

FLOWERS FOR POLLINATORS STUDY 2015-2018: RESULTS

Annual flowers that attract pollinators

WHY ANNUAL FLOWERS?

Annual flowers have been a long-time favorite plant for gardens of all kinds. They provide instant color and interest, and are relatively easy to grow. They are also an important part of early season sales for the gardening industry. Annual flowers comprise \$1.46 billion of floriculture crops sold in the United States¹. The following annual flowers were the most attractive in our 4-year study (2015-2018) of 30+ varieties. Anyone who likes annual flowers and wants to attract pollinators should add these flowers in your garden, containers and raised beds!

For more information about the study, visit z.umn.edu/flowers



Music Box Mix sunflower (*Helianthus annuus* 'Music Box Mix')

A dwarf sunflower that performs well in containers as well as garden beds. Multi-branching and continuous 4-5 inch blooms till frost. Flower color varies from creamy to bright yellow to deep gold and red bicolor. Very popular with all pollinators, especially honey and bumble bees. Size: 4-5 feet high, 2-3 feet wide. Full sun. Direct seed. Also selected for *Pollinators for Food* study.



Lemon Queen sunflower (*Helianthus annuus* 'Lemon Queen')

Large sunflower that will tower overhead! Heirloom variety that is very popular with bees of all kinds. Bright, clear yellow 10" flowers. Leave the spent flower heads hanging for fall and winter bird seed. Plants can grow to 7-8 feet tall, 2 feet wide. Full sun. Direct seed. Will re-seed.



Summer Pink Jewel Salvia (*Salvia coccinea* 'Summer Jewel™ Pink')

Graceful pink and white blooms that are favorites of bumble bees! Irregular "sage-like" flowers with anthers that protrude, making it easy for bees to access pollen and nectar. Grows to 18-22 inches high, 12-18 inches wide. Full sun. Start seeds in well-drained media. Remove spent blooms for continual flowering. Will re-seed. Also selected for *Pollinators for Food* study.

Funding for Flowers for Pollinators was provided through a gift from the Horst Rechelbacher Foundation.



Purple Fairy Tale Salvia (*Salvia verticillata* 'Purple Fairy Tale')

Lavender to deep purple flowers encircle each stem. Very popular with honey and bumble bees! Grows 12-15 inches high, 12 inches wide. Full sun. Direct sow or start seeds indoors in well-drained media. Remove spent blooms to promote continual flowering. Will re-seed.



Orange Fudge Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta* 'Orange Fudge')

Is it the name or the flower colors that makes this plant so delightful? Either way, insects love it! Expect many blossoms on a single plant and continuous bloom. Grows to 24 inches high, 18 inches wide. Full sun. Direct sow or start seeds indoors. Slow to germinate, but like the purple salvia, well worth the wait! Will re-seed. Also selected for *Pollinators for Food* study.



Prairie Sun Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta* 'Prairie Sun')

Deep gold and yellow flowers with consistent coloring and form. This plant blooms all summer long. Large 3-4 inch flowers and an upright form make this a great plant to mix with other flowers and edibles. Grows to 24 inches high and 12-18 inches wide. Full sun. Start indoors or direct sow. Will re-seed.



Showstar Butter Daisy (*Melampodium paludosum* 'Showstar')

A prolific bloomer! The small golden flowers may be small, but the plant grows to 24" high, and 24" wide. Form is rounded, making this plant great for masses, borders, backdrops, and all around excellent summer long interest. Full sun. Start seeds indoors.



Dakota Gold Sneezeweed (*Helenium amarum* 'Dakota Gold')

The smallest of our top pollinator annuals, but a favorite of native bees and syphid flies. Small bright yellow flowers and delicate foliage. Grows to 12 inches high and 8-12 inches wide. A perfect border plant thanks to its rounded form. Direct sun. Start seeds indoor in well-drained media.



Envy Zinnia (*Zinnia elegans* 'Envy')

What is a garden without zinnias? Bees big and small were all over this zinnia whose flowers range from pale yellow-green to lime green. Flower form is wide and open, making it easy for pollinators to do business with the flower. Flowers are 2-3 inches wide. Plants grow to 24 inches high, 18 inches wide. Also selected for *Pollinators for Food* study.

¹ Floriculture Crops 2018 Summary, USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service. May 2019.

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For more information about pollinators, plants and habitat: extension.umn.edu/yard-and-garden