

Beneficial Insects



Beneficial Insects and Their Services

- **Pollinators:** Honeybees, bumble bees, orchard mason bees, wasps, flies, butterflies
- **Predator Insects:** Spined Soldier Bugs, Lady Bugs, Praying Mantis, Lace-wings, Spiders (not insects) and more
- **Parasitizing Insects:** Various wasps and flies that lay eggs within the pest insect in order to raise their young
- [Link to Beneficial Insect website](#)



Creating Beneficial Insect Habitat

In order to attract beneficial insects you need to have a habitat. Many insects in adult form nectar on flowers, these flowers serve as a 'watering hole' for the insect community. Insects drink nectar, mate, lay eggs and then the larvae eat other insects. A habitat includes:

- Nectar rich flowers that bloom from spring until fall (April-late October) this can be accomplished by planting many species that flower in succession throughout the growing season.
- Larger flowers are more noticeable to many species
- Many plants in the mint and aster family are good for attracting beneficials
- Create an overwintering habitat in the flower bed for beneficial.
- [Link to Insectary Plant Profiles document](#)

Insectary Plant Profile

Many flowering plants attract beneficial species of insects for an orchard. It is good practice to encourage/attract beneficial predators and parasitoids that help keep other insect pests in check. There are many insectary plants that serve this purpose. Many options are outlined in the Holistic Orchard book by Michael Phillips in his Orchard Design chapter. The Giving Grove offers these plants for our Kansas City area, offering up spring, summer and fall flowering and nectar sources:



Bee Balm (*Monarda*): There are many species and selections of this plant. The particular one that we offer is *Monarda bradburiana*, (Ohio Horsemint or Woodland Bergamot), flowers in mid-April to mid-May. The plant is tidy at a height of 12" and spreads to 2'. Foliage and flowers are also edible. The other species of *Monarda* (Mo-Kan Natives) flower during June and July and are also great insectary plants. **(Missouri native)**



Mountain Mint (*Pycnanthemum*): We offer two species of this plant *P. muticum* (Clustered Mountain Mint) and *P. tenuifolium* (Slender Mountain Mint). Clustered mountain mint grows to 2' tall and spreads. Its white flowers are filled with nectar from June into August. Slender mountain mint grows to 18" tall and spreads to 3'. Its white flowers are present from mid-June to late July. **(Mo-Kan natives)**



Black Eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia* sp.) The species that we offer is *Rudbeckia missouriense* (Missouri Coneflower) flowers a bright sunny yellow-orange from early July to August. Plant gets 18" tall. The preference is full sun, dry conditions. Because this is one of the less aggressive coneflowers, taller and more aggressive plants should be kept away from it. **(Missouri native)**



Bronze Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*): A great insect plant and flavoring herb too. Plant gets to 5' tall in full sun and flowers throughout the summer. Foliage is attractive deep purple to green. Seeds, foliage and flowers are edible. **(Mediterranean native)**



New England Aster (*Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*): This is one of the last native flowering nectar plants. Flowers range from peach to purple and are a great late season source of nectar. Plants can get to 5' tall but if trimmed in June they will have more flowers and can be kept to under 3' tall. **(Mo-Kan native)**



Showy Goldenrod (*Solidago speciosa*): Another late season nectar source flowering from September to early October. This is confused for the allergy causing ragweed, but Goldenrod pollen is spread by insects not wind. Plant gets to 5' tall, but pruning in mid-summer will cause more flower heads and a reduced height to 3-4' tall. **(Mo-Kan native)**