

## Top Native Pollinator Plants for Clackamas County

Top, locally native pollinator plants for Clackamas County based on ratings from a three-year, peer-reviewed study conducted by Oregon State University and tailored by consultant Cindy Hines in June 2023 to include historically native species.

Note: Native plants do not require rich soil. Soil amendments can be detrimental to many of species in this list. Instead, leaves should be left where they fall, which naturally enriches the soil.

### 1. Hall's Aster (*Symphotrichum hallii*)



A rare species in Oregon that is native to upland prairies and oak savannahs of the northern Willamette Valley and an imperiled species in Washington.

**Habitat:** Sunny to mostly sunny grasslands and meadows with rocky, clay soil that is wet in the winter and dry in the summer. Drought tolerant once established.

**Plant Description:** Deciduous perennial herb that usually grows up to 2 feet tall by up to 2 feet wide. Occasionally grows up to 5 feet tall by 4 feet wide. White to pink to violet flowers from July to October. Spreads moderately by stolons to form colonies.

**Value to Pollinators:** Keystone restoration species and crucial late-season nectar and pollen source for numerous native butterflies, bees, and other pollinators, including the endangered Fender's Blue butterfly and the endangered Taylor's Checkerspot butterfly.

**Propagation:** By stolon division or seed. Seed requires little or no stratification.

**Care:** Water deeply and infrequently in summer. Do not amend soil.

**Associates:** Oregon White Oak (*Quercus garryana*), Common Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*), Narrow Goldenrod (*Solidago elongata*), Douglas' Aster (*Symphotrichum subspicatum*), native bunchgrass species, Meadow Checkermallow (*Sidalcea campestris*), Common Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium* var. *occidentalis*), Native Heal-All (*Prunella vulgaris* var. *lanceolata*)

**Substitute for:** Invasive Oxeye Daisy, nuisance weed Shasta Daisy, and exotic aster

**Nurseries and Growers:** Xera (Portland), Willamette Wildings (Creswell), Heritage Seedlings (Salem)

### 2. Douglas' Aster (*Symphotrichum subspicatum*)



A common native in the "inundated tracts" along the Willamette River until the 1830s.

**Habitat:** Sunny to partially shady meadows and oak woodlands with moist soil that is rich in organic matter. Moderately drought tolerant once established.

**Plant Description:** Deciduous perennial herb that grows between 1 to 4 feet tall by 2 feet wide. Purple to white flowers with yellow centers from June to October. Spreads vigorously by rhizomes.

**Value to Pollinators:** Keystone restoration species and crucial late-season nectar and pollen source for numerous native butterflies, bees, and other pollinators, including the endangered Oregon Silverspot,

Northern Checkerspot, Woodland Skipper, Pine White, Painted Lady, Red Admiral, and Mourning Cloak butterflies. Larval food source for the endangered Oregon Silverspot butterfly and eight species of native moths. Attracts 74 species of native bees and hummingbirds.

**Propagation:** By rhizome division or seed. Seed does not require stratification.

**Care:** Water moderately in the summer. To control spread, plant in full sun next to other competitive species such as Pearly Everlasting (*Anaphalis margaritacea*) and Showy Milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*), do not amend soil, and do not water once established.

**Associates:** Oregon White Oak (*Quercus garryana*), Quaking Aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), native lupine species, Pearly Everlasting (*Anaphalis margaritacea*), Oregon Iris (*Iris tenax* var. *tenax*), native checkermallow species, native bunchgrass species, Showy Milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*), Native Heal-All (*Prunella vulgaris* var. *lanceolata*), Fringed Willowherb (*Epilobium ciliatum*), Tall Oregon Grape (*Berberis aquifolium*), Vine Maple (*Acer circinatum*)

**Substitute for:** Nuisance weed chicory, invasive Oxeye Daisy, nuisance weed Shasta Daisy, and exotic aster

**Nurseries and Growers:** Sparrowhawk (pop-up sale fall and spring in Milwaukie), Northwest Meadowsapes (Port Townsend), Sauvie Island Natives (Portland)

### 3. Winecup Clarkia AKA Small-Flowered Godetia (*Clarkia purpurea* ssp. *quadrivulnera*)



A rare species that is native to “open rocky places” in the Willamette Valley.

**Habitat:** Sunny to partially shady meadows, open rocky grasslands, grassy slopes, and shrubby hillsides with thin vegetation and dry to moist, well-drained gritty loam or sandy clay shallow soil. Drought tolerant once established.

**Plant Description:** Deciduous annual herb that grows between 6 inches to 3 feet tall by 1 to 2 feet wide. Highly variable, self-fertile pink, lavender, purple, or wine red flowers from April to August.

**Value to Pollinators:** Important nectar and pollen source for numerous butterflies, bees, and other pollinators, including hummingbirds. Host plant for at least six native butterfly and moth species, including the rare Taylor’s Checkerspot butterfly.

**Propagation:** Self-seeding or by seed. Seed requires stratification. Scarification speeds up germination process.

**Care:** Water infrequently to moderately in summer. Do not amend soil.

**Associates:** Oregon White Oak (*Quercus garryana*), native rose species, Oceanspray (*Holodiscus discolor*), Rusty-Haired Saxifrage (*Micranthes rufidula*), native bunchgrass species, Common Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*), Farewell to Spring (*Clarkia amoena*)

**Substitute for:** Exotic Evening Primrose, exotic cosmos

**Nurseries and Growers:** Willamette Wildings (Creswell), Heritage Seedlings (Salem)

#### 4. Lindley's Clarkia AKA Farewell to Spring (*Clarkia amoena* ssp. *lindleyi*)



A rare species that is native to “fields and open places” in the Willamette Valley. It still grows wild in the Willamette Narrows.

**Habitat:** Sunny to mostly sunny oak woodlands, open grasslands, and rocky slopes with nutrient-poor sandy loam, alkaline, salty, clay, or rocky soil that is moist but well-drained in the spring and dry in the summer. Drought tolerant once established.

**Plant Description:** Winter deciduous annual or biennial herb that grows between 6 inches to 3 feet tall by 1 to 2 feet wide. Pink to purple flowers with red landing pads bloom from June to August.

**Value to Pollinators:** Important nectar and pollen source for numerous butterflies, 45 species of native bees, and other pollinators, including hummingbirds. Attracts bumblebees and Mason bees. Host plant for at least five species of native butterflies and moths, including White-Lined Sphinx, Pacific Green Sphinx, Clark’s Day Sphinx moths. Leafcutter bees use its petals for their nest tubes.

**Propagation:** Self-seeding or by seed. Direct sow seeds on bare soil as they do not transplant well. Plant in 3 to 6-foot diameters for best pollinator attraction.

**Care:** Water infrequently in summer. Do not amend soil.

**Associates:** Oregon White Oak (*Quercus garryana*), native moss species, native bunchgrass species, Common Camas (*Camassia quamash*), Oregon Sunshine (*Eriophyllum lanatum* var. *leucophyllum*), Giant White Fawn Lily (*Erythronium oregonum*), Globe Gilia (*Gilia capitata*), Common Madia (*Madia elegans*), California Poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), Narrowleaf Mule’s Ear (*Wyethia angustifolia*), Oregon Grape (*Berberis aquifolium*), native stonecrop species

**Substitute for:** Exotic Evening Primrose, exotic cosmos

**Nurseries and Growers:** Xera (Portland), Willamette Wildings (Creswell), Northwest Meadowsapes (Port Townsend, mix of various subspecies)

#### 5. California Poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*)



Native to “open glades.” It is a common species in the Willamette Valley.

**Habitat:** Sunny grasslands, rocky bluffs, and gravel bars with nutrient-poor dry to moist, well-drained rocky soil. Drought tolerant once established.

**Plant Description:** Quick-growing deciduous annual herb that grows between 8 to 18 inches tall by 1 to 2 feet wide. Bright orange to cream or white flowers from May to September. Spreads vigorously by seed.

**Value to Pollinators:** Crucial late-season nectar and pollen source for numerous butterflies, including Acmon Blue and Mormon Metalmark butterflies, 44 species of native bees, and other pollinators.

**Propagation:** Self-seeding or by seed. Seeds do not require stratification.

**Care:** Water infrequently in summer. Do not amend soil.

**Associates:** Native bunchgrass species, native lupine species, Cleavers (*Galium aparine*), native clarkia species

**Substitute for:** Exotic poppies

**Nurseries and Growers:** Xera (Portland), Al's Garden Center (Wilsonville)

## 6. Bluefield Gilia AKA Globe Gilia (*Gilia capitata* ssp. *capitata*)



A common native species in the area until the 1920s.

**Habitat:** Prefers sunny, rocky slopes, open meadows, and oak woodland margins with dry, sandy, gravelly, or rocky soil, but tolerates mostly shady areas with moist, well-drained, humus-rich soil. Drought tolerant once established.

**Plant Description:** Quick-growing deciduous annual herb that grows between 1 to 4 feet tall by 6 inches to 2 feet wide. Blue to purple flowers from May until the first hard frost in November.

**Value to Pollinators:** Crucial late-season nectar and pollen source for numerous native butterflies, 28 species of native bees, and other pollinators, including hummingbirds. Host plant for at least five species of native moths, including Fairy Longhorn moths. Larval food source for native butterflies and moths.

**Propagation:** Self-seeding or by seed. Seeds require stratification.

**Care:** Water infrequently to moderately in summer. Tolerates humus soil amendments, but does not require them. Plant with yarrow to increase nutrients in the soil, or use leaves or yarrow compost to add organic matter to the soil.

**Associates:** Oregon White Oak (*Quercus garryana*), Pacific Madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*), native bunchgrass species, California Poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), native aster species, native clarkia species, Oregon Sunshine (*Eriophyllum lanatum* var. *leucophyllum*)

**Substitute for:** Exotic phlox, exotic chives, nuisance weed Bachelor Buttons

**Nurseries and Growers:** Sparrowhawk (pop-up sale fall and spring in Milwaukie), Willamette Wildings (Creswell), Steele Acres (Corvallis)

## 7. Meadow Checkermallow (*Sidalcea campestris*)



Native to "grassy glades." It was common in the area until 1940. Now no wild populations are known to exist in Clackamas County, and the closest wild population is at the Tualatin Wildlife Refuge in Washington County. Wild populations of this beautiful native to the northern Willamette Valley are rare, and it is listed as a plant of conservation concern in Oregon.

**Habitat:** Sunny to partially shady meadows, prairies, oak woodland margins, and shrub-steppe slopes with moist, well-drained, humus-rich soil in winter and dry, humus-rich soil in summer. It will tolerate a variety of soils. Drought tolerant once established.

**Plant Description:** Deciduous perennial herb that grows between 2 to 5 feet tall by 1 to 3 feet wide. Pink to white flowers from May to September. Some plants have smaller female flowers without anthers and some plants have larger, showier bisexual flowers.

**Value to Pollinators:** Crucial late-season nectar and pollen source for numerous native butterflies, 26 species of native bees, and other pollinators, including hummingbirds. The survival of the native Black-Fronted Turret bee depends on this species. It provides nectar for endangered Fender's Blue butterfly, and it is a host plant for West Coast Lady, Painted Lady, Gray Hairstreak, Common Checkered Skipper, and American Lady butterflies.

**Propagation:** By rhizome division or seed. Seed requires stratification.

**Care:** Water moderately in summer. Tolerates humus soil amendments, but does not require them. Plant with yarrow to increase nutrients in the soil, or use leaves or yarrow compost to add organic matter to the soil.

**Associates:** Oregon White Oak (*Quercus garryana*), Black Hawthorn (*Crataegus douglasii*), native spirea species, Common Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*), native bunchgrass species, native lupine species, Tiger Lily (*Lilium columbianum*), Common Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium* var. *occidentalis*), Red Columbine (*Aquilegia formosa*)

**Substitute for:** Invasive mullein, invasive foxglove, and exotic hollyhock

**Nurseries and Growers:** Sparrowhawk (pop-up sale fall and spring in Milwaukie), Portland Nursery (Portland), Steele Acres (Corvallis)

## 8. Showy Tarweed AKA Common Madia (*Madia elegans*)



Local botanist Martin W. Gorman (1853-1926) intensely disliked the *Madia* genus and advocated for its extermination because its sticky oil stuck to his horse as he rode around the area. Fortunately, he was unsuccessful in his campaign to eliminate this important long-blooming pollinator plant and birdseed source. Although some *Madia* species are rare now, wild populations of this species still exist throughout the Willamette Valley.

**Habitat:** Sunny to partially shady grasslands, meadows, open sites in shrublands, slopes, rocky bluffs, and oak woodland margins with moist, well-drained, rocky, coarse, or heavy clay soil in winter and dry soil in summer. Drought tolerant once established.

**Plant Description:** Winter deciduous annual herb that grows between 6 inches to 5 feet tall and 2 to 4 feet wide. Pleasant aromatic plant that some describe as smelling like "pineapple." Highly variable species with a yellow flower that may have a maroon, red, or white bee landing pad in the center or may be all yellow. The flower blooms from April to November and is one of the longest blooming native flowers. The flower closes in the heat of the day to preserve moisture. The plant produces seeds in August and September.

**Value to Pollinators:** Crucial late-season nectar and pollen source for numerous native butterflies, 23 species of native bees including the rare Pomona Longhorn bee that only feeds on madia, and other pollinators. Larval host plant for at least four species of native moths, including the Owlet moth, Spotted

Sun Straw moth, and Small Heliothodes moth. Male Longhorn bees spend the night nestled in the open flowers.

**Propagation:** Self-seeding or by seed. Seed does not require stratification.

**Care:** Water infrequently in summer. Do not amend soil.

**Associates:** Oregon White Oak (*Quercus garryana*), native bunchgrass species, Common Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium* var. *occidentalis*), native Blue-Eyed Mary (*Collinsia*) species, native saxifrage species, native larkspur (*Delphinium*) species, Kinnikinnick (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*), Short-Spurred Sea Blush (*Valeriana congesta*), native lupine species, Narrowleaf Mule's Ear (*Wyethia angustifolia*), native clarkia species

**Substitute for:** Exotic sunflower

**Nurseries and Growers:** Sparrowhawk (pop-up sale fall and spring in Milwaukie), Xera (Portland), Northwest Meadows (Port Townsend), Klamath-Siskiyou (Jacksonville)

### 9. Narrow Goldenrod AKA Meadow Goldenrod (*Solidago elongata*)



A common native species in the area. At least one wild population in Clackamas County was poisoned with mercuric chloride in the 1920s. People frequently confuse this keystone species with the noxious weed Tansy Ragwort. This has led to the unnecessary destruction of wild populations of goldenrod.

**Habitat:** Sunny to partially shady meadows, fields, open oak woodlands, thickets, and slopes with dry to moist, well-drained clay soil. Tolerates a variety of soil types.

Drought tolerant once established.

**Plant Description:** Deciduous perennial herb in the Aster family that grows 2 to 5 feet tall by 2 to 3 feet wide. Yellow flowers from June to September. Seeds for birds in the fall. Spreads vigorously by rhizomes and seed.

**Value to Pollinators:** Keystone restoration species and crucial late-season nectar and pollen source for numerous native butterflies, 21 species of native bees, and other pollinators, such as hummingbirds. The endangered Oregon Silverspot butterfly, the threatened Monarch butterfly, Northern Checkerspot butterfly, Field Crescent butterfly, Checkered Skipper butterfly, Clouded Sulphur butterfly, Gray Hairstreak butterfly, Wavy-Lined moth, and Common Gray moth all depend on its nectar. It is a larval and caterpillar host plant and food source for 36 species of butterflies and moths, including the Northern Checkerspot butterfly. Cavity-nesting bees, such as Mason bees use the dry flower stalks.

**Propagation:** By rhizome division or seed. Seed does not require stratification.

**Care:** Water moderately in the summer. To control spread, plant in full sun next to other competitive species such as Showy Milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*) and Douglas' Aster (*Symphotrichum subspicatum*), do not amend soil, and do not water once established. Do not cut back; leave the seed heads for the birds and the old goldenrod stalks and associated milkweed stalks for the Mason bees.

**Associates:** Oregon White Oak (*Quercus garryana*), Showy Milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*), Tufted Hairgrass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*) and other native bunchgrass species, native camas species, Round-Leaf Bluebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*), Douglas' Aster (*Symphotrichum subspicatum*)

**Substitute for:** Noxious weed Tansy Ragwort, exotic lavender, and exotic aster

**Nurseries and Growers:** Sparrowhawk (pop-up sale fall and spring in Milwaukie), Xera (Portland), Klamath-Siskiyou (Jacksonville)

#### 10. Oregon Sunshine (*Eriophyllum lanatum* var. *leucophyllum*)



A common native in gravelly areas, on basalt outcrops, and fields along the Willamette River until 1910. Now infrequent in the area.

**Habitat:** Sunny to mostly sunny grasslands, meadows, open oak woodlands, and rocky slopes with shallow, nutrient-poor rocky or clay soil that is moist but well-drained in the spring and dry in the summer. Drought tolerant once established.

**Plant Description:** Deciduous perennial herb in the Aster family with semi-evergreen foliage that is silver-green and soft. It grows 4 inches to 2 feet tall by 2 feet wide. Highly variable yellow flowers from May to August. Seeds for birds in late summer to fall. Spreads vigorously by seed.

**Value to Pollinators:** Keystone restoration species and important summer nectar and pollen source for numerous native butterflies, 21 species of native bees, and other pollinators, including the endangered Fender's Blue butterfly, Orange Sulfur butterfly, Red Admiral butterfly, Skipper butterflies, Mason bees, Mining bees, and Sweat bees. Host plant for the Painted Lady butterfly and seven species of native moths.

**Propagation:** By seed. Seed requires stratification.

**Care:** Water infrequently in summer to establish. Do not water once established; overwatering will kill it. Do not amend soil. Do not mulch. Do not cut back; leave the seed heads for the birds. Thrives on neglect.

**Associates:** Oregon White Oak (*Quercus garryana*), Common Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium* var. *occidentalis*), native lupine species, native bunchgrass species, native stonecrop species, native huckleberry species, Common Madia (*Madia elegans*), other native aster species, native penstemon species

**Substitute for:** Exotic sunflower, invasive Oxeye Daisy, nuisance weed Shasta Daisy, and exotic aster

**Nurseries and Growers:** Sparrowhawk (pop-up sale fall and spring in Milwaukie), Xera (Portland), SymbiOp (Portland), Portland Nursery (Portland), Northwest Meadows (Port Townsend)

#### 11. Common Yarrow AKA Western Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium* var. *occidentalis*)



A common native throughout the area both historically and presently. However, many wild populations have crossed with introduced exotic yarrow and yarrow cultivars in various colors that do not support native pollinators in the same way as western yarrow.

**Habitat:** Sunny to partially shady meadows, open oak woodlands, and rocky slopes with nutrient-poor rocky, sandy, or clay soil that is moist but well-drained in the spring and dry in the summer. Drought tolerant once established.

**Plant Description:** Deciduous perennial herb in the Aster family with evergreen foliage that is gray-green and soft. It grows 1 to 4 feet tall by 1 to 3 feet wide. Flowers are most often white but occasionally pink and rarely magenta. Any other color of flower indicates an exotic cultivar that should be excluded from restoration projects. It blooms from June to October. This plant is a dynamic accumulator, meaning that it can be grown to increase the nutrients in the soil for other species. Spreads vigorously by seed and rhizomes.

**Value to Pollinators:** Important restoration species and crucial late-season nectar and pollen source for numerous native butterflies, 21 species of native bees, and other pollinators, including the endangered Oregon Silverspot butterfly, Western Tiger Swallowtail butterfly, Mourning Cloak butterfly, and Hairstreak butterfly. Host plant for Painted Lady butterfly. Repels pest insects.

**Propagation:** By rhizome division or seed. Seed does not require stratification.

**Care:** Water occasionally in summer. Limit water to limit spread. Do not amend soil. May use as a lawn replacement and mow infrequently. Use mown yarrow clippings as a green compost for plants that require additional organic matter in the soil.

**Associates:** Oregon White Oak (*Quercus garryana*), Meadow Checkermallow (*Sidalcea campestris*), Narrow Goldenrod (*Solidago elongata*), native bunchgrass species, native ceanothus species, native penstemon species, Oregon Sunshine (*Eriophyllum lanatum* var. *leucophyllum*), native stonecrop species

**Substitute for:** Exotic yarrow, yarrow cultivars, nuisance weed Queen Anne's Lace, exotic borage, and exotic marigold

**Nurseries and Growers:** Sparrowhawk (pop-up sale fall and spring in Milwaukie), Xera (Portland), SymbiOp (Portland), Northwest Meadowscapes (Port Townsend)

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"Hall's Aster." Cindy Hines, 2024. "Douglas' Aster." Cindy Hines, 2023. "Winecup Clarkia." Cindy Hines, 2024. "Lindley's Clarkia." Cindy Hines, 2024. "California Poppy." Cindy Hines, 2023. "Bluefield Gilia." Cindy Hines, 2023. "Meadow Checkermallow." Cindy Hines, 2023. "Showy Tarweed." Cindy Hines, 2023. "Narrow Goldenrod." Cindy Hines, 2023. "Oregon Sunshine." Cindy Hines, 2023. "Western Yarrow." Cindy Hines, 2022.

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