



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension



## Tim's Perennial Pollinator Picks

Twenty Top Native Herbaceous Perennial Plants that Support Pollinators  
(In Order of Bloom Time)

Prepared by Master Gardener Volunteer, Tim Kennelty 2023

Sources: *Armitage's Native Plants* by Alan M. Armitage; *Deer Resistant Native Plants*, by Ruth Rogers Clausen; Missouri Botanical Garden *Plant Finder*

- Virginia Bluebells
  - Latin Name: *Mertensia virginica*
  - Description – 1-2 foot clump-forming Spring ephemeral with pink buds and blue bell-shaped flowers
  - Conditions – Partial to full shade in moisture retentive soil
  - Other Spring ephemerals: Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) Spring Beauty (*Claytonia virginica*); Jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*); Birthroots (*Trillium spp.*)
  - Bloom Time: April/May
  - Deer Resistance: Seldom severely damaged^
- Goatsbeard
  - Latin Name: *Aruncus dioicus*
  - Description: 3-6 foot plant with showy plume-like white spiked flowers
  - Conditions: Part shade, moist, organically rich soil
  - Bloom Time: April/May
  - Deer Resistance: Occasionally severely damaged^
- Wild Columbine
  - Latin Name: *Aquilegia canadensis*
  - Description: 1-3 foot plant with nodding red and yellow bell-like flowers
  - Conditions: Full sun to part shade, prefers moist soils
  - Bloom Time: April/May
  - Deer Resistance: 8-10; Seldom severely damaged^
- Eastern Blue Star+
  - Latin Name: *Amsonia tabernaemontana*
  - Description: 1-3 foot clump-forming plant with narrow leaves and clusters of blue, tubular flowers
  - Conditions: Part shade in moist, well drained soil
  - Bloom Time: May
  - Deer Resistance: 9-10^
- Goldenstar

- Latin Name: *Chrysogonum virginianum*
- Description: 9-18 inches, low-growing, mat-forming ground cover with small yellow flowers
- Conditions: Part to full shade, easily grown in variety of soil types
- Other Native Ground Covers: Barren Strawberry (*Waldsteinia fragarioides*); Wild Strawberry (*Fragaria virginica*); Golden Ragwort (*Packera aurea*); Canadian Ginger (*Asarum canadense*)
- Bloom Time: Intermittent, May-September
- Deer Resistance: 7-10^
- False Sunflower+
  - Latin Name: *Heliopsis helianthoides*
  - Description: 3-4 foot erect plant with daisy-like yellow flowers
  - Conditions: Full sun, easily grown in dry to medium well-drained soil
  - Bloom time: June/July
  - Deer Resistance: 9-10^
- Common Milkweed
  - Latin Name: *Asclepias syriaca*
  - Description: 3-4 foot plants with stout stems and leaves and pinkish fragrant flowers in drooping clusters.
  - Conditions: Easily grown in full to part sun in a variety of soils; can be aggressive
  - Related: Butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*); Marsh Milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*)
  - Bloom Time: June/July
  - Deer Resistance: Seldom severely damaged; 9-10^
- Beebalm
  - Latin Name: *Monarda didyma*
  - Description: 2-4 foot clump forming upright plant with minty foliage and tubular flowers of red, purple and pink.
  - Conditions: Full to part sun in medium to wetter soil
  - Related: Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*)
  - Bloom Time: July/August
  - Deer Resistance: Seldom severely damaged; 7-9^
- Purple Coneflower+
  - Latin name: *Echinacea purpurea*
  - Description: 2-4 foot clump forming plant with long lasting pink, daisy-like flowers
  - Conditions: Full sun in well-drained soil.
  - Bloom Time: July/August
  - Deer Resistance: Seldom severely damaged; 7-9^
- Black-Eyed Susan\*
  - Latin Name: *Rudbeckia hirta*
  - Description: 2-3 feet clump forming plant with bright yellow petals and dark centers
  - Conditions: Full sun with moist, well-drained soil

- Related: Brown-Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia triloba*); Orange Coneflower *Rudbeckia fulgida*); Cutleaf Coneflower (*Rudbeckia laciniata*)
- Bloom Time: July/August
- Deer Resistance: Seldom severely damaged; 9-10^
- Mountain Mint
  - Latin Name: *Pycnanthemum muticum*
  - Description: 1-3 foot colony-forming with fuzzy silver leaves and small, lilac flowers
  - Conditions: Easily grown in full to part sun and moist, well-drained soil
  - Related: Slender Mountainmint (*Pycnanthemum tenuifolium*)
  - Bloom Time: July/August
  - Deer Resistance: 9-10^
- Garden Phlox^
  - Latin Name: *Phlox paniculata*
  - Description: 2-4 foot upright plants with long blooming fragrant flowers in shades of white, pink and lilac
  - Conditions: Full to part sun in moist, rich, well-drained soil
  - Related: Moss Phlox (*Phlox subulata*) Woodland Phlox (*Phlox divaricata*)
  - Bloom Time: June-August, depending upon cultivar
  - Deer Resistance: Occasionally severely damaged^
- Wild Senna
  - Latin Name: *Senna marilandica*
  - Description: 3-6 foot tall plants in pea family with multiple small showy yellow flowers
  - Conditions: Part to full sun in well-drained soil
  - Bloom Time: July/August
  - Deer Resistance: 9-10^
- Giant Purple Hyssop
  - Latin Name: *Agastache scrophulariifolia*
  - Description: Upright 2-6 foot plants in the mint family with white to purple flowers in long terminals
  - Conditions: Full sun and well-drained soil
  - Related: Anise Hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum*)
  - Bloom Time: August
  - Deer Resistance: Rarely damaged; 9-10^
- Sneezeweed+
  - Latin Name: *Helenium autumnale*
  - Description: 2-5 foot erect plant with yellow, daisy-like flowers
  - Conditions: Full sun with moist to wet soil
  - Bloom Time: August/September
  - Deer Resistance: Seldom severely damaged; 8-10^
- New York Ironweed+
  - Latin Name: *Vernonia noveboracensis*

- Description: 5-8 foot clump-forming erect plant with clusters of deep lilac/purple flowers
- Conditions: Full sun and well-drained soil
- Related: Prairie Ironweed (*Vernonia fasciculata*); Letterman's Ironweed (*Vernonia lettermannii*)
- Bloom Time: August/September
- Deer Resistance: 9-10^
- Purple Joe Pye Weed
  - Latin Name: *Eutrochium purpureum*
  - Description: 4-7 foot erect plant with pale pink or purple flowers in large clusters
  - Conditions: Full sun to part shade in moist to wet organically rich soil
  - Related: Spotted Joe Pye Weed (*Eutrochium maculatum*); Hollow Joe Pye Weed (*Eutrochium fistulosum*)
  - Bloom Time: August/September
  - Deer Resistance: Seldom severely damaged; 8-10^
- New England Aster\*+
  - Latin name: *Symphotrichum novae-angliae*
  - Descriptions: 3-6 foot robust, upright plant with profusion of daisy-like purple flowers with yellow centers.
  - Conditions: Easily grown in full sun with well-drained soil
  - Related: New York Aster (*Symphotrichum Novi-belgii*); White Wood Aster (*Eurybia divaricatus*)
  - Bloom Time: August-October
  - Deer Resistance: Seldom severely damaged^
- Perennial Sunflower\*+
  - Latin Name: *Helianthus spp.* (Many species and cultivars)
  - Description: 3-10 foot tall plant with generally narrow leaves and profusion of yellow, daisy-like flowers
  - Conditions: Full sun and tolerant of a wide range of soils
  - Bloom Time: August-October (depending upon species)
  - Deer Resistance: Yes<
- Goldenrod\*+
  - Latin Name: *Solidago spp.* (Many species and cultivars)
  - Description: 3-6 feet tall (depending upon species and cultivar) with profusion of small yellow flowers
  - Conditions: Generally prefers full sun and tolerant of a variety of soils
  - Bloom Time: August-October
  - Deer Resistant: Seldom severely damaged^

\*One of the top 30 genera for butterfly and moth caterpillars. (National Wildlife Federation)

+One of the top 30 native host plants for pollen specialist bees. (National Wildlife Federation)

^Deer resistance is based upon Rutgers University Deer Resistance 4 Level Scale and/or ratings in Deer Resistant Native Plants for the Northeast, by Ruth Rogers Clausen (1-10 with 10 being most deer resistant). Results may vary depending upon weather conditions and deer volume in your area.

<Rated deer resistant by North Carolina State Extension.

