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# Weird And Wonderful Plants For Pollinators: Wild Quinine

By Justin Wheeler on 10. May 2018

In celebration of [National Wildflower Week](#), we're highlighting some of our favorite "weird and wonderful" plants for pollinators. You can find the best plants for pollinators anytime with our [plant lists](#).

## Wild Quinine

Also known as wild feverfew, wild quinine (*Parthenium integrifolium*) has a long history of medicinal use by Native Americans and the US Army. During World War I, wild quinine was used as a substitute for the bark of the Cinchona tree—as the active ingredient of quinine used to treat malaria.

The plant seems to have no trouble with heat—blooming June through September in hot, sunny locations. While the plant is not especially showy, the tiny white clusters of flowers attract nearly every walk of life. The plant is especially valuable for its support of native bees, attracting sweat bees (*Halictus*, *Lassioglossum*, and *Agapostemon*), mining bees (*Andrena*), small carpenter bees (*Ceratina*) and yellow-faced bees (*Hylaeus*) just to name a few.

Wild quinine is a fly favorite, attracting soldier flies (*Stratiomys* and *Odontomyia*), Syrphid flies (*Syrphidae*), Tachnid flies (*Tachnidae*), and others. Far from the common housefly, these flies are both pollinators and predators. In their larval form, many of these flies are valuable pest-eating insects.



The dainty white flowers of wild quinine are an excellent landing pad for butterflies, bees, wasps, and flies— attracting a diverse mix of pollinators. (Photo: Frank Mayfield / Flickr.com)



In her book *Pollinators of Native Plants*, author Heather Holm devotes three pages to the unusual diversity of floral visitors to wild quinine, including the grapeleaf skeletonizer moth (*Harrisina americana*), a day-flying moth that visits wild quinine in late spring for nectar. (Photo: acryptozoo / Flickr.com)

As an ornamental, wild quinine may be overlooked in favor of showier plants—its slender habit and tiny bright white flowers make it easy to mix in as “filler” among other plants like baby’s breath in a bouquet. The plant mixes especially well with orange butterflyweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*). The two plants will grow without competing with one another and look marvelous when in bloom together.





Wild quinine was used extensively as part of the plantings on the High Line in New York—which makes sense

