

## Plant recommendations for Greater Vancouver: supporting beneficials in your garden

Created as part of the “Garden Ecology” series for the Vancouver Master Gardeners, spring 2024

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This list is based on research conducted by my lab, my experiences as a gardener, and searches of available literature. There may be plants that are great for ecological gardening that aren't included, because I haven't observed their interactions. If you are noticing beneficials using plants not on this list, trust those observations, your knowledge of your space and growing conditions, and let me know what they are!

A few notes:

- I use Latin names in many cases because common names aren't standardized and will likely lead to confusion
- I haven't included trees. As gardeners we often don't have room to plant too many and you likely will have many things to consider in your choice. Do consider our native flora if you have space, as trees like willow, cottonwood, alder, hemlock, and Douglas fir all support a diversity of wildlife. They do get big though! You also can't go wrong with single-flowered apples and cherries, and most maples have pollinator attractive flowers too.
- I haven't included annuals; I have a personal bias towards perennials! There are a few I've already recommended especially for vegetable gardening to attract predatory insects (sweet alyssum, dill and cilantro, bolting mustards) but I won't expand on annuals here, there are too many.
- I have not included anything considered invasive by the Invasive Species Council of BC, no matter how attractive it is to beneficials. Note that some of the wildflower seed mixes sold for pollinators in our region include invasive species. Please avoid these mixes.
- For shrubs, I provide information on bloom time, whether leaves are deciduous (D) or evergreen (E), whether flowers are attractive to pollinators, if there are fruits (F) or seeds (S) for birds, and if it is a butterfly or moth host plant. That last is not known for non-native plants so I've left off the column. You will need to research growing conditions yourself!
- For perennials, there is so much I could include, and so many plants! I've mostly put these into broad categories, by season. Remember to look at flowers like pollinators do, easy access flowers are best!

Some sources:

- My [web page](#) is in need of updating! But there are graphs with info on which pollinators use which plants.
- [Xerces society](#) does a great job with plant lists by region.
- [Earthwise Farm](#) has some information by season from their own property.
- The [Suzuki Foundation](#), [Pollinator Paradise](#), and [Oregon State](#) have info on plant choices that mostly work for our region
- And remember the native plant finder (for caterpillars) of the [National Wildlife Federation](#)

Native shrubs

Botanical name	Common name	Approx bloom time	Flower colour	Leaves	Bees	Birds	Caterpillars
<i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i>	Saskatoon	Spring	White	D	Y	F	Y
<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>	Kinnikinnik (ground cover)	Spring	White	E	Y	F	Y
<i>Cornus stolonifera</i>	Redstem dogwood	Summer	White	D	Y	S	Y
<i>Gaultheria ovalifolia</i>	Wintergreen (ground cover)	Late spring	White	E	Y	F	
<i>Gaultheria shallon</i>	Salal	Spring	White	E	Y	F	Y
<i>Holodiscus discolor</i>	Ocean spray	Summer	White	D	Y	S	Y
<i>Lonicera involucrata</i>	Twinberry	Summer	Yellow	D	Y	F	y
<i>Lonicera ciliosa</i>	Orange honeysuckle (vine)	Summer	Orange	D	Y	F	
<i>Mahonia aquifolium</i>	Tall Oregon Grape	Early spring	Yellow	E	Y	F	Y
<i>Mahonia nervosa</i>	Low Oregon grape	Spring	Yellow	E	Y	F	Y
<i>Penstemon davidsonii</i>	Penstemon (ground cover)	Late spring	Purple	E	Y		
<i>Philadelphus lewisii</i>	Mock orange	Summer	White	D	Y		Y
<i>Ribes sanguineum</i>	Red-flowering currant	Spring	Pink	D	Y	F	Y
<i>Rosa gymnocarpa</i>	Baldhip rose	Summer	Pink	D	Y	F	Y
<i>Rosa nutkana</i>	Nootka rose	Summer	Pink	D	Y	F	Y
<i>Rubus parviflorus</i>	Thimbleberry	Summer	White	D	Y	F	
<i>Rubus spectabilis</i>	Salmonberry	Spring	Pink	D	Y	F	
<i>Salix sitchensis</i>	Sitka willow	Spring	Green	D	Y		Y
<i>Spiraea douglasii</i>	Hardhack	Spring	Pink	D	Y		Y
<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	Snowberry	Summer	White	D	Y	F	Y
<i>Vaccinium ovatum</i>	Evergreen huckleberry	Spring	White	E	Y	F	Y
<i>Vaccinium parvifolium</i>	Red huckleberry	Spring	White	D	Y	F	Y

Non-native shrubs (just a selection!) that are attractive to pollinators. I don't have information on caterpillars for these plants. And I'm sure I'm missing some good ones!!

Botanical name	Common name	Approx bloom time	Flower colour	Leaves	Birds	Notes
<i>Caryopteris</i>	Bluebeard	Summer/Fall	Purple	D		
<i>Ceanothus</i>	California lilac	Summer	Purple	E	F	
<i>Clethra alnifolia</i>	Sweet pepperbush	Late summer	White	D		
<i>Cystus</i>	Rock Rose	Summer	Pink, white	D		
<i>Enkianthus campanulatus</i>	Red bells	Spring	Pink to white	D		Fall foliage. Diverse flower visitors
<i>Erica carnea</i>	Heather	Early spring	Purple, white, pink	E		
<i>Hebe</i>		Summer/Fall	Purple, white, pink	E		
<i>Hibiscus</i>	Rose of Sharon	Late summer	Purple, white, pink	D		Not double flowers
<i>Hydrangea anomalis</i>	Hydrangea vine	Early summer	White	D		The most loved hydrangea!
<i>Hydrangea aspera</i>	Rough-leaf hydrangea	Summer	Purple	E		
<i>Hydrangea macrophylla</i>	<i>Lacecap forms</i>	Summer	Purple, blue			
<i>Hydrangea paniculata</i>	<i>Check for fertile flowers</i>	Late summer	White			
<i>Kolkwitzia amabilis</i>	Beauty bush	Summer	Pink	D		Hummingbirds, bees, butterflies
<i>Lavandula</i>	Lavender	Summer	Lavender!	E		
<i>Mahonia x media</i>	Mahonia	Winter	Yellow	E		Hummingbirds love this
<i>Pieris japonica</i>	Lily of the valley shrub	spring	White, pink	E	F	Bloom when mason bees emerge
<i>Potentilla</i>	Shrubby cinquefoil		White, yellow	D	S	
<i>Pyracantha</i>	Firethorn	Summer	White	E	F	
<i>Rhododendron</i>		Varies	Varies	D/E		Red seems unattractive to bees
<i>Roses</i>	<i>Old fashioned, single</i>			D	F	
<i>Spirea</i>		Summer	Pink	D		CVs have colourful foliage
<i>Viburnum</i>		Varies	White or pink	D/E	F	Not snowball forms!

An incomplete list of perennials that are pollinator friendly. \* indicates there are some native species to look for.

Botanical Name	Bloom time	Notes
<i>Achillea</i>	Summer	Yellow cv's especially, like "moonshine"
<i>Allium</i> *	Spring to summer	A bulb, pretty much any ornamental onion is loved by pollinators
<i>Anemone</i>	Varies	There are lots of species and cultivars, with varied flowering times. They always seem popular.
<i>Aster</i> *	Late summer	Any!!
<i>Astrantia</i>	Summer	Masterwort should be in more gardens! Lovely plant.
<i>Baptisia</i>	Summer	Just bumblebees
<i>Campanula</i> *	Spring to summer	Avoid creeping bellflower as it is invasive. Some leafcutter bees specialize on <i>Campanula</i> .
<i>Cimicifuga</i>	Late summer, fall	Tall spikes of white flowers, very late. Some cv's have lovely purple foliage.
<i>Coreopsis</i>	Summer	Dependable bloomer, and can attract Asteraceae specialists
<i>Crocsmia</i>	Summer	Birds and bees
<i>Dicentra</i> *	Spring	Bleeding hearts are really only visited by bumblebees
<i>Echinacea</i>	Summer	Some evidence the purple form is more attractive to pollinators
<i>Echinops</i>	Summer	Globe flower, like pretty much all Asteraceae, is attractive to diverse pollinators
<i>Epimedium</i>	Spring, summer	An evergreen ground cover available in many colours, buzz pollinated
<i>Fragaria</i> *	Spring	Coastal strawberry is a nice groundcover!
<i>Gaillardia</i> *	Summer	
<i>Geranium</i>	Spring, summer	<i>G. macrorrhizum</i> is a great ground cover. Any perennial geranium (not pelargoniums!) is attractive.
<i>Geum</i>	Spring	
<i>Helianthemum</i>	Summer	Somewhat woody and evergreen, many colours
<i>Heuchera</i>	Summer	Usually grown for colourful foliage, the small flowers are surprisingly attractive to visitors!
<i>Lychnis</i>	Early summer	<i>L. chalcedonica</i> is attractive to hummingbirds and butterflies
<i>Monarda</i>	Summer	Depending on colour and flower tube length, attractive to hummingbirds or bees
<i>Penstemon</i> *	Spring, summer	Diverse flower colours and forms
<i>Polemonium</i>	Early summer	
<i>Rudbeckia</i>	Late summer,fall	Seed heads attractive to birds
<i>Salvia</i>	Summer	Depending on colour and flower tube length, attractive to hummingbirds or bees
<i>Sedum</i> *	Spring, summer	Lots of kinds, including some natives, all are easy access and attractive to diverse visitors
<i>Solidago</i> *	Late summer, fall	Some bees may specialize on goldenrod, as do some caterpillars
<i>Tiarella</i> *	Spring	
<i>Veronica</i> *	summer	