

FEED the POLLINATORS in EVERY SEASON!



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GOOD TO KNOW

Ruby-throated hummingbirds time their spring migration to coincide with the blooming of wild columbine. They have impeccable memories for food sources. Once your garden is on the menu, they will return every year.



DRY SHADE COMPANIONS

- 1 | Longbract trillium *Trillium underwoodii* Maroon flowers in spring; Barbara loves the variegated foliage pattern in shades of green; 6 to 12 in. tall, 6 to 9 in. wide; cold hardy in USDA zones 5 to 9
- 2 | Hellebore *Helleborus* 'Cotton Candy' Barbara has grown a lot of hellebores over the years, but these double pink early spring flowers are a favorite; 12 to 14 in. tall, 18 to 24 in. wide; cold hardy in USDA zones 4 to 8
- 3 | Mayapple *Podophyllum* 'Spotty Dotty' This is one of the most vigorous mayapples that Barbara has grown with brown spots on the leaves; star-shaped maroon blooms form under the leaf; 12 to 18 in. tall, 9 to 12 in. wide; cold hardy in USDA zones 6 to 9
- 4 | Christmas fern *Polystichum acrostichoides* A native fern with upright evergreen foliage; does great in dry shade; 1 to 2 ft. tall and wide; cold hardy in USDA zones 3 to 9
- 5 | Japanese cobra lily *Arisaema sikokianum* Large dark purple hood with a white spadix; 19 to 24 in. tall and wide; cold hardy in USDA zones 5 to 8
- 6 | Solomon's seal *Polygonatum odoratum* 'Goldilocks' One of the most vigorous variegated Solomon's seals Barbara has grown with green-streaked-gold leaves in cool weather; white spring flowers are followed by late-season purple berries; 18 in. tall, 9 to 12 in. wide; cold hardy in USDA zones 4 to 9

Plant for Pollinators

One of the biggest reasons for the dwindling pollinator population is habitat loss. Butterflies, bees and other important pollinators are becoming increasingly less common in many residential gardens across the country because of the widespread use of pesticides and a shrinking supply of the nectar-rich flowers they rely on for food. Fortunately, you can play a role in reversing this trend by dedicating a spot in your garden to pollinator-friendly plants to keep local pollinators well fed all season.

POLLINATION MATTERS Almost all flowering plants need to be pollinated to produce seeds. And most flowering plants depend on bees, butterflies and other animals (bats, hummingbirds) for pollination.

While there are non-native plants and hybrids that will feed pollinators, you can count on native plants to be attractive to local pollinators because they have co-evolved to rely on each other. Cultivars of native plants—often referred to as “nativars”—can also support pollinators, but not in all cases (see “What is a Nativar?” below).

When planting for pollinators, a succession of blooms is best so nectar and pollen will be available all season. Here are three great-looking plant combinations that can extend your pollinator feast into a full-fledged banquet. 🍷

—James A. Baggett

James has filled his Midwestern front yard with native plants that attract a nonstop parade of bees, butterflies and hummingbirds.



PHOTO: Adobe Stock, Brian Lasenby

Spring Beauty

Bumblebees, solitary bees, butterflies and many other pollinators emerge when the weather warms up, but pollen and nectar can be hard to come by. The sweet nectar hidden among the brightly colored petals of early spring flowers can be a lifeline for hungry pollinators like the ruby-throated hummingbird in the photo above. Sow seeds after the last frost in spring; once started, native columbine will self-sow for years.

- A Wild columbine** *Aquilegia canadensis* Perennial; drooping, bell-like red and yellow flowers in spring are especially attractive to hummingbirds; full sun to part shade; 12 to 36 in. tall, 12 to 18 in. wide; cold hardy in USDA zones 3 to 8
- B Woodland phlox** *Phlox divaricata* Perennial; clusters of lightly fragrant, tubular, lilac, rose or blue flowers in spring are pollinated by long-tongued insects like butterflies; part to full shade; 8 to 16 in. tall, 8 to 12 in. wide; cold hardy in USDA zones 3 to 9
- C Solomon's seal** *Polygonatum odoratum pluriflorum* 'Double Stuff' Perennial; red stalks adorned with white-edged leaves and dangling white, bell-shaped flowers in spring that attract many species of bees; part to full shade; 24 to 26 in. tall, 12 to 16 in. wide; cold hardy in USDA zones 3 to 8

WHAT IS A NATIVAR?

Shopping for native plants can be confusing. A growing majority of the plants you find in nurseries are cultivars of native species, often referred to as “nativars.”

Plant breeders select plants for a variety of characteristics like interesting leaf traits or flower size and shape. Some of these changes mean that a plant won't support pollinators as well. When you're buying plants, choose cultivars that

have retained the characteristics that make them attractive to pollinators: flower shape, easy-to-access nectaries and original leaf and petal colors.

For example, the 'Double Stuff' Solomon's seal flowers at right are the same as the species, so insects can access the pollen just as easily in either the cultivar or the species. But if in doubt, you can't go wrong with the native species.

The shrubs will remain from year to year, but you can experiment with different herb and flower combos here every spring.

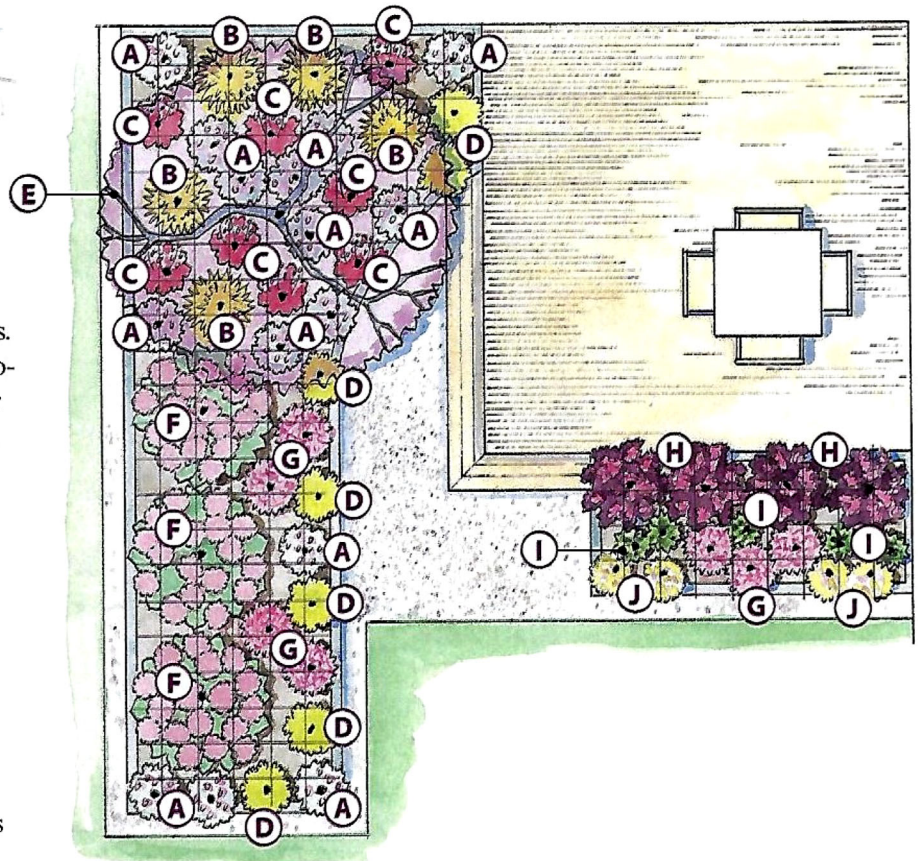


PLANT LIST (number to plant)

- A** Spotted deadnettle *Lamium maculatum* Pink Chablis® (15)
- B** Hakonechloa *Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola' (5)
- C** Coral bells *Heuchera* 'Berry Smoothie' (8)
- D** Creeping Jenny *Lysimachia nummularia* 'Goldilocks' (7)
- E** Redbud *Cercis canadensis* 'Hearts of Gold' (1)
- F** Smooth hydrangea *Hydrangea arborescens* Invincibelle® Spirit (3)
- G** Dianthus *Dianthus* Firewitch ('Feurhexe') (7)
- H** Weigela *Weigela florida* Spilled Wine™ (4)
- I** Basil *Ocimum basilicum* 'Ruby Frills' (5)
- J** Golden oregano *Origanum vulgare* 'Aureum' (4)



Scale: 1 square = 1 square foot



Small shrubs make a nice backdrop for perennials. There are more dwarf cultivars of shrubs being introduced every year, giving you a variety of choices for a small space. Where Spilled Wine weigela provides some privacy at one end of the deck, Invincibelle Spirit smooth hydrangea breaks up the length of privacy fence. Both shrubs offer long-lasting pink flowers, too.

Having herbs at easy reach is handy. Golden oregano and 'Ruby Frills' basil are planted just outside the kitchen that's on the other side of the sliding glass doors. Both herbs have unique foliage that complements the other plants in the garden and will really add an extra zing to your meals.

Turn the page to find out more about these plants and tips for growing them. >>