Joe-Pye weeds – *Eutrochium* spp.
Native roses – *Rosa* spp. (NOT beach rose/R. rugosa)
Yellow wild indigo – *Baptisia tinctoria*
Virginia creeper – *Parthenocissus quinquefolia*