

Recommended Native Pollinator Friendly Plants for the Boreal Forest Region of Alberta

The table on the following pages provides a list of plants that are native to the Boreal Forest Region of Alberta and have been observed to attract pollinating insects such as bees, wasps, flies, beetles, ants, butterflies, and moths. This list is not necessarily complete – it is open to additions! If you see pollinators frequently visiting the flowers of a native plant that is not on this list, send us a picture and description and we can add the species.

When designing habitat for pollinators, consider the following:

- **Choose species that are adapted** to your local moisture, soil, and light conditions. Information on where different species like to grow can often be found in plant identification guides, such as Royer and Dickenson, 2007; or Johnson et al., 2009.
- Strive to have **at least three species at the peak of their flowering period for every month** in the growing season.
- **Choose species with different flower colours and shapes**, as different pollinators will be attracted to different flower characteristics. In particular, smaller pollinators such as *Lassioglossum* bees, parasitoid wasps, and hoverflies have relatively short tongues, and thus are only able to access shallower flowers (Figure 1).
- **Maximize the morning sun exposure** of your habitat by planting shorter species towards the south and east. More morning sun means more flowers in your planting, and more hours in the day that pollinators can forage.
- **Clump flowering species** together in groups of 3-8 individuals per square meter. This will increase the foraging efficiency of pollinators.
- **Increase structural diversity** by including taller trees and shrubs (particularly on the north or west side), interspersing bunch grasses among the flowering species, and allowing deadfall to decay on site. Doing so will provide diverse nesting and overwintering sites for pollinators.
- **Connect habitat to existing natural habitat** so that pollinators will be able to migrate into your habitat.
- **Site within 150m (500') of pollinator dependent crops** if you have any and wish to maximize their pollination.
- **Bonus: Include a few nitrogen-fixing species in your mix.** This will not directly benefit pollinators, but it will improve the nutrient cycling within the habitat.



Figure 1. *Lassioglossum* bees are able to access shallow flowers such as prickly rose (*Rosa acicularis*). Photo courtesy: Steve Javorek.

Recommended Native Flowering Species for Pollinators in the Boreal Forest of Alberta

Peak Flowering	Species Name	Common Name	Plant Type	Flower Type	Flower Colour	N Fixation
May	<i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i>	Saskatoon	shrub	shallow	white	none
	<i>Antennaria parvifolia</i>	Small-leaved pussytoes	forb	shallow	white	none
	<i>Aralia nudicaulis</i>	Wild Sarsaparilla	forb	shallow	white	none
	<i>Cornus sericea</i>	Red Osier Dogwood	shrub	shallow	white	none
	<i>Prosartes trachycarpa</i>	Fairy Bells	forb	deep	white	none
	<i>Fragaria virginiana</i>	Wild Strawberry	forb	shallow	white	none
	<i>Prunus virginiana/pensylvanica</i>	Chokecherry/Pincherry	shrub	shallow	white	none
	<i>Ribes lacustre</i>	Bristly Black Currant	shrub	shallow	yellow	none
	<i>Ribes oxyacanthoides</i>	Wild Gooseberry	shrub	deep	yellow	none
	<i>Rosa acicularis/woodsii</i>	Prickly/woods Rose	shrub	shallow	pink	none
	<i>Salix spp. (e.g. bebbiana, discolor, petiolaris)</i>	Native willow species (e.g. beaked, pussy, basket, etc.)	shrub	shallow	yellow	none
	<i>Shepherdia canadensis</i>	Canada Buffaloberry	shrub	Shallow	yellow	medium
	<i>Thalictrum venulosum</i>	Veiny Meadow Rue	forb	deep	purple	none
<i>Viola canadensis</i>	Western Canada Violet	forb	shallow	purple	none	
June	<i>Actaea rubra</i>	Baneberry	forb	shallow	white	none
	<i>Anemone canadensis</i>	Canada Anemone	forb	shallow	white	none
	<i>Astragalus canadensis</i>	Canadian milkvetch	forb	deep	purple	low
	<i>Cornus canadensis</i>	Bunchberry	forb	shallow	white	none
	<i>Elaeagnus commutata</i>	Silverberry/Wolf Willow	shrub	deep	yellow	medium
	<i>Epilobium ciliatum</i>	Northern Willow-herb	forb	shallow	pink	none
	<i>Galium trifidum</i>	Small Bedstraw	forb	shallow	white	none
	<i>Geranium bicknellii</i>	Bicknell's Geranium	forb	shallow	pink	none
	<i>Geranium richardsonii</i>	Wild White Geranium	forb	shallow	white	none
	<i>Hedysarum alpinum</i>	American Hedysarum	forb	deep	purple	low
	<i>Lathyrus ochroleucus</i>	Cream Coloured Vetchling	forb	deep	yellow	low
	<i>Lilium philadelphicum</i>	Western Wood Lily	forb	deep	orange	none
	<i>Linnaea borealis</i>	Twinflower	forb	deep	pink	none
	<i>Lonicera dioica</i>	Twinning Honeysuckle	forb	deep	red	none
	<i>Maianthemum canadense</i>	Wild Lily-of-the-Valley	forb	shallow	white	none
	<i>Pyrola asarifolia</i>	Common Pink Wintergreen	forb	shallow	white	none
	<i>Rubus idaeus</i>	Wild Red Raspberry	shrub	shallow	white	none
	<i>Sisyrinchium montanum</i>	Blue-eyed Grass	forb	shallow	blue	none
<i>Stachys palustris</i>	Hedge Nettle	forb	deep	purple	none	
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Stinging Nettle	forb	shallow	yellow	none	
<i>Vicia americana</i>	Wild Vetch	forb	deep	purple	low	

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July	<i>Achillea alpina</i>	Many flowered yarrow	forb	shallow	white	none
	<i>Campanula rotundifolia</i>	Harebell/Bluebell	forb	deep	blue	none
	<i>Epilobium angustifolium</i>	Fireweed	forb	shallow	pink	none
	<i>Dasiphora fruticosa</i>	Shrubby Cinquefoil	shrub	shallow	yellow	none
	<i>Erigeron glabellus</i>	Smooth Fleabane	forb	shallow	purple	none
	<i>Erigeron philadelphicus</i>	Philadelphia Fleabane	forb	shallow	white	none
	<i>Galium boreale</i>	Northern Bedstraw	forb	shallow	white	none
	<i>Hedysarum boreale</i>	Northern Hedysarum	forb	deep	pink	medium
	<i>Mentha arvensis</i>	Wild Mint	forb	shallow	white	none
	<i>Sium suave</i>	Water Parsnip	forb	shallow	white	none
	<i>Solidago canadensis</i>	Canada Goldenrod	forb	shallow	yellow	none
	<i>Spiraea alba</i>	Narrow-leaved Meadowsweet	shrub	shallow	white	none
	<i>Symphoricarpos alba</i>	Snowberry	shrub	deep	pink	none
<i>Symphoricarpos occidentalis</i>	Buckbrush	shrub	deep	pink	none	
August	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Common yarrow	forb	shallow	white	none
	<i>Eurybia conspicua</i>	Showy Aster	forb	shallow	pink	none
	<i>Solidago nemoralis</i>	Showy Goldenrod	forb	shallow	yellow	none
	<i>Symphotrichum ciliolatum</i>	Lindley's Aster	forb	shallow	pink	none
	<i>Symphotrichum laeve</i>	Smooth Aster	forb	shallow	purple	none
	<i>Symphotrichum puniceum</i>	Purple-stemmed Aster	forb	shallow	purple	none

Useful Resources

- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 2014. *Native Pollinators and Agriculture in Canada*. http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2014/aac-aafc/A59-12-2014-eng.pdf
- Alberta Native Plant Council. <http://anpc.ab.ca/>
- Johnson, D., L. Kershaw, A. MacKinnon, and J. Pojar, 2009. *Plants of the Western Forest: Alberta, Saskatchewan, & Manitoba Boreal and Aspen Parkland*. Lone Pine Publishing: Edmonton AB.
- Royer, F., and R. Dickinson. 2007. *Plants of Alberta: Trees, Shrubs, Wildflowers, Ferns, Aquatic Plants, & Grasses*. Lone Pine Publishing: Edmonton AB.
- The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation. <http://www.xerces.org/>

Table content was developed with the help of Mark Wonneck.

For more information on designing and establishing pollinator habitat please contact:



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