

## BC Summer Nectar and Pollen Sources - Factsheet #905

In some parts of British Columbia, a “dearth period” occurs following initial spring bloom. This dearth period is marked by a decline in the availability of nectar and pollen sources typically in early-mid summer in most areas. The seasonal shortage of food is often worse in agricultural areas where monocultural practices reduce floral diversity.

While beekeepers can provide their colonies with supplemental feed, many wild bees suffer from the food shortage which can severely impact their nest and brood development as well as their survival. As a result, many wild pollinator populations experience reduced reproductive success which in the long term leads to low pollinator abundance and diversity.

Crop producers can effectively counteract food shortages for wild pollinators by dedicating small strips of land along the edge of fields, along ditches and berms to the planting of nectar and pollen-bearing plants that bloom during early-mid summer. The plants listed provide a valuable food source to wild pollinators without demanding significant management or cultivation input.

Maintenance of a dedicated planting will result in an increase of pollinator abundance and species diversity after several years.

Image	Names	Description	Image	Names	Description
	<b>Lupine</b> Lupinus	Bold perennial with beautifully fingered leaves and erect, cylindrical spikes of flowers in early summer. Blooms for few weeks only. Many cultivars with different colors. Attractive to bumble bees and long-tongued pollinators.		<b>Catmint</b> <i>Nepeta x faassenii</i>	Perennial forms mounds of grayish green leaves with spikes of small lavender-blue flowers throughout the summer. Highly attractive nectar source of all pollinators and hummingbirds. Frost tolerant. Easily propagated through cuttings. Low maintenance, ideal for borders and edges of farm fields.
	<b>Lavender</b> <i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	Frost hardy. From early to late summer, long-stalked spikes with small, fragrant violet flowers rise above narrow gray-green leaves. Prefers well-drained soil. Highly attractive to all pollinators		<b>Fuchsia</b> <i>Fuchsia magellanica</i>	Attractive perennial. Only select frost hardy varieties. Attractive nectar source to bees and hummingbirds. Long blooming period. Needs pruning. Excellent for borders and hedges in gardens and along farm fields.

Image	Names	Description	Image	Names	Description
	<b>Geranium</b> Johnson's Blue Perennial Geranium	Attractive blue flowers from mid-summer onward. Frost tolerant. Excellent for borders and along hedge rows. Attracts all pollinators.		<b>Phacelia</b> P. tanacetifolia	Upright annual with feathery deep green leaves and spikes of bell-shaped lavender-blue flowers. Blooms through much of the summer. Profuse nectar producer. Deep-purple pollen. Highly attractive to all pollinators. Propagates readily through seeds. Suitable along hedgerows, borders and farm fields.
	<b>Hyssop</b> Hyssopus officinalis	Member of the mint family with aromatic, narrow leaves. Small, scented blue flowers appear in mid-summer to fall which are highly attractive to bees. Produces large amount of seed which attracts birds in winter. Self seeding.		<b>Creeping Thyme</b> T. serpyllum	From a tiny clump of little seedlings comes a spreading mat of scented foliage covered with pink flowers. It makes for excellent coverage and is easy for rock gardens. Grows to maximum heights of 15cm (6") and blooms May to August. Grow in full sun, well drained soil, moderate to low water.

We wish to acknowledge and thank the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands Provincial Apiculturist for providing this important information.

[www.al.gov.bc.ca/apiculture/profile.htm](http://www.al.gov.bc.ca/apiculture/profile.htm)

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