

Fall Bees

To close out the season, your fall bee garden should be prepared for visiting royalty. These VIP's (very important pollinators) will be counting on you.

Bumble bee queens (genus *Bombus*) – the next generation – are probably the most distinguished native bee visitors to our fall gardens. These newly minted bumble bee royals are easily recognized by their large size, often exceeding a full inch. They will soon mate with the available males that have been loitering about your garden, and then begin searching for a suitable overwintering site. But first they must find enough food to build up their reserves for a long winter's hibernation. So including fall-blooming plants in your garden is essential to support these queens that will found new bumble bee colonies the following spring.

[Goldenrod](#), [aster](#), [giant hyssop](#) and [sunflower](#) are all excellent choices for your fall bee garden, providing essential forage not only for new bumble bee queens, but for other native bees that are still active.



Fall-blooming plants such as goldenrod (left) and aster (right) provide essential forage for numerous late season bees, including new bumble bee queens that must build up their reserves before hibernating for the winter.

Photos by Celeste Ets-Hokin.

Sweat bees, carpenter bees, long-horned bees and even a few leafcutter bees are among the late season guests in our residential gardens. And the bees won't be alone in appreciating your inclusion of fall blooms – you too will delight in those long elegant sprays of goldenrod and sunny faces of purple asters that grace your wild bee garden at the close of another year.