

Pollinator Resources and Plant Suggestions for Specialist Bees

Molly Jacobson, Pollinator Ecologist at SUNY ESF

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/>

Sharp-Eatman Wild Bees of New York – <https://www.sharpeatmanguides.com/>

Heather Holm website – <https://www.pollinatorsnativeplants.com/plant-lists--posters.html>

Specialist Bees of the Eastern US – https://jarrodflower.com/specialist_bees.html

SUNY ESF RSC Lawn to Meadows Program – <https://www.esf.edu/research/restoration/science/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*

Spring beauty – *Claytonia* spp.

American trout-lily – *Erythronium americanum*

Virginia waterleaf – *Hydrophyllum virginianum*

Golden-Alexanders – *Zizia aurea*

Wild geranium – *Geranium maculatum*

Violets – *Viola* spp.

Bellworts – *Uvularia* spp.

Toothworts – *Cardamine* spp.

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 – *Symphotrichum*, *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*

Milkweeds – *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*