

Bee Balm

A perennial-favorite native to North America, **bee balm** (*Monarda* spp.), also called wild bergamot, is beloved in flower beds for its display of beautiful blooms of red, pink, purple or white in mid- to late summer. The plants bear fragrant foliage, too.



About Bee Balm

In the garden, its most frequent visitors are hummingbirds, bees, butterflies, and moths.

These visitors have the long tongues required to reach the tubular flowers' nectar. Bee balm is a favorite plant

for bumblebees especially. Bumblebees and a few other insects are too big to get into some of the smaller tubular flowers of some bee balms, so the insects practice something called “nectar robbing.” The insects punch a tiny hole at the base of the flower to access the nectar, bypassing the flower’s pollen and “robbing” it of its nectar.

Bee balm plants prefer moist, rich soil, and a sunny location. Bee balm will tolerate shade, particularly in hot-summer areas. Plant it in any protected spot that would benefit from a bright shot of color. Most varieties of the bee balm plant are between 2 1/2 feet to 4 feet (76 cm. – 1 m.) tall, but there are also dwarf varieties less than 10 inches (25.5 cm.) high. Dwarf varieties are excellent for container gardens or up front in your flower border where you can appreciate the shaggy, tubular blooms of the bee balm flower.