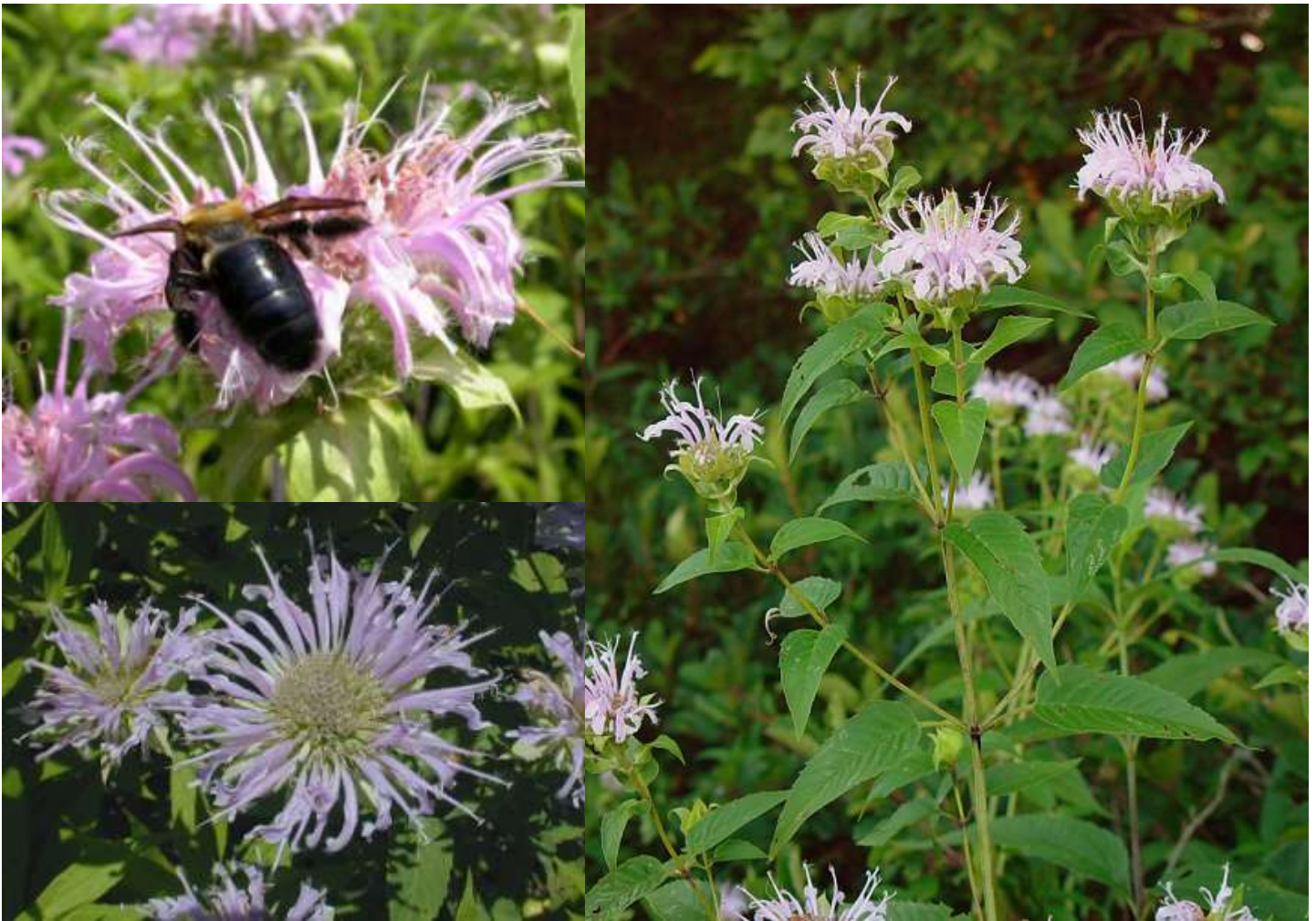


# Wild Bergamot: *Monarda fistulosa*



**Cultivation:** The preference is full or partial sun, and moist to slightly dry conditions. Growth is more luxuriant in a moist rich loam, although this can cause the plant to flop around as the growing season progresses. Under drought conditions, the lower leaves will turn yellow and drop off the stems; this reaction is normal. The lower leaves often develop powdery mildew, particularly when the weather is rainy. While this plant is easy to grow, it often becomes rather dilapidated in appearance as the growing season progresses because of these problems. This plant often spreads aggressively. The rhizomes can survive earth-moving and bulldozing operations, and send up plants in unexpected places. Some local populations may be plants that have escaped cultivation.

**Plant Structure:** This native perennial plant is 2½–4' tall, branching frequently in the upper half. These color variations are in part a response to environmental conditions. The hairless leaves are up to 4" long and 2" across, and have serrated margins. They exude an oregano scent. At the top of major stems are rounded heads of flowers about 1-3" across. Each flower is lavender or pink, and about 1" long, with an irregular shape. The blooming period occurs during mid-summer and lasts about 1 month. The root system consists of deep, strongly branched roots, and shallow rhizomes that are responsible for the vegetative spread of the plant. These rhizomes typically send up multiple leafy stems in a tight cluster, giving Wild Bergamot a bushy appearance.