



# Alamosa Landscapes

## Save the Bees with Flowers - P 3

by Marilyn Loser

2020 May 20

In parts one and two I discussed appropriate flowers to plant for bees in Alamosa from the first of the season through July. I also wrote about what bees need and what plants might do well if you don't want bees. In this installment I'll discuss bee friendly flowers for August through the end of the season. Bees need flowers throughout the growing season. I'm writing information on late summer/fall flowers in May so folks have time to plant for fall bloom!

In our garden, we have fewer new blooming flowers specimens in late summer/early fall than in earlier season months. So, I will first list flowers that may start in late July, depending on the year, but are at their height in August or later. Then, I'll discuss flowers that continue to bloom throughout the late season that I didn't mention earlier.

I love to see tall and medium height annual sunflowers (*Helianthus* species) show their glory during this season. I haven't planted new seeds in the last few years, so mine are yellow that reseed from previous years. They end up being mostly 3 – 4 ½ ft. tall and I pull them out where ever I don't want them. If you want tall, big sunflowers in various hues, plant new seeds. While bee friendly, the birds really love sunflowers, also.

I always look forward to the pink blooms on autumn joy sedum (*Sedum telephium* 'autumn joy'). Unlike many other sedums, the plants are erect. My favorite description of them by a friend's children is pink broccoli!

Fall is the time for perennial tall purple asters (*Aster* ?). Mine tend to bloom from late August until the first hard frost. They tend to be from 1 – 2 ft. tall. A lovely vase cutting flower for that last bouquet of the season! Some years I also see a bit of re-blooming short, white alpine asters (*Aster* ?) – these were given to me so I don't know the species.

Yellow Maximilian daisies (*Helianthus maximiliani* -- also called Santa Fe daisies in this part of the world) are another tall fall bloom. I love these at the back of the garden border – if we have a windy fall I do stake the plants that can grow from 3-4 ft. tall depending on weather conditions. I just realized I don't have them on the AlamosaFlowers.net website! The rest of the flowers listed here are on the website and all photos were taken in our Alamosa garden.

Fall really is the time for purple and yellow blooms. Purple sea holly (*Eryngium*) and blue mist spirea

(*Caryopteris x clandonensis*) actually start blooming in our garden in late July, but come into their glory in August and often stay until the first hard freeze. They are both bee friendly. Sea holly is a type of thistle with flowers smaller than those of the globe thistle. It grows about 1- 1 ½ ft. in our garden now. It has persisted for at least 20 years without adding additional plants. Also, it works well in dried arrangements.

I've had to replace several blue mist spireas over the years as they tend to 'not return' after several years – I have no idea why. However, I really like them as they are easy care while they exist.

I have compact, low, white buckwheat perennial (*Pagopyrum* ?) that is bee friendly and has persisted for at least 18 years. It is still only about 2 x 2 ft. and 10 in. high at the edge of a rock garden. I love it, but do not remember where I got it! I do recommend it as it has made it through some tough drought years.

I'm also mentioning two flowers that are wonderful in August that I couldn't verify whether they are bee friendly or not. However, I love them so am including them here. Sea Lavender (*Limonium latifolium*) is a light feathery purple perennial that does well in part shade. It has large leaves so does well under our cottonwood tree and I love the large leaves when it isn't blooming. We have a white hydrangea (*Hydrangea arborescens* 'Annabelle'), planted in 2007, that I keep in one of our wetter beds. It has large white blooms that persist for a month. It only failed to bloom one year.

Flowers that continue to bloom in the late season or come into their height during the late season include yellow Gloriosa daisies (*Rudbeckia hirta* - last flowers to bloom in our sunny sidewalk garden), lavender Russian sage (*Perovskia atriplicifolia*), and purple butterfly delphinium (*Delphinium grandiflorum* 'blue butterfly' -- also called perennial larkspur).

"When you take a flower in your hand and really look at it, it's your world for the moment." Georgia O'Keefe