

Beekeeping

Department of Entomology Insect Note

Note 1.04

(Previously Note #2)

HONEY PLANTS OF NORTH CAROLINA

Knowledge of the plants honey bees use is important to every beekeeper. Plants provide the nectar for honey production and pollen for brood production. Coincidentally, the bees pollinate the plants allowing seed and fruit to develop.

The type and availability of nectar sources in an area determines, not only the potential honey production for that locality, but also the flavor, color and quality of the honey crop. Pollen is collected by bees and provides the essential protein for brood development. For these reasons, a beekeeper who knows his local flora will be better able to develop a management system which fully utilizes those potential honey and pollen plants.

North Carolina is a large state and exhibits considerable variety in honey plants as one travels from the sea to the mountains. This note lists the average blooming dates of some of the important nectar sources in the state's three main geographical areas. The figure in parenthesis following each blooming date indicates the average number of days flowering may be expected. There are others which you should learn.

Some good references are:

Honey Plants Manual by H.B. Lovell. 1966. A. I. Root Company, Medina, OH 44256.

American Honey Plants by F.C. Pellett. 1947. Orange Judd. N.Y.

Manual of the Vascular Flora of the Carolinas by Radford, Ahles and Bell. 1968. UNC Press, Chapel Hill, NC

Calendar of Beekeeping. N.C. State Beekeepers Assn. 1403 Varsity Drive, Raleigh, NC 27606.

Plant	Average bloom date (duration)		
	<u>Mountains</u>	<u>Piedmont</u>	<u>Coastal Plain</u>
Alsike Clover (<i>Trifolium hybridum</i>)	--	Apr 4 (102)	--
Aster (<i>Aster</i> spp.)	Aug 30 (40)	Sep 25 (35)	Sep 30 (40)
Basswood, Linden (<i>Tilia</i> spp.)	Jun 20 (23)	--	--
Black Gum (<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>)	May 5 (10)	Apr 26 (14)	Apr 27 (24)
Black Locust (<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>)	May 15 (14)	Apr 27 (10)	--
Blackberry (<i>Rubus</i> spp.)	--	Apr 10 (20)	Mar 1 (46)
Crimson Clover (<i>Trifolium incarnatum</i>)	--	Apr 10 (25)	--
Dandelion (<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>)	May 1 (50)	Mar 15 (60)	Mar 5 (55)
Gallberry (<i>Ilex glabra & coriacea</i>)	--	--	May 12 (28)
Goldenrod (<i>Solidago</i> spp.)	--	Aug 8 (67)	Aug 1 (85)
Heartsease, Smartweed (<i>Polygonum</i> spp.)	--	Jul 4 (126)	--
Holly (<i>Ilex</i> spp.)	May 8 (15)	Apr 30 (15)	Apr 24 (16)
Huckleberry (<i>Gaylussacia</i> spp.)	--	--	Apr 5 (32)
Ladino Clover, White Clover (<i>Trifolium repens</i>)	May 29 (51)	Apr 14 (102)	--
Pepperbush (<i>Clethra alnifolia</i>)	--	--	Aug 1 (20)
Persimmon (<i>Diospyros virginiana</i>)	May 22 (15)	May 20 (13)	--
Privet (<i>Ligustrum</i> spp.)	--	May 8 (23)	--
Raspberry (<i>Rubus</i> spp.)	May 17 (17)	Apr 30 (20)	Apr 20 (40)
Red Maple (<i>Acer rubrum</i>)	Mar 5 (35)	Feb 1 (40)	Jan 20 (45)
Sourwood (<i>Oxydendrum arboreum</i>)	Jun 25 (25)	Jun 10 (20)	Jun 1 (20)
Sugar Maple (<i>Acer saccharum</i>)	--	Mar 5 (25)	Feb 25 (25)
Sumac (<i>Rhus</i> spp.)	Apr 8 (146)	Apr 3 (151)	Apr 1 (153)
Sweet Clover (<i>Melilotus</i> spp.)	Jun 8 (53)	May 28 (37)	--
Tulip Poplar (<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>)	May 25 (23)	Apr 25 (29)	Apr 17 (30)
Tupelo Gum (<i>Nyssa aquatica</i>)	--	--	Apr 20 (30)
Vetch (<i>Vicia</i> spp.)	--	Apr 28 (46)	--

Prepared by J. Ambrose; revised by S. Bambara 6/21/95