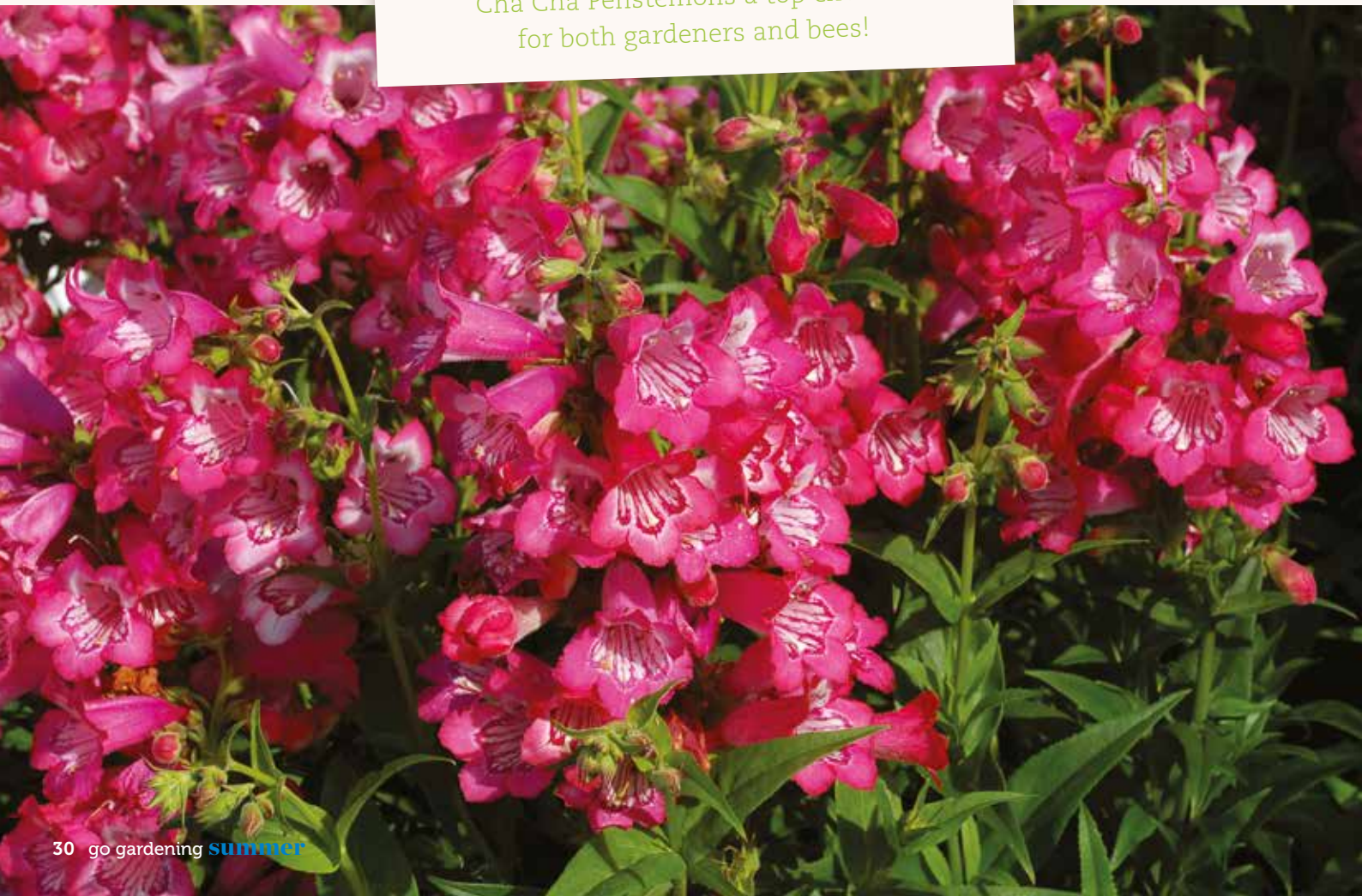




Rich colours, special markings and an extra long flowering season make Cha Cha Penstemons a top choice - for both gardeners and bees!



CREATING A BUZZ

Summer days evoke the warm sun and the drowsy foraging of contented bees amongst the gentle drifts of summer flowers. Bell-shaped flowers are particularly enticing to bees.

A flower garden is one of the best ways to help out our vitally important bees. Many annuals and perennials are good food sources but bees are particularly attracted to certain colours and shapes of flower.

Blues, mauves and yellows are top of the bee's list as are cup or bell shaped blooms. Some flowers produce nectar guides, which are strong patterns to draw the bee in to the 'prize' of nectar or pollen, as seen in **Penstemons 'Strawberry Taffy'** and **'CHA CHA Pink'**. The reward for the plant is pollination serving a vital reproductive function, while bees and other important insects depend on nature's pantry to survive and thrive.

Creating diversity of food sources by planting perennials which flower in different seasons is a practical way to help nurture a bee population. Spring is rich with options including **Campanula**, **Scabiosa**, **Lavender** and **Alstroemeria**. Summer **Nepeta** and **Sedums** will be alive with

bees foraging, while the Autumn offers fruit tree blossom but also **Rudbeckia** and **Echinacea** are valued for bees.

Winter can be difficult and while there are fewer bees around it's good to ensure a supply of pollen when the wildlife wakes up, ideal are wallflowers and hellebores.

Penstemons deserve a special mention as the newer varieties will flower from spring right through summer and into late autumn, packing a lot of flower power if your garden space is limited. The new and compact

'CHA CHA' series are a great compact option with masses of blue or pink bell flowers with those distinctive nectar guides to help direct the bee traffic. Gardeners too get to enjoy the lovely spectacle of a summer garden in full and glorious flower.



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Pictured anti clockwise from top left: **Penstemon CHA CHA Purple**, **Penstemon CHA CHA pink**, **Bumble Bee feeding**, **Penstemon 'Strawberry Taffy'** showing distinctive Nectar Guide patteration.

