

## Autumn's nectar boost – The best late season plants for pollinators

Pollinators face a diminishing supply of nectar and pollen as the days shorten, and we head into the autumn season. While spring and summer offer a hive of activity for our bees and butterflies, the cooler months can prove challenging. However, the team at British Garden Centres has put together its guide to the best autumn plants for pollinators that will keep your garden buzzing as we head into the last quarter of the year.

**Asters:** One of the most recognisable autumn flowers, asters bloom profusely in shades of purple, pink, and white. Their daisy-like appearance offers abundant nectar, attracting bees right until the first frosts. Asters are particularly valuable for providing continuity of forage when other plants have finished flowering.

**Sedum:** Sedums are magnets for bees and butterflies, as their flat flower heads provide perfect landing pads, while their nectar offers an essential energy source. Sedums also add structure and colour to gardens well into winter as their dried seed heads linger.

**Ivy:** Often overlooked, ivy flowers in late autumn and provides one of the most important food supplies for insects at this time of year. As a native evergreen climber, ivy's small flowers are rich in nectar, feeding bees, wasps, and flies, whilst its berries offer sustenance to birds.

**Echinacea:** Also known as the coneflower, these colourful, conical-shaped blooms thrive late into autumn. Pollinating insects will flock to their spiky centres, which are packed with nectar. Echinacea adds height to gardens and is striking in late season as seed heads remain into winter.

**Verbena bonariensis:** A tall, wiry perennial, Verbena produces clouds of tiny lilac flowers from late summer into autumn. Full of nectar, the plant is highly attractive to butterflies, while providing continuous forage for bees.

**Japanese Anemone:** Elegant and with a long flowering period, Japanese anemones provide a late burst of pink and white flowers to brighten the days as they get shorter. Their open, pollen-filled centres are well loved by a range of insects, providing much needed resources in the cooling months.

**Dahlias:** The single flowered varieties are highly valuable in autumn as their central discs remain open and rich in nectar, providing a feast for bees and hoverflies when resources grow scarce.

**Mahonia:** With spires of fragrant yellow blooms appearing in late autumn and even winter, mahonia is one of the few shrubs that bridge the seasonal nectar gap. Its berries later provide food for birds, making it a late season wildlife champion.



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**Kniphofia:** Commonly known as Red Hot Poker, these striking spikes of fiery flowers bloom from late summer into autumn. Kniphofia produces abundant nectar that attracts a variety of pollinators, including bees and butterflies, adding a bold splash of colour and drama to your garden while supporting insect populations.

**Crocsmia:** Crocsmia offers vibrant red and orange flowers that bloom in late summer and early autumn. The nectar-rich blossoms are favoured by bees and butterflies, and their arching stems add movement and interest to autumn borders.

**Salvia:** With vibrant tubular flowers, salvias are magnets for long-tongued bees and butterflies. Their extended blooming season makes them ideal for bridging the nectar gap and will keep pollinators visiting your garden well into the autumn months.

**Julian Palphramand, Head of Plants at British Garden Centres,** said: “Autumn is a brilliant time to plant as the soil is still warm and there are plenty of seasonal plants to keep your garden looking fresh. Late flowering varieties not only keep gardens looking vibrant, but they also provide a vital food source for pollinators preparing for winter. At British Garden Centres, we’re passionate about helping gardeners choose plants that do good as well as look good, so whether it be this autumn or next, your garden can help bees and butterflies in the later months of the year.”

**ENDS:**

**WORD COUNT: 629**

**Notes to Editors:** British Garden Centres (BGC) is the UK’s largest family-owned garden centre group, with 73 centres around the country. The group is owned and led by the Stubbs family, who also own and operate Woodthorpe Leisure Park in Lincolnshire. BGC was launched in 1990 with the opening of Woodthorpe Garden Centre, funded by brothers Charles and Robert Stubbs. Since 2018, it has expanded rapidly with the acquisition of 50 garden centres, allowing it to grow from its heartland to the business it is now, with 73 garden centres spread from Carmarthen to Ramsgate, Wimborne to East Durham. The group has a team of 2,700 colleagues working across the garden centres, restaurants, three growing nurseries, 4 distribution centres and Woodthorpe Leisure Park and Woody’s Restaurant & Bar.

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