Ivy is loathed by some, but it is one of the few plants for bees that aid survival of the late foragers. Pollination of ivy allows berries to develop, which feed a number of birds over the winter months, as well as providing excellent shelter. Research has shown that trees with ivy growing up them accommodate more wildlife than those without. Instead of assuming that all ivy must be cut away, it is better to be pragmatic about it. Investigate first whether it is really causing any damage. Most healthy trees can withstand at least some ivy growth before being cut back. The wildlife will appreciate it!

Common Heather (Calluna vulgaris)
Ivy
Mint (Mentha)
Oregano (Origanum)
Viburnum

So Why not Become a Beekeeper

Successful beekeeping depends on the beekeeper acquiring the skills and knowledge to handle bees in a safe and effective manner.

This can be gained by joining your local Beekeeping Association and attending classes.

Beginners Classes.
Theses classes will prepare you for the technical aspects of beekeeping.

Theory: Evening Classes in the Autumn held at The Nature Centre Park Slip. Bridgend

Practical Classes in late Spring held at Bryngarw House Bridgend.

We would strongly recommend you attend the practical classes before you buy any equipment. If beekeeping is not for you it may be an expensive mistake.

We have a small number of suits available for beginners using the apiary.

Interested: Contact:
Sue Verran, Secretary
Ty Mel, Maesteg Rd, Coytrahe.
Bridgend CF32 0EE
01656 729699
secretary@bridgendbeekeepers.co.uk

www.bridgendbeekeepers.co.uk
Due to variations in climate and conditions, flowering times may differ from region to region. This may also affect foraging, as well as the distribution of different bee species. For example, Italian strains of honey bees will forage on crocus flowers, but in very cool weather, may be deterred from foraging in the first place. Bumblebees, on the other hand, with their furry coats, can often be found foraging on cooler days. In fact, bumblebees are increasingly being seen to forage during the cool winter months, meaning that late and very early flowering plants are vital for bumblebees.

Barberry (Berberis) (Lamium)
Bluebell (Choose native varieties)
Bugle (Ajuga)
Cowslip (Choose native varieties)
Crocus
Daffodil
Dicentra
Flowering Currant (Ribes)
Genista
Gorse (Ulex)
Ground Ivy
Mahonia
Primrose (Primula vulgaris)
Pulmonaria (Lungwort)
Rosemary (Rosemarinus)
Snakeshead (Fritillaria meleagris)
Snowdrops (Galanthes) – single flowered varieties
Winter Heathers (Erica carnea)
Winter Honeysuckle (Lonicera fragrantissima, Lonicera purpusii)

During the Spring and Summer, all types of bees (and other pollinating insects) are rearing their broods. A typical honey bee colony may consist of around 50,000 to 60,000 workers, as well as larvae to feed. Bumblebee colonies may be fragile - fewer than half survive, and solitary bees are in need of undisturbed nesting sites, as food is gathered for storing in egg cells to feed newly developing larvae. Plenty of bee friendly plants are therefore vital during the Spring and summer to ensure survival of the colony.

Allium
Bistort
Borage officinalis
Thyme
Bugle (Ajuga)
Campanula
Chives
Columbine (Aquilegia)
Comfrey (Malus)
Crane's-bill (Geranium)
Crocus
Forget-me-not (Myosotis) - pictured above
Foxglove (Digitalis)
Hebe
Honey Suckle (Lonicera)
Lesser Celandine (Ranunculus acris)
Lupin (Lupinus)
Muscari
Passion Flower (Passiflora)
Penstemon
Poppy (Papaver)
Rosa rugosa
Salvia
Sea Holly (Eryngium)
Sweet pea (Lathyrus)

During the late summer and autumn, these plants will continue to feed late developing broods, as well as those bees that have already developed into working adults. Note that Himalayan balsam) is a controversial plant in the UK, where it is not native, however, pollinators adore it for the ample nectar it provides. It is thought that it may be invasive, but please see my page about native versus non-native plants for further information.

On the other hand, Scorpion Weed is also not native to the UK, but many do enjoy growing it in the garden. It also attracts bees and other pollinators. Please grow cornflowers, solidago, lavender and scabious in your garden. They are great bee attracting plants.

Bergamot
Bergenia
Bugle (Ajuga)
Cornflower
Golden Rod (Solidago)
Hellebores
Himalayan Balsam (Impatiens)
Hollyhock
Lavender
Nasturtium (Tropaeolum majus)
Nepeta (Catmint)
Red Hot Poker (Kniphofia)
Salvia

Scabious
Scorpion Weed (Phacelia tanacetifolia)
Sedum
Snapdragon (Antirrhinum)
Sunflower
Verbascum
Veronica
Watermint