

Handpick bouquets at Mama Bees Flower Farm

BY MAX UNGER

Nestled in the heart of the Applegate Valley, Mama Bees Flower Farm is excited to bring their new flower farm to the community! They are all about celebrating the beauty of the seasons and connecting with neighbors. Imagine strolling through vibrant fields, handpicking your own bouquets of fresh, seasonal flowers. It's a truly magical experience that they can't wait to share with you.

But flowers aren't the only charm here. As you wander the farm, you'll meet their friendly animal companions who are as much a part of the experience as the blooms. Their playful goats are always eager for attention, and their chickens, with their curious clucks, add a delightful soundtrack to your visit. Don't be surprised if their geese or ducks waddle by to say hello! They're all part of the vibrant life that makes this farm special.

For those who love to learn and create, they offer hands-on workshops where you can craft with flowers and explore your creativity. If you're looking to bring consistent beauty into your home, their bouquet subscription service offers six weeks of stunning, locally grown blooms throughout spring and summer. They also host many professional

photographers to capture beautiful, lasting memories.

On-site farm store and stand

Their on-site farm store and stand are filled with treasures for everyone. From farm-fresh eggs to locally made goods, you'll find something special to take home. And this year, they're planting a lavender field that will add even more charm to your visits and provide a serene, fragrant escape.

If you're driving down North Applegate Road, you can't miss the vibrant beauty of Mama Bees Flower Farm. And if you're one of their neighbors or passing by and see them out and about, feel free to stop by and say hi! They'd love to meet you and share the joy of the farm with you.

Mama Bees, at 10561 North Applegate Road, Grants Pass, is open seasonally. The best way to stay up-to-date on upcoming events and open hours is by following them on Instagram @mamabeesflowerfarm or visiting their website at mamabeesfarm.com.

Their mission is simple: to support the community and create a beautiful, welcoming space for everyone to enjoy. Come visit and see how they're growing something special for the Applegate Valley.

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Native garden in bloom after some rain.

Native plant gardening for pollinator-friendly gardens

BY MAYA BRIGGS

National Native Plant Month is coming up next month, and in honor of April—the new best month of the year—let's talk about the native plants that support the bees, butterflies, moths, flies, wasps, beetles, and hummingbirds of the southern Oregon bioregion. Native plant gardens are becoming increasingly important because they give our remaining native pollinators a place to live, grow, and thrive.

The home gardener can be an active force for ecological restoration from any location, context, or skill level. As the saying goes, "With great power comes great responsibility." But I prefer to think of it the other way around instead: "With great responsibility comes great power." In the past, water-intensive, monocultural, and unproductive grass lawns were the norm, but by adapting our mentalities and harnessing the positive influence we can have on our surroundings, we can give native pollinator-friendly gardens the spotlight. Native plants are bursting with the potential to impress you with their resilience, complexity, and beauty if you give them a chance to show you what they have in store. The key to planting native pollinator-friendly gardens is to start small, experiment, and remember to be patient! Good things come with time!

Tips to get you started

1. Choose where you want your garden plot. Start small with a three-by-six-foot area that gets six or more hours of sunlight. Of course, a bigger garden will allow you to include more native plants!

2. If you need to remove or smother the existing lawn and/or invasive vegetation present in your chosen area, one easy way is to sheet mulch: place cardboard on the surface of the grass, soak it with water, and then apply four to six inches of arborist wood chips on top. Let this sit for six months, preferably through the summer. You could also try solarizing with a plastic tarp for 12 months.

3. Start to plan your garden! Include "layers," from trees to grasses, plants that bloom from spring through late fall, and different shapes and sizes of flowers that all help to serve a diversity of pollinators. Be intentional about clumping the same plant species together. It's also important to choose host plants for caterpillars to feed on, ensuring the growth of beautiful moths and butterflies.

4. Buy native plants from your local nursery or greenhouses. Keep an eye out for Pollinator Project Rogue Valley's bi-annual native plant sale, which always has at least four native plant growers



Native bee on Idaho gumweed.

(including Klamath-Siskiyou Native Seeds) and offers the largest selection of plants native to the southern Oregon bioregion. The next sale is Sunday, April 27, 2025, from 10 am-2 pm.

5. Fall through early spring is the best time to plant natives so they are watered by rain as much as possible. Arrange your plants with consideration of sun and shade and be sure to leave enough room for the mature plant. Also, select plants with different seasonal blooms. To plant, dig holes twice as large as the pot the plant came in, remove the plant from its pot, loosen its roots, place it in the ground, fill in the sides, tamp the soil, and water. Water well through the first two summers.

6. Weed as needed (being mindful that some weeds benefit pollinators), and avoid using insecticides, herbicides, or fungicides, as they can seriously impact pollinator populations.

7. Each species of pollinator will interact with your garden differently, fulfilling its unique role in your own little ecosystem. Because 70 percent of native bee species nest in the ground, keep some areas unmulched, but expect many others to make shallow burrows under leaves or native grass.

8. Add your pollinator garden to the interactive Rogue Buzzway map (see our website at pollinatorprojectroguvalley.org) and help illustrate the power of collective action for our southern Oregon pollinators.

Additional resources

More resources are available from the Siskiyou Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Oregon at npsoregon.org/wp/si. And take a look at the Resources section for links, videos, and photos to inspire your pollinator garden: pollinatorprojectroguvalley.org/protect-pollinators.

Best of luck to you!

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Stop by Mama Bees Flower Farm in Grants Pass, pick your own bouquet of flowers, and enjoy the relaxing atmosphere.



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