



Eva Crane Trust

ECTD_162

TITLE: Wild gardens for bees

SOURCE: *Bee World* 62 (4) 128 – 129

DATE: 1981



Beekeeping round the World

Wild gardens for bees

Wild gardens are very much the fashion in England just now—for reasons of nature conservation, nostalgia for the 'flowery meads' of days gone by, and lack of labour and money to keep large gardens in the state to which they were accustomed.

Many of the plants grown in these miniature nature reserves are visited by bees among other insects, and beekeepers are likely to be interested in the new wealth of literature on them. There are books, leaflets from active organizations, and catalogues of wild plant seeds, all of which can provide interesting winter reading.

In a letter published in *Birds* this year (no. 6, p. 67), Jasmine Edlin enthused over the benefits of introducing a hive of bees into her garden in 1980: 'The bees have also caused a great increase in seeds, berries and nuts for food for wild creatures . . . I would never have believed one hive of bees could have made such a difference—and in a bad year too. I wonder what they would have done in good weather? I got 39 lb of honey . . .'

Books that cover many bee plants, and have especially attractive illustrations, include *Living in a wild garden* by Roger Banks, and *The wild garden* by Lys de Bray. *The wild flower garden* by Roy Genders, *Green gardener: creating a wild garden* by Betty Dougherty, and *How to enjoy your weeds* by Audrey Wynne Hatfield, are also illustrated.

Books directly on bee plants, to be consulted when making a wild garden for them, are Dr. F. N. Howes' *Plants and beekeeping*, IBRA's new *Garden plants valuable to bees*, and a new Dutch book by L. G. M. Hensels, *Drachtplantengids voor de bijenteelt* [Guide to bee forage plants].

Ideas for interesting gardens by Daphne More has a chapter on bee gardens. *The hedgerow book* by Ron Wilson mentions bees, and *Hedgerow* by John T. White gives a century by century history of English hedges, beautifully illustrated by Eric Thomas. A *handbook for naturalists* is edited by Winwood Reade and R. M. Stuttard, and includes a useful list of voluntary organizations in Britain that are concerned with natural history. Michael Chinery's *Natural history of the garden* has more on bees, and also Ron Wilson's *The back garden wildlife sanctuary book*.

After the appearance of several coffee-table books on garden history that have been disappointing for their lack of interest in bees and beekeeping, two have now been published that make up for this. In *The cottage garden*, Anne Scott-James uses some interesting illustrations that show old hives, and the text has many references to bees. Teresa McLean's *Medieval English gardens* is a splendid scholarly book that enables one to enter in imagination the paradises and other gardens of the Middle Ages, and to find bees on many of the flowers. The Elizabethan poet Nicholas Grimald put it thus:

Seed, leaf, flower, fruit,
herbe, bee and tree
are more than I may sing.

On a more practical level, the following addresses—of firms that have supplied IBRA with their catalogues of seeds for wild flowers—will be useful in making preparations for next summer's wild bee garden.

John Chambers, 15 Westleigh Road, Barton Seagrave, Kettering, NN15 5AJ
British Seed Houses Ltd, Bewsey Industrial Estate, Pitt Street, Warrington, Cheshire
Emorsgate Seeds, Emorsgate, Terrington St. Clement, King's Lynn, PE34 4NY
Mr. Fothergill's Seeds, Regal Lodge, Kentford, Suffolk CB8 7QB
Gerson & Co. (Agricultural) Ltd, Grove Lane, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands B66 2SE

W. W. Johnson & Son Ltd, Boston, Lincs. PE21 8AD
Naturescape, St. Peters Cottage, Colston Bassett, Notts. NG12 3FB
The Seed Bank, 44 Albion Road, Sutton, Surrey
Suffolk Herbs, Sawyers Farm, Lt. Cornard, Sudbury, Suffolk

A useful leaflet, including recommendations, can be obtained from the Nature Conservancy Council, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY4 4TW, and the NCC also sells a booklet *Creating attractive grasslands using native plant species* by T. Wells, S. Bell and A. Frost, price £3.20, including p. & p.

References

- BANKS, R. (1980) *Living in a wild garden*. Tadworth, UK; World's Work Ltd 128 pages £7.95
- BRAY, L. DE (1978) *The wild garden*. London, UK; Weidenfeld & Nicolson 192 pages £6.95
- CHINERY, M. (1977) *Natural history of the garden*. London, UK; Collins 77 pages £5.95 (paperback £2.25)
- DOUGHERTY, B. (1975) *Green gardener: creating a wild garden*. Newton Abbot, UK; David & Charles 200 pages £4.50
- GENDERS, R. (1976) *The wild flower garden*. Newton Abbot, UK; David & Charles 155 pages £4.50
- HATFIELD, A. W. (1969) *How to enjoy your weeds*. London, UK; Frederick Muller 116 pages £1.00
- HENSELS, L. G. M. (1981) *Drachtplantengids voor de bijenteelt* [Guide to bee forage plants] In Dutch. Wageningen, Netherlands; Centre for Agricultural Publishing & Documentation 126 pages From IBRA.
- HOWES, F. N. (1979) *Plants and beekeeping*. London, UK; Faber & Faber (rev. ed.) 256 pages £8.95 (paperback £4.45) from IBRA post paid
- INTERNATIONAL BEE RESEARCH ASSOCIATION (1981) *Garden plants valuable to bees*. London, UK; International Bee Research Association 56 pages £2, post paid
- MCLEAN, T. (1981) *Medieval English gardens*. London, UK; Collins 298 pages £12.50
- MORE, D. (1974) *Ideas for interesting gardens*. Newton Abbot, UK; David & Charles 158 pages + 18 plates £3.25
- READE, W.; STUTTARD, R. M. (eds) (1968) *A handbook for naturalists*. London, UK; Evans Brothers Ltd 160 pages
- SCOTT-JAMES, A. (1981) *The cottage garden*. Harmondsworth, UK; Allen Lane 160 pages £9.95
- WHITE, J. T. (1980) *Hedgerow*. London, UK; Ash & Grant 46 pages £4.95
- WILSON, R. (1979) *The hedgerow book*. Newton Abbot, UK; David & Charles 208 pages £5.95
- (1981) *The back garden wildlife sanctuary book*. Harmondsworth, UK; Penguin Books Ltd. 160 pages £2.95 (paperback)