

Native Plants for Wild Bee Conservation

Fact Sheet: Blanket Flower

Scientific name: *Gaillardia aristata* Pursh



Blanket flower was one of nine plant species used in research evaluating native perennial wildflower plantings for supporting wild bees and improving crop pollination on farmlands in Montana.

Family: Asteraceae
Life cycle: perennial
Growth habit: forb/herb

Flower color: yellow ray flowers, reddish-brown disk flowers
Flower shape: disk-shaped flowers
Foliage: dull, gray-green, hairy, lance-shaped leaves
Height: 1-3 feet
Bloom period: June-September

Habitat: Grows in a variety of environments throughout its range including meadows, grasslands, mountain foothills, prairies, plains, roadsides, ditches, and disturbed sites. Found from low to high mountain elevations.

Growing conditions: full sun; dry to moist, well-drained soil; loamy to rocky and gravelly/sandy soil; drought tolerant once established.

Establishment: Seed does not require pre-treatment to break dormancy. For this project, we grew plants from seed in the greenhouse and transplanted them to the field as plugs in Spring. Plants did not flower during the year they were planted, but did so abundantly the following two years. Overwintering success was high on all farms. Seed collecting was easy, but gloves were needed because of the spiky pappus.

For more information on native plants: Visit the USDA-NRCS PLANTS database or the Montana Native Plant Society website.

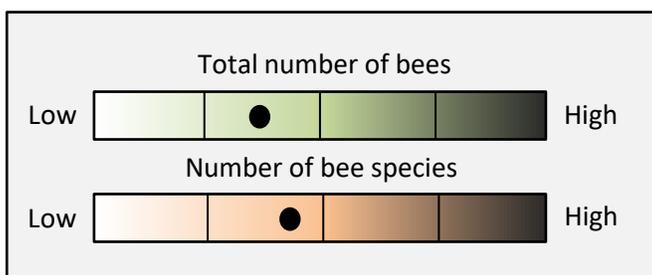


Photo: C.M. Delphia

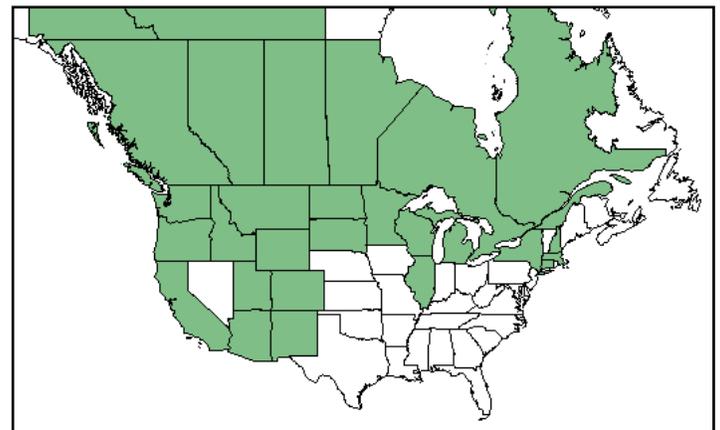


Photo: C.M. Delphia

Bee visitation: Bumble bees, medium and small mining bees, green sweat bees, banded sweat bees, small dark sweat bees, small carpenter bees, mason bees, leafcutting bees, resin bees, masked bees, long-horn bees, and cuckoo bees.



Relative attractiveness of *G. aristata* across farms over 2 years.



Gaillardia aristata distribution from USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database