

**Brunswick County Extension Master Garden Volunteer
Association
*ATTRACTING BEES AND BUTTERFLIES TO YOUR
CONTAINERS*
May 21, 2025**

Today's Plant List

Blanket Flower

Gaillardia

Indian blanket flower is an erect annual or perennial in the Asteraceae (daisy) family and are native to North and South America including North Carolina. Blanket flowers attract pollinators to the flowers and bloom from spring to fall. Blanket flower is deer and rabbit resistant and salt tolerant.

Prefers full sun though it tolerates light shade and is tolerant of most garden soils as long as they drain well and get even moisture. They are highly drought, heat, and salt tolerant. Deadhead to encourage repeat blooming.

The show stopping orange and red flowers appear from summer to fall adding brightness to the landscape nectar for butterflies. If the seed heads are left over winter they will be enjoyed by songbirds.

Indian blanket flower grows well in containers, or mass plant it for some amazing warm colors in your landscape.

Lanceleaf Coreopsis

Coreopsis lanceolate

Lanceleaf Coreopsis is a naturalized (vs native) wildflower in the Asteraceae (daisy) family that typically grows to 2' tall and occurs in prairies, glades, fields, and roadsides. Coreopsis prefers full sun with moist, well-drained soil and can be an aggressive self-seeder. Deadheading of spent flowers will help control self-seeding and encourage additional blooms. Division may be needed every 2-3 years to maintain robustness. They can be cut back hard if they become too sprawling.

Lanceleaf coreopsis attracts many species of butterflies and bees, including is a long-tongued bees like bumblebees and small carpenter bees

Brown Eyed Susans – Three Lobed Coneflower

Rudbeckia triloba

Brown-eyed Susan is an herbaceous biennial or short-lived perennial in the daisy family (Asteraceae). It is native to much of eastern North America.

Brown-eyed Susan grows easily in average, moist, well-drained soils. It is a rugged plant, somewhat weedy, that tolerates heat, drought, deer predation, and a wide range of soils. You can deadhead spent flowers to encourage additional blooms, which also prevents any unwanted self-seeding.

The plant's typical height is 3 to 5 feet with 2- to 4-inch leaves and 2- to 3-inch yellow flowers with dark purple-brown center disks. The leaves often have three lobes and a rosette of leaves that originate at the base of the stem persists through the winter, creating an attractive winter ground cover. Flowers bloom in late summer through fall and make an excellent cut flower. This plant differs from black-eyed Susan (*R. hirta*), which has smaller, but more numerous, flowers.

Purple Coneflower

Echinacea purpurea

Purple coneflower is an herbaceous perennial in the Asteraceae (daisy) family that is native to the central and eastern United States.

It may grow 3 to 4 feet tall and produce pinkish-purple flowers that mature in early summer through mid-fall. Coneflowers are drought tolerant once established, and can grow in full sun to partial shade. It is also deer, heat, humidity, and salt resistant. Easily propagated by seed, it will reseed itself in the garden.

Several pollinators are attracted to the flower, especially butterflies. Leave some of the flower heads on to produce seeds for the birds.

Salvia – Texas Sage

Salvia greggii

Texas sage is a small, herbaceous perennial or somewhat woody sub-shrub in the Lamiaceae (mint) family.

This sage prefers full sun but tolerates afternoon shade in regions with high summer heat. Salvia attracts butterflies, hummingbirds, and other pollinators and is seldom damaged by deer. It is drought and slightly salt tolerant.

Salvia – Hot Lips

Salvia microphylla

Hot lips salvia is an evergreen shrub in the Lamiaceae (mint) family and found in the wild in southeastern Arizona and the mountains of eastern, western, and southern Mexico.

Plant salvia in full sun and in well-drained, highly organic soil. It is drought and heat tolerant and slightly salt tolerant. Propagate by division or stem cutting.

The flowers occur on spikes in shades of pink, red, and white in spring with repeat blooming to fall and are attractive to bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. The leaves are aromatic and can be used in making teas.

Zinnia

Zinnia

Zinnia is a warm-season flowering upright growing annual in the Asteraceae (daisy) family. They are native to southern North America and South America, and there are many cultivars, colors, and a range of sizes.

Zinnia is showy, low maintenance, and easy to grow. Plant them in average, well-drained garden soil in full sun and allow good air circulation. Keep them moist until established. Deadhead to encourage more blooms but leave some seed heads for the birds.

Dwarf Sunflower

Sanvitalia procumbens

Also known as Creeping Zinnia, this is a low growing annual can grow to 6" tall and 18" wide. Showy flowers are $\frac{3}{4}$ " in diameter and look like small sunflowers. Dwarf Sunflowers attract many pollinators. The long bloom period, summer to first frost, makes it an attractive addition to a pollinator container.

Bearded tongue

Penstemon

Penstemon is a dramatically beautiful, tall, slender plant. The cultivar 'Blackbeard' has burgundy foliage and lavender flowers. Penstemon attract pollinators and the seeds attract songbirds. Hummingbirds are attracted to the tubular flower shapes.

Grow Penstemon plants in full sun and well-drained soil.

Sundrops

Oenothera fruticosa

Sundrops is a native, perennial, erect, day-flowering member of the evening primrose family. It is native to all parts of North Carolina except the high mountains.

Bees, butterflies, skippers, honeybees, and native bees are attracted to the bright yellow flowers of sundrops

Sundrops prefer moderately fertile, dry, well-drained soil in full sun but will tolerate some shade. The yellow flowers are short-lived but they occur in a succession over a long period. In the south, the rosettes will be purplish-green throughout the winter.

Sundrops was selected as the 1989 [NC Wildflower of the Year](#), a program managed by the North Carolina Botanical Garden with some financial support from the Garden Club of North Carolina.

Garden Phlox ‘Jeana’

Phlox paniculata

Garden phlox is an erect herbaceous perennial that may grow 2 to 4 feet tall and is clump-forming. Flowers come in various colors and bloom mid-summer to mid-fall. It mixes well with other perennials, attracts hummingbirds, and is a good selection for a bird garden.

Phlox prefers sun to partial shade and moist, fertile, and well-drained soils. Removing faded flower panicles will prolong blooming and prevent self-seeding as cultivars do not come true from seed.

Bronze Fennel

Foeniculum vulgare

Bronze fennel has an upright, branching habit and can grow 3 to 5 feet high with aromatic, yellow-green leaves and tiny yellow flowers. The flowers are very attractive to butterflies, and fennel is a larval plant for certain swallowtail butterflies.

Plant fennel in full sun. To prevent any unwanted spread through self-seeding, remove spent flowers and stems before seed is produced.

Garlic Chives or Wild Leeks

Allium tuberosum

Garlic chives or wild leeks are a bulbous perennial herb with characteristic onion or garlic odor. Chives bloom in spring, providing a crucial food source for pollinators when other plants are not yet in bloom. The bright, globes of flowers provide nectar and pollen for bees, butterflies, and other insects.

Rosemary

Salvia rosmarinus

Rosemary is an aromatic, perennial, evergreen shrub in the Lamiaceae or mint family. The shrub grows from 4 to 5 feet tall and is generally erect and rounded. The aromatic, needle-like leaves are green on the upper surface, and the undersides are white.

Flowering usually begins in the spring and into summer and attracts butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds. American goldfinches will also visit them for the seeds.

Rosemary does best in full sun, tolerates drought, salt, heavy pruning, and most soil types except clay. It is easily transplanted and rooted. Once the bloom has passed, severely pruning is an option to encourage dense foliage growth.

Cilantro

Coriandrum sativum

Cilantro grows best in cool climates in spring and fall. It prefers medium moist well-drained soil in full sun to light shade. It bolts easily in hotter climates, and the flowers attract many different types of pollinators, including bees and butterflies. Its white or pale pink flowers arranged in umbrella-like clusters, called umbels, are easily accessible to these insects, facilitating pollination. Cilantro is a good source of nectar and pollen for pollinators, and allowing the plant to flower and set seeds can actually benefit local pollinator populations and your garden

Ornamental Oregano

Origanum laevigatum

Oregano is a versatile and valuable addition to any pollinator garden. Its fragrant flowers, extended blooming period, and appeal to a wide range of beneficial insects make it an essential herb for attracting and supporting pollinators like bees and butterflies. Plant in full sun.

Italian parsley

Petroselinum crispum

Parsley is a hardy biennial that is usually grown as an annual in the carrot family (Apiaceae).

Parsley prefers consistently moist, well-drained rich soil in full sun or light shade. They grow better in cool summer areas and can wilt in the hot humid deep South. They grow 2-3 feet and produce a greenish-yellow flower and seeds the second year. The parsley may reseed itself after the second year.

Parsley's flowers (found in the second year of growth) are attractive to various pollinators, including bees, butterflies, and other beneficial insects. They provide a source of nectar and pollen, which are essential for these insects' survival. In addition, parsley is a host plant for swallowtail butterflies. The larvae (caterpillars) feed on the parsley leaves during their growth stages, and the adult butterflies rely on the plant for food and reproduction

Better for Your Landscape than Containers

Mountain Mint

Pycnanthemum muticum

Mountain mint is a native, herbaceous perennial, wildflower in the mint family (Lamiaceae). It is native to eastern Canada and eastern United States. Mountain mint grows in full sun to partial shade and in moist soil with good drainage. It grows 3 to 4 feet tall in a space of 2 to 3 feet. Although mountain mint is not considered invasive, it is a vigorous grower, spreading its rhizomes, in optimum conditions. If spreading is not needed or wanted, the roots should be pruned in the spring with a spade.

The leaves emit a strong spearmint fragrance when crushed. The leaves and flowers may be used for tea. The flowers attract butterflies and other pollinators.

It is commonly found in woodland areas and thickets. The best landscape uses include butterfly, edible, native, pollinator and rain gardens.

Culver's Root

Veronicastrum virginicum

Culver's Root is a native wildflower that prefers average, medium to wet soil. It is slow to get established in your garden. It is found in open woods, moist meadows and prairies. Flower spikes open from the top down beginning in late spring. Cut the spent flowers to the rosette for possible rebloom in the fall.

Both long and short tongued bees collect pollen and nectar as do honeybees, bumblebees, mason bees, green metallic bees and masked bees. Other insect visitors include sphecid wasps, butterflies, moths and syrphid flies.