

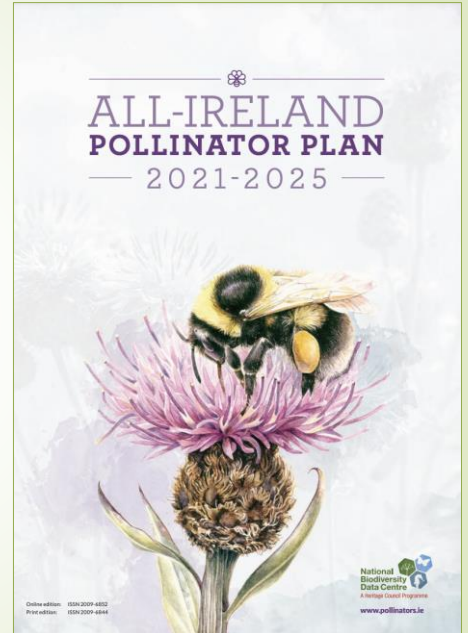
# Actions for Pollinators

Sligo Communities Biodiversity Training: Session 2/6

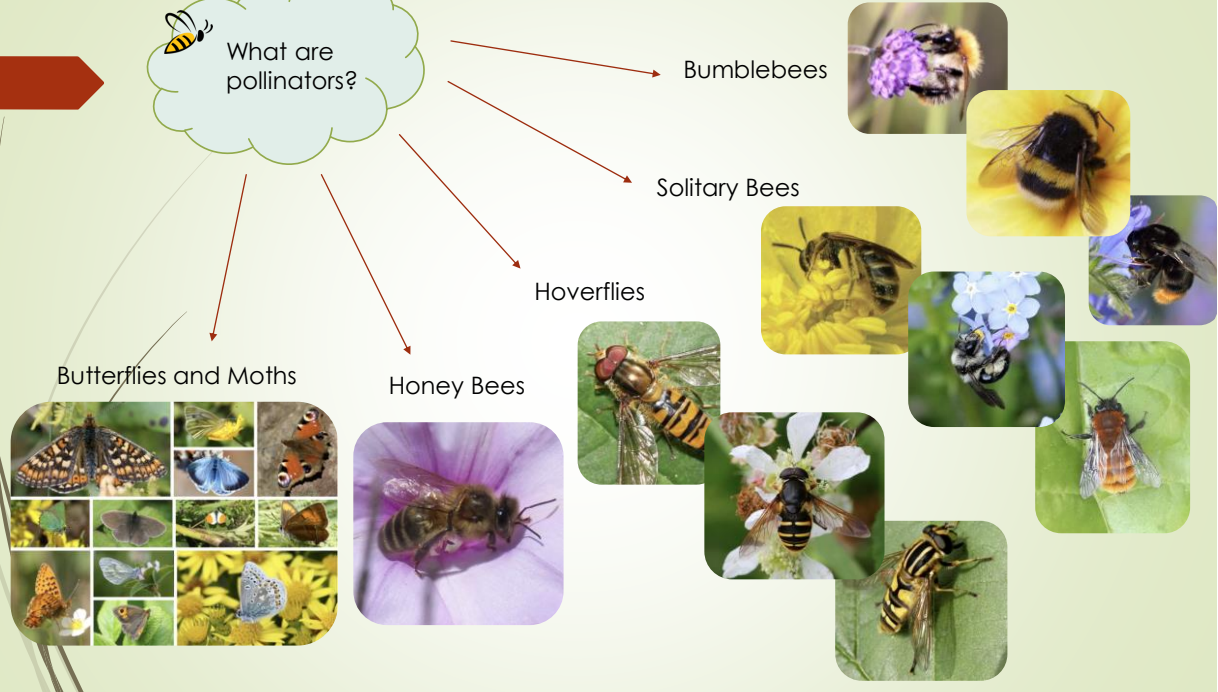
To inform Sligo communities about wildlife and habitats in their areas and how they can excite and inspire action to benefit them.



Emmeline Cosnett, Woodrow Sustainable Solutions Ltd.



## What are pollinators?



Why do we need to help our pollinators?



**78%** of our wild plants benefit from insect pollination

More wild bees = more wild plants

more insects invertebrates, fruits & seeds

supports more birds and mammals

Actions you take to help pollinators will also benefit all types of biodiversity, including birds, bats and bugs in Ireland

One third of our 97 wild bee species are threatened with extinction in Ireland. We are also seeing declines in honeybee numbers.

Bees are declining because we've drastically reduced the areas where they can nest and the amount of food our landscape provides for them.

We've also inadvertently introduced pests and diseases that negatively impact their health, and we subject them to levels of pesticides that make it difficult for them to complete their life cycles.

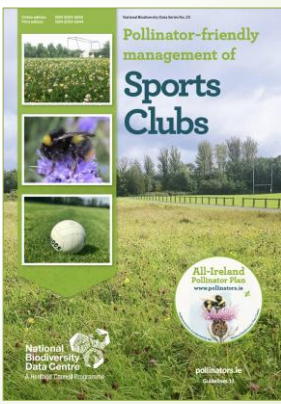
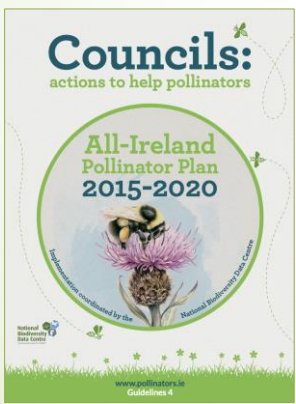
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBIKqFywxTY&t=1s>



What can we do to help?

If we want pollinators to be available to pollinate our crops and wild plants for future generations we need to manage the landscape in a more sustainable way and create a joined-up network of diverse and flower rich habitats.

It requires all of us to help from farmers to local authorities, to schools, gardeners and local businesses.



 Local Community Actions

**ACTION**  
1. Identify and protect existing areas that are good for pollinators



2. Reduce the frequency of mowing of grassy areas



3. Create a wildflower meadow or even a short flowering '6-week meadow'



 Local Community Actions

**ACTION**  
4. Let the Dandelions bloom! – carry out the first grass cut of the year in April after the first flush of Dandelions, but before they set seed. Dandelions are a vital food source for bees in spring.



6. Create wild pollinator nesting habitat: hedgerows, earth banks and hotels

 5. Pollinator –friendly planting



7. Raise public awareness of pollinators within the local area



## Sports Club Actions

With approximately 15,000 sports clubs across the island, clubs can play a vital role in conservation of our biodiversity if managed in a pollinator-friendly way. Introducing pollinator-friendly management across sports clubs would create an entire network of safe places for bees and other insects across the landscape. The positive impact this could have is enormous.



Reduced mowing on banks beside pitches at Roger Casement's GAC, Co. Antrim

## 5 ways to make Sports Clubs biodiversity-friendly:

- 1. Manage some off-pitch grass for pollinators**  
 Following a pollinator-friendly grass management plan on some off-pitch areas will create a mosaic of grass heights to encourage the growth of wildflowers, including natural short-flowering meadows and long-flowering meadow areas.  
 ACTION 1: Create short-flowering meadows by mowing every 4 to 6 weeks.  
 ACTION 2: Manage some areas as natural long-flowering meadows
- 2. Manage existing native hedgerows for biodiversity**  
 Many sports clubs are surrounded by native hedgerows, which can be managed so that they flower to provide food for pollinators. This management means less maintenance and makes these hedgerows vital to the survival of pollinators, providing food, shelter and ecological corridors.  
 ACTION 3: Manage native hedgerows around club so that they flower each year
- 3. Plant biodiversity-friendly trees, shrubs and flowers**  
 Planting additional pollinator-friendly trees, shrubs, perennials and bulbs around the grounds provides vital sources of food, particularly in spring and autumn.  
 ACTION 4: Plant biodiversity-friendly trees around the club grounds  
 ACTION 5: Plant a new native hedgerow  
 ACTION 6: Make flower beds and containers pollinator friendly
- 4. Reduce use of herbicides**  
 Adopt a pollinator-friendly pesticide code. Reducing the use of herbicides will mean more wildflowers for pollinators to feed on.  
 ACTION 7: Consider strimming instead of spraying around fencing, goals and lights. Avoid spraying the base of trees or hedgerows.
- 5. Provide nesting places for wild bees**  
 Wild pollinators need safe places where they can breed: such as the base of hedgerows, bare earth banks, drilled wood and bee hotels.  
 ACTION 8: Provide safe nesting sites for Bumblebees  
 ACTION 9: Provide safe nesting sites for mining solitary bees  
 ACTION 10: Provide safe nesting sites for cavity-nesting solitary bees



You can register what actions you have taken at your club on our online mapping system: [pollinators.biodiversityireland.ie](http://pollinators.biodiversityireland.ie)

### Reduced mowing provides free superfoods for pollinators:



Dandelion  
Mar-April\*

\*Peak flowering season



Clovers  
May-July



Bird's-foot-trefoil  
Jul-Aug

\*3-6 week flowering



We may not recognise this as a wildflower meadow but this type of growth, with clovers and Bird's-foot-trefoil provides lots of food for pollinators. Where you are reducing mowing, the diversity of wildflowers will increase with time. It's very important to always remove cuttings to reduce soil fertility.



**Note:** Fertilisers promote grass and weed growth. Do not use them on a site where you want wildflowers to grow (wildflowers grow best in infertile soils). Bear in mind that your site may also be experiencing fertiliser run-off from adjacent areas.



Unmown areas left for nature, near wetlands/waterways can act as buffers against overland run-off.



- Velvetleaf
- Queen's Daisy
- Scab-worm
- Dandelion
- Bird's-foot-trefoil
- Wormwood
- Sailfin
- Clover
- Dwarf's Bit Scabious

Look around your club grounds to see if there are areas suitable for reducing mowing, such as here, behind pitches and in unused corners.



There may be large areas behind goalposts or along fence lines that could be mowed every four to six weeks to maintain short-flowering meadows.


During lockdown due to COVID-19, reduced mowing at St. Ita's GAA in Youghal, Co. Cork, resulted in a profusion of thousands of pyramidal orchids, showing the potential for rare plants to grow if we simply reduce mowing.




© Dominic McGrath



## Sports Club Actions

 Council Actions

→ providing food, shelter and safety for pollinators 

**1. Protect what you have**

- Manage and restore semi-natural habitats and their native plants
- Identify and protect existing sources of food and shelter for pollinators on general council land

**ACTION**

**2. Alter frequency of mowing**



- Identify at least 10 locations that are mown under a pollinator friendly regime (5 cut & lifts per year)
- Aim to create at least 5 meadows (one cut & lift per year)
- Identify at least 10 flagship roadside verges that are managed to be pollinator friendly (one cut & lift per year)
- Introduce a layered mowing approach to other roadside verges


**ACTION**

**3. Pollinator friendly planting**

- Plant a native perennial wildflower meadow
- Plant a native hedgerow
- Replace grass with a dense clover sward
- For future ornamental tree planting select from pollinator friendly species


**ACTION**

 Council Actions

**4. Provide nesting habitats**

- Manage hedgerows for pollinators
- Bare earth/sand banks for wild pollinator nesting
- Holes in wood or concrete for wild pollinator nesting
- Install a bee hotel




**5. Reduce use of pesticides**

- To minimise negative impacts on pollinators it is important that pesticides are used sustainably. This means they should only be used when necessary, and efforts should be made to minimise their impact on non-target species like bees.
- Pesticides should always be applied exactly according to manufacturer guidelines

**6. Raise awareness**

- Councils can play a leading role through their influencing power and ability to reach elected representatives and rate payers.
- Signage, funding, building pollinator actions into existing frameworks

**ACTION**



## Council Actions




### A Protect what you have

The easiest and most important thing you can do is identify and protect existing areas that are already good for pollinators

- 1 Manage and restore semi-natural habitats and their native plants
- 2 Identify and protect existing sources of food and shelter for pollinators on general council land

### B Alter the frequency of mowing

Changing the frequency of mowing allows wildflowers (food) to flower among the longer grass. This is the most cost-effective way to provide food for pollinators

- 3 Identify at least 10 locations that are mown under a pollinator friendly regime (5 cut & lifts per year)
- 4 Aim to create at least 5 meadows (one cut & lift per year)
- 5 Identify at least 10 flagship roadside verges that are managed to be pollinator friendly (one cut & lift per year)
- 6 Introduce a layered mowing approach to other roadside verges

### C Pollinator friendly planting

Take the actions below to ensure you have flowers blooming that can provide food for pollinators from March-October

- 7 Plant a native perennial wildflower meadow
- 8 Plant a native hedgerow
- 9 Replace grass with a dense clover sward
- 10 For future ornamental tree planting select from pollinator friendly species



Pollinator friendly roadside verges in NI: Don't Mow, Let it Grow



Pollinator friendly containers - Maynooth

### D Provide nesting habitats

In addition to food, wild pollinators need safe places to live.

- 11 For new works ensure 75% of ornamental planting is pollinator friendly
- 12 In landscape/ornamental maintenance planting try to select from the pollinator friendly planting code
- 13 Make some urban planters pollinator friendly
- 14 Make some green roundabouts pollinator friendly
- 15 Manage hedgerows for pollinators
- 16 Bare earth/land banks for wild pollinator nesting
- 17 Holes in wood or concrete for wild pollinator nesting
- 18 Install a bee hotel

### E Reduce use of pesticides

Pesticides include insecticides, fungicides and herbicides, all of which can be harmful to pollinators.


- 19 Reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides (insecticides, insecticides & fungicides)
- 20 Adopt the pollinator friendly pesticide code

**Key**

- Costs of each action range from zero/low savings (1) to most expensive (5)
- Effort required to carry out each action indicated by the number of spaces (1)
- Our FAVOURITE actions are marked with a bee (B)

**National Biodiversity Data Centre**

## What to plant?




**• Perennial**

**• Native**

**• Diverse**

**DON'T MOW, LET IT GROW!**



### Examples of important native plants for pollinators

Trees & Shrubs	Wildflowers				
Blackthorn Bramble Broom Crab apple Elder Gorse Guelder Rose Hawthorn Hazel Honeysuckle Ivy Rowan Whitebeam Wild Cherry Wild Privet Wild Rose Willow	Bird-foot-trefoil Bugle Cowslip Creeping buttercup Dandelion Germander speedwell Harebell Red clover Selfheal Tormentil White clover Wild Thyme	Agrimony Autumn hawkbit Cat's ear Creeping thistle Devil's Bit Scabious Field Scabious Goldenrod Knapweed Meadow buttercup Meadow Willowherb Vetchling Ox-eye daisy Spear thistle Vetch Wild carrot Wild marjoram Yarrow Yellow rattle	Bluebell Brassica Dead nettles Fogglow Herb Robert Hogweed Lady's Bedstraw Lesser celandine Weld Ramsoms Red campion Willowherb Woundworts Vetches Wild strawberry	Charlock Coltsfoot Deadnettle Forget me not Geranium Hawksbeard Mullein Mustard Poppy Red bartsia Speedwells Willowherb Vetch	Angelica Bisort Bogbean Crowfoot Cuckoo flower Meadowsweet Fleabane Purple Loosestrife Marsh marigold Mint Ragged Robin Valerian Willowherb Woundwort
<b>Woodland, Hedgerow</b>	<b>Short grass meadows</b>	<b>Long grass meadows</b>	<b>Hedges, borders, woodland edge</b>	<b>Disturbed ground</b>	<b>Ponds, wetlands</b>

**LOW MAINTENANCE OR NO MAINTENANCE IS THE BEST POLICY**

Other semi-natural habitats (heaths, dunes, bog) are also rich in plants and provide pollinators with a diverse diet.

**What to plant?**

**Perennial plants:**  
Helleborus (Feb-March)

**Perennial plants:**  
Perennial plants are generally better sources of pollen and nectar than annuals. They are also cost effective as they grow and flourish over the following years.

**Stachys** (June-Sept)  
e.g. *Stachys officinalis* 'Hummelo'

**Trees/shrubs:**  
Berberis (April-May)  
Broom (March-April)  
Ceanothus (April-Sept)  
Cotoneaster (May-Aug)  
Deutzia (June-July)  
Firethorn (May-June)  
Forsythia (March-April)  
Hebe (June-Oct)  
Horse chestnut (May-June)

**Herbs:**  
Basil (July-Sept)  
Borage (April-Oct)  
Lavender (June-Aug)  
Oregano (June-Aug)  
Rosemary (April-June)  
Sage (June-Aug)  
Thyme (May-Aug)

**Fruit trees/bushes:**  
Apple (April-May)  
Cherry (April-May)  
Currants (April-May)  
Plum (April-May)  
Raspberry (June-Aug)

Traditional annual bedding plants like Geraniums, Begonias, Busy Lizzy, Petunias, Polyanthus or Salvia splendens have virtually no pollen and nectar and are of little value to pollinators. If you are using annuals you should try to select scented, single-flowered varieties. The block planting of these can be an excellent source of food for pollinators.

The All Ireland Pollinator Guide have lists of pollinator friendly trees, shrubs, climbers, perennials, annuals and bulbs. Please note that these are not exhaustive lists. The best guide is to observe what the bees themselves are feeding on in parks/gardens and to increase the amount of these plants.

e.g. *Salvia nemorosa* 'Caradonna', 'May Night', 'East Friesland'  
**Scabious** (June-Sept)  
e.g. *Scabious atropurpurea* varieties

**Info Box:**  
Bumblebees are particularly attracted to pollen and/or nectar rich plants in the blue-purple colour range

**Clematis** (April-May)

**Borage** (April-Oct)

**What to plant?**

Alter the frequency of mowing of grassy areas to allow more native plants to flower

ACTION

- Consult, communicate and inform the local community where possible
- Signage can be used to identify areas as deliberate

**DON'T MOW, LET IT GROW!**

Arna Bhaistíú don bhFiadhúra Managed for Wildlife

**Prioritise native plants**

For pollinators, it is important to prioritise the management and restoration of native plants over ornamental varieties. An estimated 78% of our native flowering plants require insect pollination. In return, they provide those pollinators with food (nectar and pollen) throughout the year. This means those insects will be there when we need them to pollinate our crops. Increasing the number of native flowers and trees that occur on council land not only provides food for pollinators, it creates a colourful and dynamic landscape that is pleasant to live in or to visit.

**Use stock of local provenance**

Often increasing or restoring native plants occurs through changes to site management. Although this is a slower process, it is cheaper and more sustainable as only plants that should naturally occur there will survive and thrive.

In areas where you can enhance native species by deliberate planting, it is important to use stock or seed of local provenance. This means that it is sourced locally and is adapted to the local climate and soil conditions. Many of our wild pollinators have evolved to emerge from hibernation in the short window when our native species are in flower. If you buy stock (e.g. Hawthorn) from central Europe there can be a three week difference in the flowering times compared to those sourced locally. Local provenance seed or stock may be more expensive, however the benefits greatly outweigh any additional initial costs.

Wildflowers with Bramble and Ivy - Tipperary County Council

**Info Box:**  
Wildflower seed bought from elsewhere (e.g., southern England) will not be adapted to our climate and soil conditions. It also creates a risk of genetic pollution to our native wildflower populations.

What to plant?



# Calendar of Bee Plants

March, April, May	June, July, August	Sept, Oct, Nov	Dec, Jan, Feb
Gorse	White Clover	Ivy	Winter Flowering Heather
Willow	Blackberry	Hypericum	Snowdrops
Dandelion	Phacelia	Heather	Hellebores
Sycamore	Rosebay Willow Herb	Teasel	Willow
Hawthorn	Knapweed	Strawberry Tree	Crocus
Borage	Bell Heather	Michaelmas Daisy	Gorse
Gooseberry	Borage	Snowberry	Hazel
Flowering Currant	Field Beans	Fuchsia	Winter Heliotrope
Hawthorn	Lime	Water Balsam	Cornelian Cherry
Horse chestnut	Cotoneaster		Elm
Rosemary	Cornflower		Winter Aconite
Mahonia	Sunflower		
Wallflower	Lavender		
Holly	Buddleia		
Limnanthes	Poppy		

*Note: some cross overs from month to month*

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Hedgerows for pollinators

Good quality hedgerows provide the four essential needs of pollinators:

- Sources of pollen and nectar for food
- Places to breed
- Places to overwinter
- Corridors and pathways to travel across the landscape

Most agricultural crops that require pollinators only provide a food source for a few weeks – diverse hedgerows and flower-rich verges can provide food over a much longer period to fill the hungry gaps

## New hedgerows for Pollinators

### Planting a diverse range of species is key

Many common and uncommon hedgerow species will provide food for pollinators. The following is a list of some native hedgerow species that are insect-pollinated with their approximate period for blossoming – this can be affected by a number of factors such as local climate and altitude.

Species	Blossoming Period
Willow	March - April
Blackthorn	March - April
Wild Cherry	April - May
Crab apple	April - May
Rowan	April - May
Bird Cherry	April - May
Whitebeam	May - June
Spindle	May - June
Whitethorn/Hawthorn	May - June
Guellder Rose	May - July
Elder	June

Shrubs like gorse and climbers like wild rose, honeysuckle and brambles also provide food and habitat for pollinators. Hedgerow species need to be suitable for their environment (soil and climate) and complementary to each other – in some situations some species can become dominant and push out less vigorous species. Try and select a suitable mix that will provide blossom throughout the season. Be sure to source species of native (preferably local) provenance.

### Ensure good connectivity between hedgerows and other natural and semi-natural habitats

If you can link in your new hedge with other natural and semi-natural habitats in your area then this will make it easier for pollinators to get to and from your new hedge safely and will complement the general ecology of the area. Remember that areas of scrub are also important sources of food for pollinators.







Hedgerows for pollinators

**Hedgerow management to encourage flowering:**

- Where possible, cut hedgerows on a minimum 3-year cycle. Cutting annually stops the hedgerow flowering and fruiting.
- Where hedgerows must be cut for road safety, allow the inside to flower.
- Let some hedgerows grow wild, side-trimming only.
- Where possible, cut in rotation rather than all at once - this will ensure some areas of

**Managing existing hedgerows for Pollinators**

Unmanaged hedgerows produce more flowers and fruit than managed hedges but leaving hedges unmanaged might not be consistent with other objectives.

**Hedgerows should not be over-managed**

Cutting hedges back to the same point every year reduces their capacity to flower and fruit. Ivy is a rich source of nectar and pollen. Removing all ivy from trees, shrubs and structures is detrimental to

away from hedgerows and verges; they are all detrimental to pollinators.

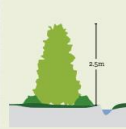
- ✓ Don't allow hedgerow margins to become poached by livestock.
- ✓ Hedge banks, especially sheltered south-facing ones, are important nesting and over-wintering sites for pollinators.

Good native hedgerow species for pollinators:

**Hazel** (Feb-Apr) **Willow** (Mar-May) **Blackthorn** (Mar-May) **Hawthorn** (Apr-Jun) **Broom** (Apr-Jun) **Wild Cherry** (Apr-May) **Bramble** (May-Sept) **Wild Privet** (May-Jul) **Crab apple** (May-Jun) **Elder** (May-Jun) **Whitebeam** (May-Jun) **Rowan** (May-Jun) **Wild Rose** (Jun-Jul) **Honeysuckle** (Jun-Oct) **Gelder Rose** (Jun-Jul) **Raspberry** (Jun-Aug) **Ivy** (Sept-Nov) **Gorse** (Jan-Dec)

These species are not recommended for hedgerows: **Horse Chestnut, Beech, Laburnum, Lilac, Lime.**

These species can be considered invasive and should not be planted: **Fuchsia, Cherry Laurel, Rhododendron, Sycamore, Snowberry.**



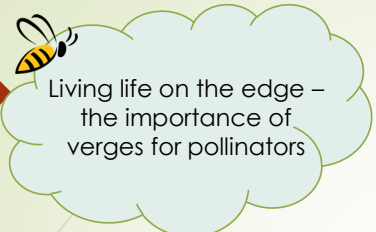
A pollinator-friendly hedgerow should be flowering, at least 2.5m in height, and should be trimmed in an A-shape.

Hedgerow margins and verges, especially sheltered south-facing ones are good places to try and increase the amount and diversity of wild plants.

- ✓ Flowers like knapweed, vetches and woundwort are good for bees, while hogweed, rough chervil and wild angelica are good for hover flies.
- ✓ Keep fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides well

will need to be periodically rejuvenated through coppicing or laying if they are to remain sustainable.

- ✓ Laying should be the preferred option for rejuvenation as laid hedges will continue to flower and provide food for pollinators. Most coppiced hedges will not return to a flowering mode for a number of years.



Living life on the edge - the importance of verges for pollinators



**ACTION**

**DON'T MOW, LET IT GROW!**

*Wildflower meadows have disappeared by 97%. Some of the remnants of these old meadows are on our roadside verges.*

*Roadside verges can act as a refuge for rare plants and invertebrates in a landscape increasingly being intensively managed or exposed to pesticides.*



*Where roads are used by walkers, a one-metre stretch by the road can be mowed, while allowing wildflowers to bloom on the rest of the verge.*

*Where there are no sightline/Health&Safety issues, wild verges add much beauty and interest to trips through our countryside.*



Protecting native wildflower species, and their associated invertebrates, should be a national priority.

Recent studies have shown that insect numbers/abundance has plummeted, by up to 75% in places. There is an insect armageddon happening here and now. Insects are critical for the food chain, and are crucial for our own food supply.

Isn't part of the fabric of any place the indigenous species that grow there? These plants are an integral part of the food web for the insects, invertebrates and pollinators – on which we in turn rely, to pollinate our crops.

Everyone can make changes and bring about change on a wider scale. Please be the voice for wildflowers/pollinators in your area.



<http://woodrow.ie/resources/woodrow-biodiversity-resource-links>



### Biodiversity Resources

#### Pollinators/Planting to benefit biodiversity:

All-Ireland Pollinator Plan – [www.pollinators.ie](http://www.pollinators.ie)



- o All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025 - <https://pollinators.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/All-Ireland-Pollinator-Plan-2021-2025-WEB.pdf>
- o Local Communities: actions to help pollinators - [https://pollinators.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Local-Communities\\_actions-to-help-pollinators-2018-WEB.pdf](https://pollinators.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Local-Communities_actions-to-help-pollinators-2018-WEB.pdf)
- o Sports Clubs: actions to help pollinators - <https://pollinators.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Pollinator-Sports-Clubs-guide-WEB.pdf>
- o Gardens: actions to help pollinators - [https://pollinators.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Gardens\\_actions-to-help-pollinators-2018-WEB.pdf](https://pollinators.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Gardens_actions-to-help-pollinators-2018-WEB.pdf)

#### All things Biodiversity Ireland:

National Biodiversity Data Centre Resources – <https://www.biodiversityireland.ie/> and <https://www.biodiversityireland.ie/resources/>

- o NBDC 10 ways to help biodiversity - <https://www.biodiversityireland.ie/biodiversity-irelands-top-10/10-ways-to-help-biodiversity/>
- o NBDC Shop – An excellent resource for ID guides and Keys to Irish Biodiversity - <https://www.biodiversityireland.ie/shop/>



#### Other Useful Biodiversity Resource Links:

- o Trees - <https://www.treecouncil.ie/> and <https://www.treecouncil.ie/native-irish-trees>
- o Birds - <https://birdwatchireland.ie/>
- o Bats - <https://www.batconservationireland.org/>
- o Fish - <https://www.fisheriesireland.ie/>
- o Irish Wildlife Trust - <https://iwt.ie/>
- o National Parks and Wildlife Services - <https://www.npws.ie/>
- o Waterways Ireland - <https://www.waterwaysireland.org/>
- o Ulster Wildlife - <https://www.ulsterwildlife.org/>
- o DAERA - <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/species-northern-ireland>


#### Free Biodiversity Identification Resources:

Free Resources - Identification

- Identification apps:
- BirdNet (Bird calls)
- Nord University (Birds)
- PlantNet (Plants)
- Seek/ iNaturalist

#### Links to some UK & Ireland ID Guides/Keys:

- o Field Studies Council - <https://www.field-studies-council.org/shop/>
- o NBDC Shop - <https://www.biodiversityireland.ie/shop/>



Thank you for  
listening



**Have you any questions?**