

## episode 99 show notes and advice

### Episode description

For the next episode in our '12 best' series, Sarah is joined by returning guest, Dave Goulson, the British Bumblebee ecologist. A true fount of knowledge when it comes to protecting pollinators, Dave shares his most helpful hints for insect conservation and together, they discuss their 12 top plants for welcoming pollinators into the garden.

### In this episode, discover:

- ❖ Different flowers approaches to alluring pollinators
- ❖ Sarah and Dave's top 12 pollinator-friendly plants
- ❖ Why earwigs are actually our friends

## episode 99 advice sheet

### Introducing earwigs (2:00)

Often regarded as pests, Dave shares why the common earwig forms such an important part of our garden eco systems.

- ❖ Dave explains that earwigs are essentially bio-control agents and friends of the garden. With their primary food source being small insects such as aphids and white fly, which are notorious for wreaking havoc in the garden.
- ❖ A recent study found that a healthy earwig population in an orchard is the equivalent of a farmer spraying 3 x the quantity of insecticide. Plus, this is an entirely more natural defence.
- ❖ Dave suggests creating an earwig hotel by the side of your dahlia bed, and then transporting it close to your apple tree to work as a pest deterrent.

## 12 best plants for pollinators

### Bees (6:07)

- ❖ (Dave) Wild Marjoram – a wild and vibrant purple, and one of the richest sources of pollen and nectar for bees and butterflies. Great to use in cooking. Grows well in a pot, in the garden or even a roof terrace.
- ❖ (Sarah) *Allium bulgaricum* – candelabra of brownish crimson flowers. A prolific self-seeder with a tall stem, and pretty hanging bells. The bumblebee ballet this allium hosts is totally fantastic, with sometimes over 100 bee visitors at any one time.
- ❖ (Dave) *Echium vulgare* 'Viper's bugloss' - another native loved by both Dave and Sarah. A gorgeous biennial to look at, if you've got a sunny, well drained spot, this plant will just keep seeding itself, popping up year after year. It produces tones of nectar, which the bees go mad for.
- ❖ Foxgloves – totally wonderful for the bees. Sarah likens the foxglove to a high-rise of nectar cafes for hungry bees. It doesn't matter if it's the whites or subtle purple pinks like *Digitalis purpurea* 'Sutton's Apricot' – the bees adore this plant. Dave explains that long-tongued bumblebees like the 'Garden Bumble Bee' and the 'Common Carder bumblebee' love to visit foxgloves. Both varieties have extra-long tongues compared to other bumbles, so are well equipped to navigate past the bristles and scoop out the sweet nectar.
- ❖ Korean mint – Korean mint is a firm favourite with the pollinators. Part of the *Agastache* genus – it's easy to grow and reaches a metre or so tall with vivid purple spikes. It's a versatile plant and thrives irrespective of its conditions. Sarah explains that the flowers and leaves are edible too and works well in salads, or something exciting like Korean seafood rolls.

### Hoverflies (14:59)

Notoriously short-tongued, hoverflies like big dinner plate flowers. Hogweed is particularly good, although Dave explains that most listeners probably wouldn't want this in their garden!

- ❖ (Dave) Fennel – same family as hogweed – but the flowers are vastly more attractive. The hoverflies simply love it.
- ❖ (Sarah) *Ammi Majus* – like a domesticated form of hogweed – it's a wonderful cut flower and fantastic garden plant. The Ammi has self-sown into the grass at Perch Hill, so Sarah intends to introduce it into the wild flower meadow. Even though this isn't a native British plant, it's happy as Larry, flowering away.

- ❖ (Dave) Ivy – loads of insects flock to ivy because it's often one of the last plants to flower in the season. Honeybees love it for their last fix of sugar too. Dave says people should be more tolerant of ivy as it's a great choice for pollinators.

### **Butterflies and moths (18:42)**

- ❖ (Sarah) Single and anemone flowered dahlias – 'Totally Tangerine' and 'Blue Bayou', play host to all sorts of butterflies, most notably the peacock, red admiral, tortoiseshell butterflies, late in the year too.
- ❖ (Sarah) Buddleia – a cliché choice to some, but an absolute favourite of bees and butterflies. Sarah highlights that in recent years, trials to create more compact and long-flowering buddleia hasn't affected this plants ability to still produce good quantities of nectar. Varieties such as 'buzz indigo' and 'Buzz lavender' which Sarah grows in a pot are fantastic. Queen bumblebees love this plant too.
- ❖ (Sarah) Grasses, for moths are totally excellent. It's important to look out for under-appreciated insects who also play a large environmental role.
- ❖ (Sarah) Salvias – The salvia is late flowering and loved by insects too.

### **Honourable mentions (27:05)**

- ❖ Flowering trees – limes, cherry, and general fruit trees are wonderful, but pussywillow is Dave's favourite. The yellow catkins in spring are an excellent feast for bumblebees reemerging after hibernation.
- ❖ Lawn daisy
- ❖ Dandelions – not very pretty, but great if you're looking to undertake some garden rewilding.
- ❖ Nicotiana (Tabacco plant)
- ❖ Catmint (Nepeta)
- ❖ Comfrey

### **What Dave's up to now... (28:18)**

Dave has written a variety of fantastic books about pollinators and other insects. You can purchase any of these terrific titles at any good bookstore.