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Newsletter: September 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. It is managed by the National Biodiversity Data Centre.

To spot this month: keep an eye out for the Common Carder Bumblebee

By September, many of our bumblebees are thinking about hibernation. One of the last to be spotted is the Common Carder Bumblebee (*Bombus pascuorum*), which still flies into October. Keep an eye out for this very common bumblebee this month. It is variable and can become bleached in the sun. However, there are no other bumblebees that have all ginger hairs on the thorax, a ginger tail, and then some black hairs on the abdomen. The photograph shows two Common Carder Bees on Knapweed: Rodney Daunt.



[Submit your bumblebee sightings](#)

To do this month: plan to cut and lift your long-flowering meadow

September is the time when long flowering meadows should be cut, and the grass removed. Having these meadows, however small, is a fantastic action for biodiversity as it is returning a vital species-rich grassland habitat that has been lost in Ireland.

September is the ideal time to cut and lift, but please be aware that some Councils and large organisations may have cut earlier than this. This can occur where they have large areas to mow before the weather changes, and the ground becomes too wet for large machinery. Others will have such large areas of meadows to manage, that some will be cut in spring instead. Some flexibility in cutting is fine. More important is that the grass is removed. Fertilising or mulching grass back in will enrich the soil and give grasses an advantage over any wildflowers. Flower-rich meadows are a very fragile habitat that require the correct management each year. The photo below shows a meadow managed by Waterford City & County Council.



[Guide: Creating and restoring meadows in local communities and gardens](#)

[Video: Top Tips for Creating a Wildflower Meadow](#)

Video: Introducing the third phase of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2026-2030

In our recent webinar, All-Ireland Pollinator Plan Programme Manager, Dr Sarah Larragy, explored the next phase of the AIPP (2026–2030).

Sarah introduced the Plan's vision and priorities, highlighting its 10 work packages which bring together actions across sectors including farmland, public land, transport networks, communities, businesses and researchers. You'll also hear about how the Plan's 50 strategic aims and 75 success metrics will help guide and measure progress towards an island where pollinators can survive and thrive.

Watch the recording below on the National Biodiversity Data Centre YouTube channel.



[Video: Introducing the AIPP 2026-2030](#)

Wild Bee Festival 2026

On Saturday 22nd and Sunday 23rd August, we visited Waterford City for the fifth annual Wild Bee Festival.

Following the success of previous years in Skerries, Tralee, Galway City, and Abbeyleigh, we were delighted to come to Waterford for the fifth year of the festival. This year, the festival was organised in collaboration with the B Corridor group, who have done inspirational work creating ecological corridors and connecting local people with nature.

The festival was an opportunity for community groups to come together and learn how to protect pollinators in Waterford. We had a vibrant range of talks from ecologists and community groups, and a bee-themed artistic workshop, inspiring us to take action for wild bees and come up with creative ways to encourage new connections with our natural world.

Read more about the 2026 Wild Bee Festival and find speaker presentations at the link below. (Below: the B Corridor group give a guided tour of the Maypark Nature Trail, pic: Sarah Larragy).



The Wild Bee Festival 2026

Online course: Pollinator-friendly hedgerows on farmland

Last year, the National Biodiversity Data Centre released a free online training course 'Farmland Pollinator-friendly Hedgerows', developed by the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.

With Ireland believed to be the most hedge dense country in the world, the course aims to make farmland more pollinator friendly by helping farmers learn which pollinators they might find on their farm, and which evidence-based actions they can take to help them.

We hope the course will give farmers, farm advisors and agricultural students an insight into the value of native species-rich hedgerows and the many benefits they can provide such as shade and shelter for livestock, nutrient buffering to protect water quality, help with flood alleviation and field drainage and refuge for beneficial insects, birds and pollinators. The course includes a section on how to assess your existing hedgerows and find out which native plant species are present, as well as how to manage existing hedgerows and restore and create new ones.

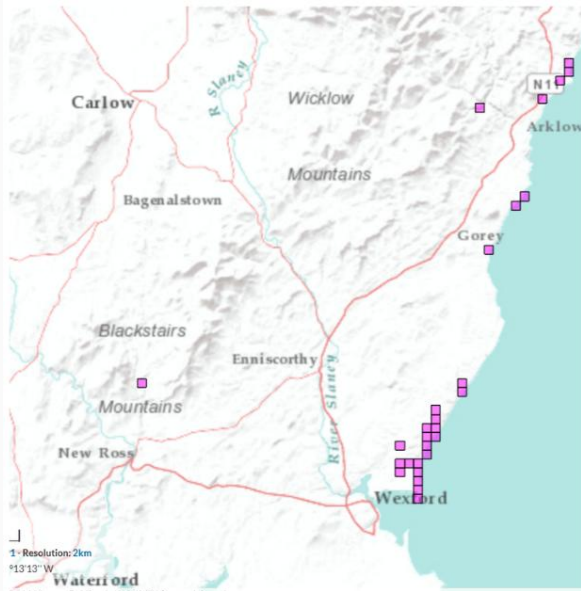


[Enrol for free here](#)

Can you help find new populations of the Ivy Bee?

The Ivy Bee (*Colletes hederæ*) is one of our most recent bee arrivals. It was first spotted at the Raven Nature Reserve (Wexford) in October 2021. It's a solitary bee with an autumn flight period, to match the flowering of its favourite plant - Ivy. It nests in south facing banks of light soil. Within the National Biodiversity Data Centre, we've been keeping an eye on its spread each year. You can see the current distribution below, as of September 2026.

The Ivy Bee is quite large and has very distinctive bands of white on the abdomen. To make it a little easier, most of our solitary bees have completed their life cycles now, although there will still be hoverflies, wasps and honey bees on the wing. The Ivy Bee is likely to be around from mid-September until mid-October. Particularly check in areas along the east and south coasts. Submit your record if you think you've spotted this bee, and please attach a photograph if you can.



[Submit your solitary bee sightings](#)

Can you help us increase the number of Flower-Insect Timed Counts (FIT Counts) for 2026?

FIT Counts are an important way that you can help us monitor pollinators and help track if the pollinator-friendly measures you are taking on your site are working. They are a quick and easy survey that involves watching a 50cm x 50cm patch of flowers for 10 minutes and count how many insects visit. Anyone can get involved, and you can carry out a FIT Count anywhere, and on any flower, but where you can, please use one of our 15 target flowers.

The closing date for the 2026 FIT Count season is the 30th of September. This month, it's especially useful to carry out FIT Counts on Ivy, Heathers, Knapweeds and Lavender.

In 2025, 1,323 validated FIT Counts were submitted by 235 different volunteers. The average number of insects per FIT Count was 9. The most common insect group recorded were other flies followed by hoverflies then bumblebees. Gardens were the most common habitat FIT Counts were carried out in last year. Why not try one where you are to see how your site compares.

Visit the link below to download the 2025 newsletter and see the full results of the scheme last year.

Pollinator monitoring: Flower-Insect Timed Counts (FIT Counts)

<https://biodiversityireland.ie/surveys/fit-counts/>

Watch a 50cm x 50cm patch of flowers for 10 minutes and count how many insects visit. This scheme runs from April until September.



September

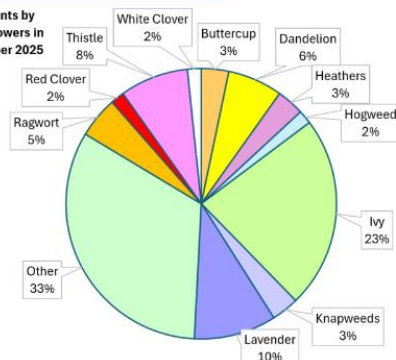
Target Flowers for August 2026: **Ivy or Heathers**. Other target flowers are Buddleja, Heathers, Knapweeds, Lavender, Ragwort and Thistle

September 2025

Total number of FIT Counts 61

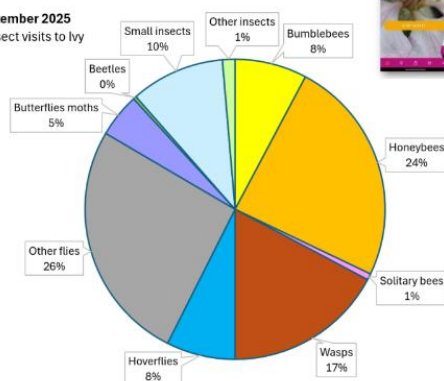
Average Insects/FIT Counts 11.70

FIT Counts by Target Flowers in September 2025



September 2025

296 insect visits to Ivy



Other flies and honeybees accounted for 50% of insect visits to Ivy in September 2025



[Flower-Insect-Timed Count Homepage](#)

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