

Native Plants for Wild Bee Conservation

Fact Sheet: Silverleaf Phacelia, Silverleaf Scorpion Weed

Scientific name: *Phacelia hastata* Douglas ex Lehm.



Silverleaf phacelia 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: Hydrophyllaceae

Life cycle: perennial/biennial

Growth habit: forb/herb

Flower color: light purple, lavender

Flower shape: bell-shaped flowers in groups that form tight coils

Foliage: dull gray-green to silvery, hairy, oval to lance-shaped leaves

Height: 6-24 inches

Bloom period: May-July

Habitat: Grows in a variety of environments throughout its range including meadows, grasslands, prairies, woodlands, scrub, scree slopes, rocky/sandy areas, and disturbed sites. Found from low to high elevations.

Growing conditions: full to part sun; dry sandy or gravelly soils; drought tolerant once established.

Establishment: Seed requires scarification with sand paper to help break dormancy. For this project, we grew plants from seed in the greenhouse and transplanted them to the field as plugs in Spring. Plants flowered some during the year they were planted, and those that survived winter flowered abundantly the following year. Plants behaved more like biennials and died after their second year, but because plants readily self-seeded, there were always plants in bloom. Overwintering success was low to high depending on the farm. Seed collecting was very difficult, due to indeterminate ripening combined with plant habit.

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

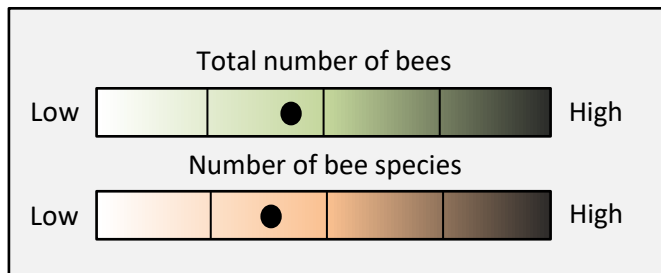


Photo: C.M. Delphia

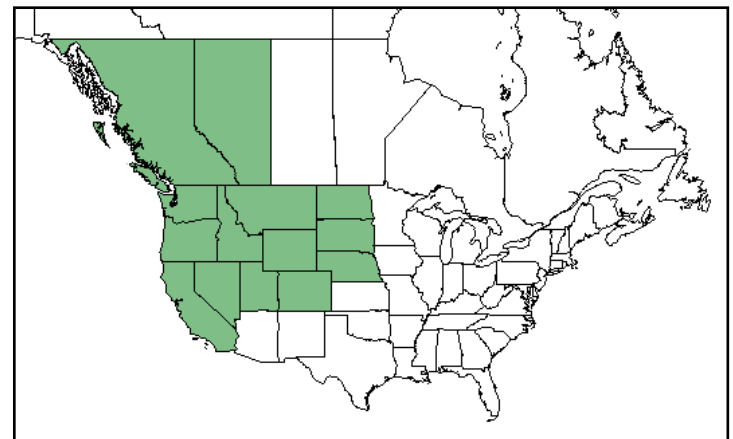


Photo: C.M. Delphia

Bee visitation: Bumble bees, digger bees, medium and small mining bees, green sweat bees, banded sweat bees, small dark sweat bees, small carpenter bees, wool-carder bees, cellophane bees, mason bees, leafcutting bees, resin bees, masked bees, and cuckoo bees.



Relative attractiveness of *P. hastata* across farms over 2 years.



Phacelia hastata distribution from USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database