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March 17, 2017

## Trees for bees and beauty

The bright blooms of Eastern Redbuds and flowering crabapples are springtime favorites of bees as well as people. The two species top the list of "Plants Bees Like Best," a just-published chart based on an ongoing study that seeks to identify the most "bee-friendly" ornamental trees and shrubs.

The handy chart lists dozens of bee-friendly trees and shrubs, organized by bloom time. It's a useful guide to share with garden center customers that will help them choose plants for a season-long progression of bee-friendly habitat. <http://jfs.co/sa317bees>

Eastern Redbuds and flowering crabapples earned "very heavy" visitation rates. They were favored over other spring flowering beauties such as Cornelian Cherry Dogwood and Prunus species, which merited "heavy" visitation ratings. Two summer and fall bloomers that we grow also earned "very heavy" visitation rates: Goldenrain tree (*Koelreuteria paniculata*) and Seven-son Flower (*Heptacodium miconioides*).

Plant Name	Visitation Rating
Eastern Redbud	Very Heavy
Flowering Crabapple	Very Heavy
Cornelian Cherry Dogwood	Heavy
Prunus species	Heavy
Goldenrain tree ( <i>Koelreuteria paniculata</i> )	Very Heavy
Seven-son Flower ( <i>Heptacodium miconioides</i> )	Very Heavy

We first wrote of the research in the April 1, 2016 *Clippings* article, "Blooms, trees, birds & bees." Supported by the Horticultural Research Institute, University of Kentucky scientists observed activity and counted more than 9,000 bees at more than 200 sites, and identified trees and shrubs preferred by five families of bees.



**Purple Prince Crabapple** is fast-growing and disease resistant. Rose red flowers complement the deep purple spring foliage that matures to bronze green in summer. A heavy crop of small maroon fruits is attractive to birds and persists into the winter months. An easy care, resilient and adaptable tree.



**Eastern Redbud** flowers are irresistible to bees as well as humans, who appreciate the bursts of bright pink blooms as harbingers of spring. Flowers, arranged in dense masses along its bare branches, are reddish purple in bud and open to various shades of pink to lavender-pink. Fall color is yellow.



**Perfect Purple Crabapple** presents deep pink to rose red flowers that are irresistible to bees. They set the stage for dark purple foliage that crowns the perfectly rounded canopy of this very cold hardy tree. It is a time-tested top performer in the North and Intermountain regions.



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