



the
UPPER FELL'S POINT
Improvement Association/Asociación de Mejoramiento

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Herb Plants For Bees



Note: If you are purchasing ready grown herb plants rather than growing from seed, please try to purchase from an organic supplier to ensure they have not been cultivated with the use of an insecticide that is toxic for bees - particularly a neonicotinoid.

You may or may not have space for a large kitchen herb garden, but most people can squeeze in a few herbs at least somewhere, even if they only have a small yard, balcony, hanging basket or doorstep for pots. You could create a container herb garden, or a window herb garden too.

Herbs not only help pollinators, they have many uses for humans too: cooking, medicinal uses, fragrance, not to mention their beauty and versatility in the garden.

Borage

Borage refills with nectar every 2 minutes! This is exceptionally fast. No wonder all kinds of bees love it! The leaves are edible and pretty blue flowers can be added to salads, or into ice cubes to include in drinks. Borage is easy to grow from seed and will self-seed.

Catmint (Nepeta)

Cats love it and you may attract them but the bees like the flowers too.

Chives

Allow them to flower. You can still clip some of the stalks for cooking. Chives are easy to grow from seed. They start out spindly with just a few stems, but soon fill out in the following year.

Dill

Dill is a gorgeous plant and its delicate flavor is very versatile in the kitchen. When allowed to flower, it is also enjoyed by honeybees. It also freezes well - cut off several stems, wrap in foil and freeze immediately; add to dishes while they are still frozen.

Fennel

Has a licorice flavor and can be used in many dishes. It is also popular with seed-eating birds and hoverflies, as well as bees.

Hyssop

Attracts bees and butterflies and is used as a medicinal plant as a cough reliever and antiseptic.

Lavender

Choose different varieties for a prolonged season. You can propagate more plants from cuttings, but ensure you take quite a few as they may not all 'take'. Remember you can also collect the fragrant seeds for potpourri or add them to home-made toiletries. The flowers are fragrant and loved by bees.

Marjoram/Oregano

Another fragrant, excellent culinary herb loved by bees and other pollinators.

Mints (Mentha)

Bees love the flowers. Mint can spread and take over a bit, so it may be best to confine it to a pot or container.

Parsley

Sow a culinary parsley (such as flat leaf) and allow it to flower. Bees and other pollinators such as butterflies love it.

Rosemary

Excellent early food source for bees. It is often considered easy to grow. It is reputedly helpful in repelling 'pest' invertebrates despite the fact that bees enjoy foraging on it.

Sage

The sage family of plants are wonderful for bees and other pollinators.

Summer Savory

Having pale, lilac, blue, white or pink delicate tubular flowers, this is an old-fashioned herb which is easy to grow as well as attracting pollinators. It can be used as a companion plant to help attract bees, and is useful in pots and containers.

Thyme

Thyme can also be used to create a small patch of lawn. The fragrance and look are beautiful. Butterflies like thymes too.

Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*)

Often referred to as 'bee balm'. Long tongued bees especially, enjoy this pretty herb. There are also cultivated varieties of *Monarda* available, which are also enjoyed by bees. It is in the mint family so needs to be contained as it will spread.

Data from <http://www.buzzaboutbees.net/herb-planting-for-bees.html>
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