Bees are our most effective pollinators, and flowers are food for bees. To support native bees and honey bees, provide a succession of flowers through the entire growing season. Plants differ in their attraction to bees, and the differences could be subtle. In a University of Maine experiment at four gardens in Old Town, Jonesboro, and Blue Hill, researchers count insects that land on flowers in good weather during three one-minute observations per plant. To date we have tested more than 60 species of native wildflowers, shrubs, bedding plants, cover crops, and herbs. These easy-to-grow bee plants are likely to be successful in your garden:


Purple coneflower, *Echinacea purpurea*, has often been recommended for bee gardens, attracts bumble bees over a long season. Aug-Sept. Hardy perennial, easy to grow.

White wood aster, *Eurybia divaricata*, is one of many native asters that attracts honey bees, bumble bees, and sweat bees. Sept. Hardy perennial, easy, spreads.


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