

South Dublin County Council Pollinator Plan 2020 - 2025



WHO are our pollinators?

While other insects play a role, most pollination on the island of Ireland is carried out by bees. We have one type (species)

of managed honeybee and 97

different wild bees. That includes 20 bumblebee and 77 solitary bee species. Research shows that reliable pollination services depend not only on healthy honeybee populations, but also on an abundance and diversity of wild bees and other insect pollinators.



Honeybee



Bumblebee



Solitary bee

WHAT do our pollinators need to survive?

Just like us, pollinators need food and a safe place to live. Experts agree that inadequate nutrition is a major cause of declines. We want pollinators to be there when we need them, but our landscape doesn't provide the abundance and diversity of flowering plants that they need to survive throughout their life cycle. To have a healthy balanced diet, they need to be able to feed on pollen and nectar from a range of different flowers from MARCH through to OCTOBER. Spring is when hunger gaps are most likely to occur. It is important to prioritise increasing native plants (trees, shrubs, wildflowers) across the landscape to provide food for pollinators. Pollinators also need plenty of safe nesting habitats - long grass, bare earth, crevices in dry stone walls or wood - that are free from pesticides.

WHY do we need to help our pollinators?

Pollinators are important to farmers that grow pollinator dependent crops, to gardeners that want to grow their own fruits and vegetables and for the health of our environment. The annual value of pollinators is at least €53 million in the Republic of Ireland and £603 million in the UK. Furthermore, 78% of our wild plants require insect pollination. Without pollinators, these flowers would disappear, and our countryside would be a very different and less beautiful place.

All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020

One third of our 98 bee species are threatened with extinction from the island of Ireland. If we want them to be there to pollinate crops and wild plants for future generations we need to manage the landscape in a more pollinator friendly way and create a joined-up network of diverse and flower-rich habitats. The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020 is supported by over 68 governmental and non-governmental organisations who have pledged to deliver 81 actions to achieve this goal and make Ireland, North and South, more pollinator friendly.



www.biodiversityireland.ie/pollinator-plan

Economic contribution of Pollinators



€ The economic contribution of pollination by wild bees was recently assessed as £1,800 or €2,400 per hectare.

 The National Biodiversity Data Centre reveals that pollinators contribute €53 million to the Irish Economy each year.

BEES!

Bumblebees



EARLY SPRING: Queens are establishing nests

In the early days of the nest it is estimated that a *Bombus terrestris* queen may have to visit as many as 6000 flowers/day to get enough nectar to maintain the heat needed to brood her eggs

SPRING – SUMMER: nests are growing, workers are active

AUTUMN: queens are fattening up ready for hibernating

Bombus terrestris queens need to weigh at least 0.6g to successfully hibernate and emerge next spring

Solitary Bees



62 species (80%) are mining bees who nest in bare ground or south/east facing banks of bare earth (soil, sand, clay, peat)



Are pollinators declining in Ireland?

More than half of Ireland's bee species have undergone substantial declines in their number since 1980.

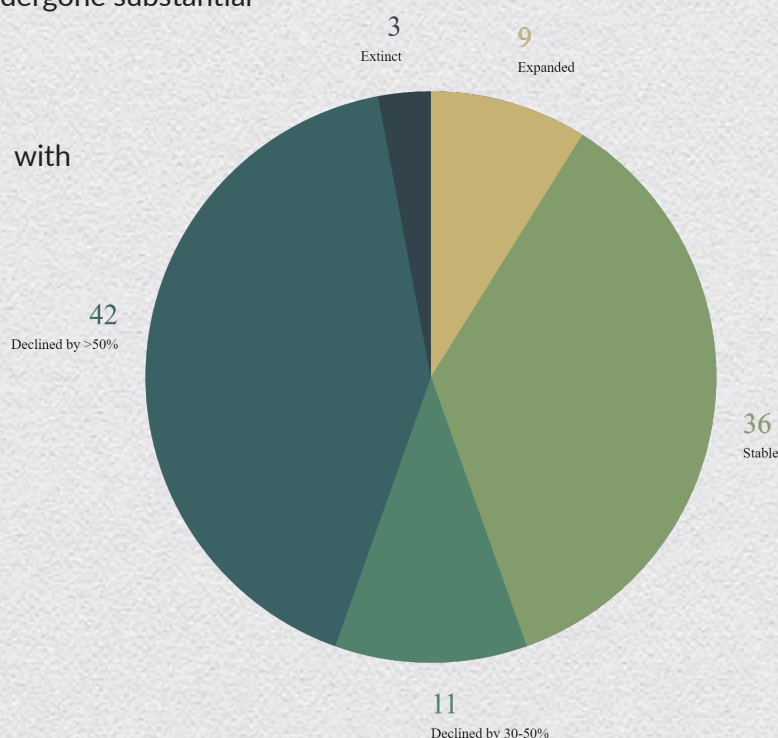
Three species have become extinct

One third of our 98 bee species are threatened with extinction from Ireland

6 Species are critically endangered

10 endangered

14 vulnerable





Actions SDCC is taking to help pollinators - providing food, shelter and safety

These are some of the actions SDCC is taking to help protect our pollinators

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

Action
1

Manage and restore semi-natural habitats and their native plants on Council land

Action
2

Identify and protect existing sources of food and shelter for pollinators on general Council land



Rathfarnham castle

Corkagh Park



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

B

Action
4

Aim to create at least 5 meadows (one cut and lift per year)

Action
3

Identify at least 10 locations that are mown under a pollinator friendly regime (5 cut and lifts per year)

Action
5

Identify at least 10 flagship roadside verges that are managed to be pollinator friendly (one cut and lift per year)

Action
6

Introduce a layered mowing approach to other verges

Common blue butterfly spotted at a wildflower meadow



C

Pollinator friendly planting

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

Action 7

Plant a native perennial wildflower meadow

Native perennial wildflower in Tymon park

Target areas like Parks, Roadside verges, Off-road pedestrian routes, and Greenways

Action 8

Plant a native hedgerow

Hawthorn is one of the native hedgerows in Ireland

Accessible, pollinator friendly planter in Firhouse

Action 9

Replace improved grass with a dense clover sward

Clover flowers are valuable food source for pollinators. i.e red clover

Action 10

For future ornamental tree planting select from pollinator friendly species

Action 11

For new works ensure 75% of ornamental planting is pollinator friendly

Action 12

In future ornamental maintenance planting try to select from the pollinator friendly planting code

SDCC Grange road wildflower

Cowslips SDCC wildflower meadow

Action 13

Make some urban planters pollinator friendly

Identifying some urban planters where the standard annual bedding mix could be replaced by perennial pollinator friendly plants

Action 14

Make some urban roundabouts pollinator friendly

Kilmahuddrick roundabout midmarch

Tulips and Daffodils create attractive visual displays in spring but are not a good food source for pollinators. Where used, it is recommended they be combined with more pollinator friendly bulb planting (e.g., Snowdrop, Crocus, Muscari, Allium).

D

Provide nesting habitats

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

Action 15

Manage hedgerows for pollinators



Waterstown park hedgerows

Action 16

Bare earth/sand banks for wild pollinator nesting



Mining bee bank Tymon park

Many Solitary/ Mining bees often nest under bare earth

Grange road wild flower meadow with natural hedging for habitat

Action 17

Holes in wood or concrete for wild pollinator nesting



SDCC mining bee in Tymon park

Action 18

Bee hotels for wild pollinators



Insect hotel in Glendoher

Any free land where bee hotels could be kept safely.

Reduce use of pesticides

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

E

Action 20

Ensure best practice where the use of pesticides cannot be avoided

We have adopted the All-Ireland pollinator plan pesticide best practice code. This is being applied all across the SDCC land

Action 19

Reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides (herbicides, insecticides & fungicides)



Waterstown Park



Wildflowers in waterstown park.

Herbicide has the greatest negative impact on pollinators. Pollinators need a range of flowers to feed on from spring through autumn. The overuse of herbicides is making it very difficult for them to find enough food to survive in our landscape.

First apple tree planted in Lucan



Taking it further

Providing funding, training and further engaging with the community

Action
21

Build actions on pollinators into existing frameworks and initiatives

Currently developing a Green Infrastructure Strategy, Biodiversity Strategy and developing SUDs guidelines for the County. Actions for pollinators will be built into all of these plans.

Action
22

Fund pollinator projects on council land to demonstrate best practice to other sectors



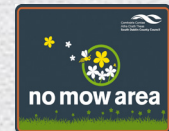
SDCC headquarter pollinator friendly planter



Accessible, pollinator friendly planter in Firhouse

Action
23

Put up signage to identify pollinator friendly habitats on council land



SDCC Signages

Action
24

Promote & distribute pollinator friendly guidelines to other sectors

Firhouse wildflower scheme



As part of cooperation with tidy towns Groups

Action
26

Facilitate or deliver training on pollinators and how to take action to protect them

Training programme currently being designed and plan to give presentations to Tidy Towns and other groups.



Pollinator action presentation given in SDCC

Action
25

Promote & distribute the Junior Pollinator Plan to local schools



Firhouse urban planter team

Action
28

Promote and get involved in other pollinator related initiatives

Action
27

Fund a special pollinator award in the Tidy Towns

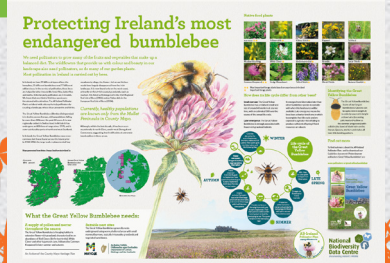
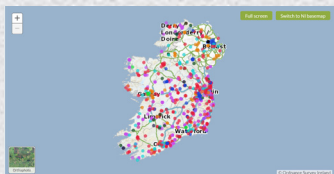
Action
29

Log your existing and new 'Actions for Pollinator's on the mapping system to ensure your efforts are recognised

Action
30

Take part in the bumblebee Monitoring Scheme

Actions for Pollinator mapping system





Crocuses in Willsbrook Park, early March.



Wild Orchids in Rathcoole park

1	Action	Areas where it might apply	Current Initiatives
	Manage and restore semi-natural habitats and their native plants on Council land	Semi-natural habitats that fall under council land e.g., meadows, woodland	136.5 Hectares managed as meadows
2	Action	Areas where it might apply	Current Initiatives
	Identify and protect existing sources of food and shelter for pollinators on general Council land	• Flowering hedgerows (food & shelter) • Patches of wildflowers on disused ground (food) • Short grass meadows (food) • Small wild areas with bramble/ivy (food) • Existing earth banks (shelter) • Dry stone walls (shelter) • Allotments These areas can be very small. Signage could be used to identify these areas where appropriate.	Ongoing programme of surveying trees using ArborTrack. Continued mapping of meadows. Staff engaged in planned programme of removing invasive species.
3	Action	Areas where it might apply	Current Initiatives
	Identify at least 10 locations that are mown under a pollinator friendly regime (5 cut and lifts per year)	Parks, roadside verges, pavement verges, greenways, roundabouts, off-road walking/cycle routes, waterway towpaths, housing estates, old graveyards. Species rich grass tends to be colourful and still look well managed. Signage can be used to identify these areas as deliberate.	For discussion with Tidy Towns Groups
4	Action	Areas where it might apply	Current Initiatives
	Aim to create at least 5 meadows (one cut and lift per year)	As Action 3. The creation of a long flowering meadow should be viewed as a long term action. The longer it is in place and managed to remove the final cut each year, the more flower-rich it and attractive it will be.	Progressing to multiple sites
5	Action	Areas where it might apply	Current Initiatives
	Identify at least 10 flagship roadside verges that are managed to be pollinator friendly (one cut and lift per year)	Roadside verges. Councils are likely to have areas where the location and soil type lends itself to the creation of a wildflower rich roadside verge. It is proposed these are used as flagship locations and identified using signage.	In association with Tidy Towns Groups. SDCC likely to opt for alternative measures on roadside verges such as bulb planting
6	Action	Areas where it might apply	Current Initiatives
	Introduce a layered mowing approach to other verges (Flower rich strip behind mown verge)	Roadside verges. This approach can reduce the need for traffic management during mowing and is also pollinator friendly.	Progressing in multiple sites
7	Action	Areas where it might apply	Current Initiatives
	Plant a native perennial wildflower meadow. Use purchased seed, mow late Aug/early Sept, remove cuttings	Parks, Roadside verges, Off-road walking/cycling routes. Greenways. Areas that have undergone other works as an alternative to normal reseeding. Topsoil should not be applied.	A number of sites being progressed, viewed as a long term action

8	Action	Areas where it might apply	Current Initiatives
	Plant a native hedgerow Sourced & grown locally. Ideally 75% Hawthorn; 25% of at least four other species e.g. Willow, Blackthorn, Hazel, Holly, Dog rose, Whin and Guelder rose. 30m length	• Parks • Roadside verges • Off-road walking/cycling routes • Greenways • New housing schemes	native hedgerows specified in new development sites and parks
9	Action	Areas where it might apply	Current Initiatives
	Replace improved grass with a dense clover sward Red and white clovers provide colour and are an important food source for pollinators in summer. Minimize grasses in the mix as clovers will fix nitrogen and boost grass growth if grass seeds are present.	• Roundabouts • Off-road walking/cycle routes • Greenways Could be adopted in areas that have undergone other works as an alternative to normal reseeding. Not suitable for high use areas at it won't withstand heavy footfall.	Implemented successfully on new roads around Grange Castle business park
10	Action	Areas where it might apply	Current Initiatives
	For future ornamental tree planting select from pollinator friendly species Spring to Autumn flowering mix. Refer list in Appendix	Could be incorporated into future street and open space tree planting programmes	In practice (in line with Tree Management Strategies and wider planting policies).
11	Action	Areas where it might apply	Current Initiatives
	For new works ensure 75% of ornamental planting is pollinator friendly List and advice in Appendix	• New council developments • Housing schemes • New roads or road realignments • New roundabouts	In practice
12	Action	Areas where it might apply	Current Initiatives
	In future ornamental maintenance planting try to select from the pollinator friendly planting code	• Parks • Housing estates • Sections of off-road walking/cycle routes	In practice
13	Action	Areas where it might apply	Current Initiatives
	Make some urban planters pollinator friendly Identify some urban planters where the standard annual bedding mix could be partly/fully replaced by perennial pollinator friendly plants [list in appendix].	• Urban planters • Areas of annual bedding	New planters at County Hall and at Rathfarnham & Firhouse villages - examples of high quality Pollinator friendly planting scheme
14	Action	Areas where it might apply	Current Initiatives
	Make some urban roundabouts pollinator friendly	• Roundabouts	Pollinator friendly Bulb schemes have been planted at various roundabouts

Firhouse pollinator friendly planting scheme





Seedhead of Goat's
Beard, Tymon Park



15	Action	Areas where it might apply	Current Initiatives
	Manage hedgerows for pollinators. Willow, Blackthorn, Hawthorn in spring, bramble in summer, ivy in autumn	• Parks with existing hedgerows or areas where new hedgerows are to be created • Hedgerows along roadsides (where sightlines are not impacted)	In practice
16	Action	Areas where it might apply	Current Initiatives
	Bare earth/sand banks for wild pollinator nesting Maintain by manual scraping to bare soil annually. Do not spray	Edges of tracks/lawns, Roadsides, Riverbanks, Natural ridges, Housing estates, Parks. Solitary bees commonly only fly 100m from their nest to feed. It is important to create nest sites close to food sources.	Examples in Tymon Park and elsewhere
17	Action	Areas where it might apply	Current Initiatives
	Holes in wood or concrete for wild pollinator nesting S/SE facing; 10cm depth; range of diam 4-8mm; 1.5-2m height	• Any wooden fencing on council land • Community buildings Most effective if small numbers of holes are drilled in areas that are close to food sources.	In practice in many sites. Will progress further with community groups
18	Action	Areas where it might apply	Current Initiatives
	Bee hotels for wild pollinators Good awareness raising tool. A number of small hotels is better than one large one	Any free common land where bee hotels could be kept (avoiding areas prone to vandalism) e.g., parks, allotments, schools Will only be used if situated close to food sources	Various locations countywide
19	Action	Areas where it might apply	Current Initiatives
	Aim to eliminate the use of herbicide, fungicide and insecticide in some locations	County Hall and Civic Centres, Council Offices, Libraries, Heath Centres, Community Centres, Leisure Centres, Graveyards, Green Flag Sites	Reduced spraying in some locations and no spraying in many other sites. End of use of glyphosate
20	Action	Areas where it might apply	Current Initiatives
	Ensure best practice where the use of pesticides cannot be avoided. Adopt the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan best practice code.	Across council land.	All staff fully trained
21	Action	Areas where it might apply	Current Initiatives
	Build actions on pollinators into existing frameworks and initiatives	• City, County or Local Development Plans • Sustainability criteria of the Green Flag Award Scheme (Parks) • Green Infrastructure strategies • Climate adaptation plans • Parks and Open Space Strategy • Biodiversity Plan	In practice
22	Action	Areas where it might apply	Current Initiatives
	Fund pollinator projects on council land to demonstrate best practice to other sectors. Use as case studies and reference sites	• Across council land	In progress- planters at Tallaght, Rathfarnham & Firhouse, meadows countywide - site visits organised post COVID 19

23	Action Put up signage to identify pollinator friendly habitats on council land	Areas where it might apply • Across council land	Current Initiatives In practice. Additional signage being added
24	Action Promote & distribute pollinator friendly guidelines to other sectors Parallel AIPP guidelines available.	Areas where it might apply • Local community groups • Council events • Libraries	Current Initiatives Video progressing for social media, training video for staff and tidy towns groups and other materials to publicize actions
25	Action Promote & distribute the Junior Pollinator Plan to local schools (Child friendly version of AIPP)	Areas where it might apply • Local schools and youth groups • Libraries • Education Centres	Current Initiatives Environmental officer promote Junior Pollinator Plan in tandem with biodiversity theme in Green Schools programme
26	Action Facilitate or deliver training on pollinators and how to take action to protect them Resources on AIPP website	Areas where it might apply • Council staff • Local community groups	Current Initiatives Training material being developed
27	Action Fund a special pollinator award in the Tidy Towns competition	Areas where it might apply Tidy Towns	Current Initiatives Environmental Awareness Officer to fund awards
28	Action Promote and get involved in other pollinator related initiatives	Areas where it might apply See website for list of existing projects e.g. Save our Magnificent Meadows, Grow Wild, Don't Mow, Let it Grow, Bee-Licious	Current Initiatives Environmental Awareness Officer to progress
29	Action Log your existing and new 'Actions for Pollinator's on the mapping system to ensure your efforts are recognised	Areas where it might apply All actions taken on council land can be logged and recognised	Current Initiatives In practice.
30	Action Take part in the bumblebee Monitoring Scheme	Areas where it might apply Across Council Land	Current Initiatives Heritage Officer



Orchid in Waterstown park

Accessible, pollinator friendly urban planter in Firhouse



Making your own bee hotel

You will need:

- Reeds/bamboo stems: Use stems or tubes 4-8mm in diameter, minimum 10cm in length. Don't use plastic straws, as they are not the best nesting materials for many solitary bees. Try collecting reeds growing in marshy areas, or get them from a local thatcher. Bamboo is available at most garden centres, and you can hollow it out using a drill bit.
- String or wire
- A small piece of PVC piping or equivalent plastic or untreated wood container
- Scissors or wire cutters
- Take a piece of string or wire and bundle the tubes together. Make sure the tubes are tightly secured, using a second piece of string or wire if necessary. You can stop here, and hang up your bundle of nest tubes.
- **Optional:** If you want to better protect the nest tubes from rain and wind, enclose them in a container. A small piece of PVC piping or any other small plastic container will do.
- Cut the front of the tubes so that they are approximately the same length as the container (minimum 10cm in length).
- Now insert the tubes into the container with the open end facing out. Make sure tubes are packed tightly so they will be secure when the nest is placed outside.

How to make your hotel:

- First, make sure that one side of all of your tubing is closed; if working with reeds or bamboo, each tube should be cut on the "internode" in the centre of the section to create a natural end.
- Next make sure the open sides of the tubes are all facing the same way. Scatter tubes with different diameters and slightly different lengths throughout the bundle.

Top Tip:

Try putting a sloping roof on top of your bee hotel to ensure it stays dry during rainy weather



Top Tip:

Don't hang your bee hotel near bird feeders so the nesting bees won't be easy targets for hungry birds

