

A Guide to Becoming Pollinator Friendly Letterkenny



BIODIVERSITY IN THE GARDEN



Our wild bees, butterflies and other insects play a vital role in pollinating our wild flowers, trees, fruit and vegetables. In recent times due to urban development and changes in farming, there has been a dramatic decline in suitable habitats as well as less food being available for them. Everyone needs to play their part no matter how small to create pollinator-friendly landscapes to protect our pollinators and ensure their survival.

*Did You Know
In Ireland we have 99 species
of bee - 1 Honeybee Species,
21 Bumblebee species & 77 solitary
bee species? Since the 1980s,
over 50% of all these species have
undergone huge declines and
one-third is now threatened
with extinction.*

HOW YOU CAN HELP?

Your garden (even if it's just a window box) can help. By gardening in a particular way we can provide some of the habitats and food they need.

FLOWERS

Grow as many varieties as possible of flowers and flowering plants to ensure colour from spring through into autumn. Not only do they look beautiful and bring colour and scent into your garden, they provide food for many insects. Choose native species, if possible.



Limit or no use of pesticides:

Using pesticides including weed killers will not only repel or kill beneficial insects already living in your garden and the natural balance of a local ecosystem. Try making your own weed killer or weed by hand. Avoid using pesticides to eliminate pests such as slugs. Use other methods such as old recycled plastic bottles over young plants; coarse matting, eggshells, coarse grit or seaweed around small plants, or set beer traps to catch the slugs.

RELAX ABOUT WEEDS



Plants such as nettles, daisies and buttercups are important sources of food for many insects, including butterflies and moths. They flower for a long time, whatever the weather providing food when other sources might be absent.

LET THE GRASS GROW

Having large paved areas can reduce the number of wild bees and native birds in your garden.

Many lawns are overly manicured and leave very little support for birds and other wildlife. Little changes such as letting the dandelions and clover grow can make a difference.



Mowing less often and outside peak flowering times can make a big difference for plants and pollinators.

Long grass is one of the rarest garden habitats. By leaving an uncut corner letting some or all of your lawn grow you will make space for many plant

and insect species, including butterflies and wildflowers. Leave the grass long over winter and cut it again in the spring.



ENCOURAGE BIRDS

Birds are an important part of garden ecosystems. Installing bird boxes, a bird bath or nest box can make sure they thrive. Put your bird box up high in a sheltered site. In spring, provide protein-rich feed, such as fat balls. Seeds are best in the winter. If cats are around place your feeder near a dense bush to provide birds with cover.

CREATE A POOL

Even a tiny one will be beneficial.

Ensure that there is a gradual slope on one side, so that mammals, birds and insects can drink and wash safely.

Grow water plants in the pond water and wet ground on one edge, so that the animals have somewhere to hide.



GROW CLIMBERS

Plant climbing clematis, jasmine and roses. Species like Ivy, Pyracantha and honeysuckle which produce fruit are even better.

CREATE PLACES FOR CREATURES

Piles of rocks, twigs and rotting wood create shelter for all sorts of important insects, such as beetles and spiders. Consider adding a bee hotel or an insect house to your garden.

COMPOST

Create a space for a compost heap or bin. Making and using your own will naturally enrich your soil. It will also provide a habitat for worms, woodlice and many other insects.

TREES

Plant native species if possible in your garden and hedges such as Hazel, Ash and Holly. Did you know that the flowers of the sycamore tree are an important source of nectar for bees?



This leaflet was written by Scouts Emma Carr & Cáolan Boyle, First Letterkenny Scout Group, 5th Donegal, Errigal County. All photographs were taken in Letterkenny. Sponsored by Browne Printers Ltd as part of their Green Company Initiative.



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