



# Bee-licious

## helping our pollinators

**Bee-licious** is a partnership project developed amongst eight councils across Northern Ireland, who are concerned by the decline of our pollinating insects.

**Bee-licious** will work with local communities to restore networks of semi-natural habitats where pollinators can find food and shelter.



## What's the problem?

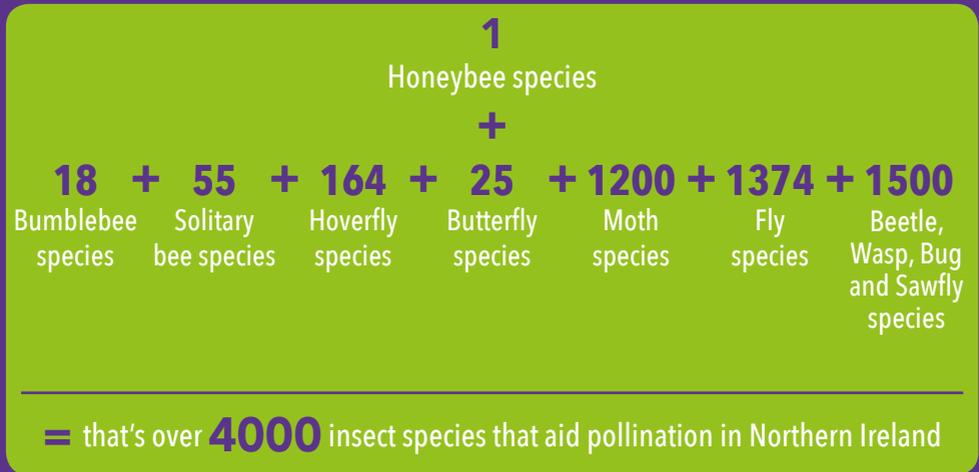
Pollinators, including bumblebees, solitary bees, honeybees, hoverflies and many beetles, are declining due to a lack of food and shelter. The main reasons for these declines are habitat loss due to development and the intensification of agriculture (including the use of some pesticides).



## What is Pollination?

Pollination occurs when pollen is moved within flowers or carried from flower to flower by pollinating animals or by the wind. The transfer of pollen between flowers of the same species leads to fertilisation, and successful seed and fruit production.

## Our pollinating insects include:



## Why do we need pollinators?

Pollinators are crucial for the production of some food. One out of every three mouthfuls of our food depends on pollination taking place, ensuring that plants produce full-bodied fruit and viable seeds. This enables reliable crop yields and a range of fruit and vegetables at affordable prices. It also ensures a variety of fruits and seeds for animals to eat, and the survival of our wildflowers.

Although there are many beekeepers in the country, most bee-keeping is done at a small scale for domestic use. In the UK and Ireland as a whole, there are only enough honeybee hives to pollinate a third of our crops, therefore the main pollinators are wild insects.



## Here are some examples of the value of our pollinators:

- In Northern Ireland the annual apple crop is worth £25 million per year to the local economy.
- £603 million was the estimated value of insect pollination to crops in the UK, due to increases in yield and quality of seeds and fruits in 2010.
- 70 of the 100 crop species that provide 90% of food worldwide are pollinated by bees.

## What do pollinating insects need to thrive?

### Food (nectar and pollen)

- To survive all year, pollinators need a continuous supply of suitable flowers on which to forage, provided by flower-rich habitat, such as hedgerows, wildflower meadows, trees and shrubs.
- Ideally use native plants sourced from local seed as these plants have evolved alongside our pollinators.

### Shelter

- Log piles.
- Areas of long, tussocky grass that is left uncut all year.
- Earth banks and bare ground.
- Damp places – many hoverfly species need wet, rotting vegetation in which to breed.



## What can you do to help pollinators?

- Provide food
  - plant native trees, shrubs and wildflowers that flower at different times of the year.
- Provide a home
  - build nest sites,
  - if suitable, leave an area of your lawn uncut,
  - and /or create a sunny earth bank.
- Reduce the use of pesticides in your garden.
- Record pollinating insects:
  - Submit your records to CEDaR to the Ulster Museum
  - You could set up a Bumblebee transect, go to Biodiversity Ireland
  - Or have a go at OPAL's Polli:Nation survey [www.opalexplornature.org/polli-nation](http://www.opalexplornature.org/polli-nation)



## Useful websites

All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, has a range of guidelines [www.biodiversityireland.ie/projects/irish-pollinator-initiative/all-ireland-pollinator-plan/resources/](http://www.biodiversityireland.ie/projects/irish-pollinator-initiative/all-ireland-pollinator-plan/resources/)

Buglife, information on 'saving the small things that run the planet' [www.buglife.org.uk/](http://www.buglife.org.uk/)

Bumblebee Conservation, information on bumblebees and the best ways that you can help them [www.beekind.bumblebeeconservation.org/](http://www.beekind.bumblebeeconservation.org/)

Butterfly Conservation information on our butterflies and moths and the best ways you can help them [www.butterfly-conservation.org/](http://www.butterfly-conservation.org/)

Count Flowers for Bees, a citizen science project to create a flower map of Ireland for Bees [www.flickr.com/groups/countflowersforbees/](http://www.flickr.com/groups/countflowersforbees/)

Polli:Nation schools and community groups making changes for pollinators [www.polli-nation.co.uk/](http://www.polli-nation.co.uk/)

Royal Horticultural Society, make your garden perfect for pollinators [www.rhs.org.uk/science/conservation-biodiversity/wildlife/encourage-wildlife-to-your-garden/plants-for-pollinators](http://www.rhs.org.uk/science/conservation-biodiversity/wildlife/encourage-wildlife-to-your-garden/plants-for-pollinators)

Ulster Beekeepers Association, gardening for bees [www.ubka.org/beekeeping/gardening-bees/](http://www.ubka.org/beekeeping/gardening-bees/)

Wild About Gardens, planting and activity ideas to help pollinators flourish in your garden [www.wildaboutgardensweek.org.uk/Downloads/15849-Pollinator-Booklet-28-8.pdf](http://www.wildaboutgardensweek.org.uk/Downloads/15849-Pollinator-Booklet-28-8.pdf)

[www.biodiversityni.com](http://www.biodiversityni.com)

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Belfast City Council



Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council



**BIODIVERSITY**

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For more information go to: [www.hlf.org.uk](http://www.hlf.org.uk)

