

Lavant Horticultural Society

“Helping the Honey Bee” *Darren Lerigo*

13th January 2021

NB: *This is not a transcript of Darren’s excellent talk, just a reminder of some of the plants he mentioned.*

Helenium autumnale Heleniums replenish their nectar in the afternoon, providing more for the bees.
Do not cut back until the end of winter, as nutrients in the stems sink down into the roots.

Sedum Sedum leaves are edible, but not from purple-leaved varieties, as these are very bitter.

Origanum vulgare, (*marjoram*)

Echium vulgare (*Viper’s bugloss*)

Eupatorium (*Joe Pie Weed*)

Borage, Nepeta, Veronicastrum,

Teucrium can be used as a replacement for box – although it is looser, it can still be clipped and has the added advantage of blue flowers full of nectar.

Lavender

Geranium ‘Rozanne’ does not produce seed and therefore continues flowering over a long period in a vain attempt to do so. Nevertheless, they do continue to produce nectar, making them very attractive to bees. [Find out more.](#)

Pulmonaria when the nectar has been taken from a flower it turns from blue to pink, indicating to bees where it is still worthwhile foraging.

Flowers planted in the shade will not be attractive to honey bees, which prefer to forage in warm conditions. However, they can still be useful to bumblebees that have more insulation against the cold.

Bulbs are important, especially early in the year when sources of nectar are scarce.

Crocus and } both of these only open their flowers to give access to the pollen and
Eranthis (winter aconite) } nectar when it is warm enough for bees to be foraging.

Fruit trees and **hedges** (blackthorn, willow, hawthorn)

Rosemary

Phillyrea – read more from Darrens’ website page about [Phillyrea](#).

June gap – there is now a limited range of plants in flower at this time, such as poppies and foxgloves; this gap is down to the destruction of wild flower meadows in the quest for more productive farming and the fashion for the beautifully mown weed-free lawn.

So grow patches of wild flower meadow. Even just cut down on the grass mowing and let it grow, so that the clover and other wild flowers (*aka weeds*) can flower to feed the bees.

Monarda (*Bee balm*) excellent for bees but very prone to powdery mildew. Now there are new mildew resistant cultivars names after American first nations, e.g. *Monarda ‘Cherokee’*.

Cosmos

Echium pinanina – very tall, needs mild conditions, but masses of nectar rich flowers

Rosebay willow herb, Ivy, Ceanothus

Roses and **Dahlias** only open-centred varieties are of any use to bees.