

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
Bulk Wildflowers	NC	http://www.bulkwildflowers.com/			Bulk	Their mixes include invasive species
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.
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