



Newsletter: February 2026

The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan is a framework bringing together different sectors across the island of Ireland to create a landscape where pollinators can survive and thrive. Its implementation is coordinated by the National Biodiversity Data Centre.

To spot this month: keep an eye out for large bumblebee queens that have emerged from hibernation

The two most common bumblebee queens you will spot this month are the Buff-tailed bumblebee (*Bombus terrestris*) and the White-tailed bumblebee (*Bombus lucorum*). They are similar to each other – both have one band on the thorax, one band on the abdomen and a whitish tail. The Buff-tailed bumblebee has orange bands and a buff or off-white tail. The White-tailed bumblebee has lemon yellow bands and a clean white tail. Submit your sightings to the National Biodiversity Data Centre. You can attach a photo if you're not sure if you have the correct identification.



Submit your bumblebee sightings

To do this month: make a plan for how you'll help pollinators in 2026

We're often asked about the best ways to help our declining wild pollinators. Here are the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan's top ten evidence-based actions you can take to help these important insects.

Top Ten Ways to Help Pollinators

We're often asked about the best ways to help our declining wild pollinators. Here are the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan's top ten evidence-based actions you can take to help these important insects.

If you'd prefer, you can watch our [Top Ten Actions for Pollinators video](#), which takes you through each of the recommendations.

You'll also find links to information about how you can help pollinators every month, what plants they visit and which species you might spot. We'll be adding a new page every month between February and October 2024.

1. Don't mow, let it grow!

Reduce mowing to allow native wildflowers like Dandelions, Clover and Birds-foot Trefoil to naturally return over time.

Why? This action helps to restore species-rich grasslands: a vital habitat providing food and shelter for pollinators. Species-rich grasslands have been decimated in Ireland in recent decades. By reducing mowing – even to once a month – you will help them to slowly return, one pocket at a time



Pollinator-friendly mowing. Pic: Dara Stanley

Top ten ways to help pollinators

The NBDC is recruiting for an All-Ireland Pollinator Plan Programme Manager - application deadline 6th March 2026

To meet the expanding ambitions of the next All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2026-2030, the National Biodiversity Data Centre is inviting applications from suitably qualified applicants to apply for the Programme Manager role. They will be responsible for coordinating implementation of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and will oversee a team of six Project Officers who are based in the National Biodiversity Data Centre. This is an exciting opportunity to drive a more ambitious AIPP over the coming years.



[**Read more and download the candidate information booklet**](#)

Review of Flower-Insect Timed Counts in 2025

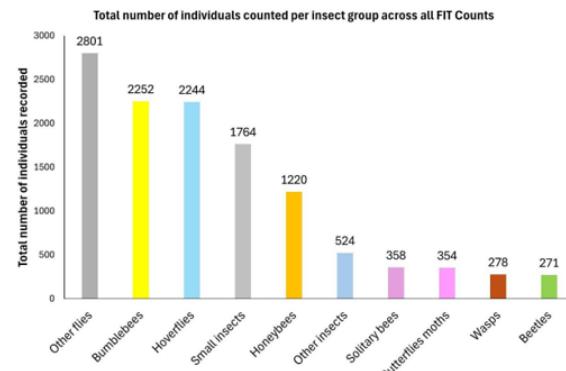
Flower-Insect Timed Counts (FIT Counts) is a citizen science scheme that collects information on the numbers of flower-visiting insects. Volunteers watch a 50cm x 50cm patch of flowers for 10 minutes and count how many insects visit. Anyone can take part, and you can carry out a FIT Count in any location with flowers including your garden. In 2025, gardens were the most common habitat FIT Counts were carried out in.

In 2025, over 1,000 records were submitted through the scheme by 235 volunteers with over 12,000 insects counted in total. We would like to express our sincerest thanks to everyone who submitted FIT Counts during 2025. Your continued efforts and support will help assess changes in the number of flower visiting insects.



2025 at a glance

	2025
Total number of validated FIT Counts	1,323
Number of volunteers	235
Total number of insects counted	12,070
Average number of insects per FIT Count	9
Most common insect group recorded	Other flies
Most common habitat FIT Counts were carried out in	Garden
Flower that most FIT Counts were completed on	Dandelion



[**See the full breakdown and learn more about the scheme**](#)

Irish Pollinator Research Network meeting 2026

Pollinator researchers descended onto UCD campus this year for the 9th annual Irish Pollinator Research Network (IPRN) meeting, hosted by Dr Dara Stanley and Dr Julia Jones. Researchers from eight universities and research institutions presented their research to the group, with approximately 40 members in attendance. This year's meeting was one of the largest, showing that while pollinators are in decline, there is a large group of dedicated people working hard to reverse this.



[Read the event blog](#)

Research update: Are new woodlands good for nature? Pollinators can help us find out

Are new woodlands good for nature? Pollinators can help us find out. Kate Harrington, an ecologist and post-doctoral researcher based at Trinity College Dublin tells us about her research.

This blog is part of the 'Dispatches from Researchers' series, which features guest articles written by experts in pollination and related fields.



Edge of a 12-year-old native woodland plantation in Co. Dublin

[**Read the 'Dispatches from Researchers' blog**](#)

Bumblebee Poster

In preparation for bumblebees reappearing to brighten up our lives again, now is a great time to remind yourself of what the different species look like. We have lots of National Biodiversity Data Centre resources to help.

 **Bumblebees** of Ireland

National Biodiversity Data Centre  www.biodiversityireland.ie

Bumblebees are vital pollinators and a key component of Ireland's biodiversity. There are 21 different species. The National Biodiversity Data Centre is mapping their distribution and tracking how populations are changing. Help by recording your sightings at: records.biodiversityireland.ie

www.pollinators.ie

<i>Bombus cryptarum</i> (Cryptic white-tailed bumblebee)	<i>Bombus distinguendus</i> (Great yellow bumblebee)	<i>Bombus hortorum</i> (Garden bumblebee)	<i>Bombus hypnorum</i> (Tree bumblebee)	<i>Bombus johannae</i> (Heath bumblebee)	<i>Bombus lapidarius</i> (Red-tailed bumblebee)
<i>Bombus lucorum</i> (White-tailed bumblebee)	<i>Bombus magnus</i> (Mountain white-tailed bumblebee)	<i>Bombus monticola</i> (Mountain bumblebee)	<i>Bombus muscorum</i> (Large carder bee)	<i>Bombus pascuorum</i> (Common carder bee)	<i>Bombus ruderarius</i> (Red shanked carder bee)
<i>Bombus ruderatus</i> (Red-tailed cuckoo bee)	<i>Bombus sylvarum</i> (Shrill carder bee)	<i>Bombus sylvestris</i> (Forest cuckoo bee)	<i>Bombus terrestris</i> (Buff-tailed bumblebee)	<i>Bombus vestalis</i> (Southern cuckoo bee)	<i>Bombus pratorum</i> (Early bumblebee)

All images © Steven Falk

[**Bumblebee poster**](#)

Please think twice about planting wildflower seed

Our pollinators need the native flowers they have evolved alongside. Studies have shown that the seeds in many wildflower seed mixes are imported from other countries, and are not native, despite what the packet might say. There is a huge risk of accidentally bringing in invasive species like Black grass that, if spread, would be devastating to the Irish agricultural industry.

Wildflower seed mixes are much more attractive to humans than to pollinators. If you decide to buy wildflower seed, source it very carefully, and never plant outside garden settings. The Pollinator Plan does not endorse any seed suppliers or wildflower seed products. If you really want to help biodiversity, our advice is always to Don't Sow, Let it Grow



[**Read more**](#)

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