

Sources for Pollinator Plants

Pollinators need a diversity of plants blooming throughout the growing season. Bees need flowers with pollen and nectar, and, in some cases, structures for nesting habitat. Other pollinators will have other needs – moths and butterflies, for example, will need plants that provide food for their caterpillar larvae.

Over the long term, the best pollinator habitat will have a diversity of trees, shrubs, vines, and other perennial plants. Summer annuals, winter annuals, biennials and short-lived perennials can play an important role in the short-term, particularly in agriculture, where they can be grown as cover crops on a field scale.

Seeds:

Agricultural Plants that are Good Sources of Nectar and/or Pollen:

- Legumes: including white clover, alsike clover, yellow sweet clover, white sweet clover, red clover, crimson clover, bird's foot trefoil, alfalfa, and vetch
- Brassicas and related species: including mustards, rapeseed, sweet alyssum
- Mint family plants: including anise hyssop, lemon balm, basil
- Buckwheat
- Borage and *Phacelia tanacetifolia* (purple tansy)
- Sunflowers

These are available from many seed companies selling cover crops to farmers. See “Agricultural Cover Crops” below.

Seed Mixes for Pollinators:

Seed mixes for pollinators are offered by many different companies, but vary widely in important characteristics. Some questions to ask about these mixes:

- Are there invasive plant species in the mix? Some plants that are considered invasive in Connecticut are included in pollinator mixes, for example cup plant, *Silphium perfoliatum*. You can check the Connecticut list of invasive plants here: https://cipwg.uconn.edu/invasive_plant_list/

- Are there plant species in the mix that are listed as endangered, threatened, or species of special concern in Connecticut? If these are planted widely with germplasm from other regions, then the non-native genes may swamp the genes of native populations. An example is wild senna, *Senna hebecarpa*, which is in many mixes and is a threatened species in Connecticut. You can find the state-listed species here: http://www.ct.gov/deep/lib/deep/wildlife/pdf_files/nongame/ets15.pdf
- To what extent are the species in the mix annuals or biennials? Annuals and biennials bloom quickly and are fine for a short-term planting or as part of a mix of perennials, but are not likely to persist in a planting intended for the long term.

Sources of Seeds

| Company | Location | Website | Agricultural Cover Crop Seeds | Pollinator seed mix | Native Plant Seed | Notes |
|--------------------------|----------|---|-------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|--|
| American Meadows | VT | https://www.americanmeadows.com/ | | X | Bulk | Not growers, seed is sourced worldwide |
| Ernst Conservation Seeds | PA | https://www.ernstseed.com/ | X | X | Bulk | extensive selection, sources identified |
| FedCo | ME | https://www.fedcoseeds.com/ | X | | | Cover crop seed under Organic Growers Supply |
| Green Cover Seed | NE | https://www.greencoverseed.com/ | X | | | Specializes in custom cover crop mixes |
| Hart Seed | CT | https://hartseed.com/ | | X | X | |
| Johnny's Selected Seeds | ME | http://www.johnnyseeds.com/ | X | | | |
| New England Seed | CT | https://www.neseed.com/ | X | | By special order | Most native & wildflower seeds 1 lb. min. |

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| New England Wetland Plants | MA | http://newp.com/ | | X | | Mainly a wholesale plant nursery |
| OSC Seeds | Ontario | https://www.oscseeds.com/ | X | | X | |
| Prairie Moon Nursery | MN | https://www.prairiemoon.com/ | | | Bulk | |
| Roundstone Native Seed | KY | http://roundstoneseed.com/ | X | X | | Regional ecotypes, mostly for southeast US |
| Sheffield's Seed | NY | https://sheffields.com/ | | | X | Website gives source location for seed |
| Vermont Wetland Plants | VT | http://www.vermontwetlandplants.com/ | | X | | Also sell plugs, pots |
| Vermont Wildflower Farm | VT | https://www.vermontwildflowerfarm.com/ | X | X | X | Also bare root perennials |
| Wild Seed Project | ME | http://wildseedproject.net/ | | | Packets only | From local hand-collected sources |
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