



## **Blooms for Bees**

By Pauline Atkins

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Bees, bees, bees! We all depend on bees. Not only do they bring sweetness to our lives in the form of honey, but they pollinate our fields, orchards, and gardens. UC Davis Apiculturist Eric C. Mussen states that honey bees are integral to producing nearly one third of all the food we eat. And according to a UC Berkeley report, “75 percent of all food crops in the U.S. benefit from pollination, and for commercial crops, that means the European honey bee.”

As you probably know, bees face various threats and need our help. There are three easy, yet critical ways to help keep our busy pollinators alive:

1. Provide food by planting pollen rich flowers and herbs in our gardens. Also, make sure to have a clean fresh source of water in your garden for these hard-working bees.
2. Avoid the use of chemical pesticides in your yard and garden. Buy plants which have not been treated with pesticides.
3. Furnish bee friendly housing. Don't mulch all your dirt--leave some soft, bare earth, in a sunny spot for ground nesters. Provide bee boxes with nesting holes for native bees.

Now, time to plant your bee friendly flower garden! Bees love browsing flowers in a warm sunny area. Their favorite flower colors are blue, white, and yellow. Although there are many bee-preferred flowers, the list below represents some of their favorites.

Borage (*Borago officinalis*)  
California Poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*)  
Lavender (*Lavendula* spp.)  
Sunflowers (*Helianthus*)  
Rosemary (*Rosmarinus*)  
Cosmos (*Cosmos bipinnatus*)  
Pineapple sage (*Salvia elegant*)  
Blanket Flower (*Gaillardia*)  
Sedum “Autumn Joy”  
Dandelion (*Taraxacum*)  
Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)  
Catmint (*Nepeta*)

With a few of these petal power flowers, you can turn a forgotten corner into an enticing, beautiful spot in your garden that supports our little buzzing friends. Bee responsible and help them thrive!

On Saturday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, Master Gardener Kit Veerkamp will discuss pollinators in a class, Planting for Pollinators. Hear how a biodiverse, beautiful, and ecologically- sustainable garden attracts beneficial insects and pollinators. Reduce need for pesticides in your own garden with natural pest control habitat management. This free class is from 9am-noon at Bethel-Delfino Agriculture Building, 311 Fair Lane, Placerville

Want to know more:

Mussen, E. *Don't Underestimate the Value of Honey Bees!* Retrieved from <http://entomology.ucdavis.edu/files/147544.doc>

Sanders, R. (2016, February 10) *Worldwide bee epidemic linked to human cause: colony trafficking*. Retrieved from <https://news.berkeley.edu/2016/02/10/worldwide-bee-epidemic-linked-to-human-cause-colony-trafficking/>

For more information on the UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County, see our website at <http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu>. Master Gardeners are available to answer home gardening questions Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to noon, by calling [\(530\) 621-5512](tel:5306215512), or send us an email using the Ask a Master Gardener option on our website. Walk-ins are welcome at our office, located at 311 Fair Lane in Placerville. We also encourage you to visit us at the Sherwood Demonstration Garden, located at 6699 Campus Drive in Placerville, behind Folsom Lake College, El Dorado Center. See [http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu/Demonstration\\_Garden](http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu/Demonstration_Garden) for more information and days and hours of operation, or call us to schedule a tour. To sign up for notices and newsletters, see [http://ucanr.edu/master\\_gardener\\_e-news](http://ucanr.edu/master_gardener_e-news). Master Gardeners are also on Facebook and Instagram; we hope you enjoy our postings and will share them with your friends.