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Newsletter: November 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 queen bumblebees

The normal lifecycle of most Irish bumblebees ends when the workers and males die off and the newly mated queens hibernates through the colder winter months. Occasionally, at this time of year you can still see some bumblebee queens fattening up for hibernation. If you spot any queen bumblebees that you're able to identify, it's very useful to let us know what plant it was feeding on. Last November, queens were observed feeding on Ivy and on garden plants like Mahonia, Comfrey and Hebe. Photo below is the Buff-tailed Bumblebee (Joe Curtis).

Please note: Ireland's Citizen Science Portal and mobile application is currently offline due to the global security alert affecting PHP, software used to run websites. There has been no loss of data, the decision to take the portal offline was an entirely precautionary measure to protect the service and its data.

We have received an update that the work required to get the system back online will likely take until the 16th of November 2026 (16/11/2026). We apologise for any inconvenience caused and thank you for your patience with this matter. Any records you currently have can be kept until the system is back online and can be submitted then. You can find the latest updates below.



NBDC application status

To do this month: plant bare root fruit trees

Bare root fruit trees are generally cheaper to buy than potted trees, and the time to buy and plant them is from November to March. Consider adding a small orchard to your garden, local community, business site or farm.

As well as containing some of our rare heritage fruit tree varieties, a small orchard can be valuable for biodiversity. They're made up of several habitats, including elements of woodland, hedgerow and meadow. This mosaic of habitats is home to a range of biodiversity, including bees, butterflies, birds, bats, mosses, beetles, fungi and lichen. Windfallen fruit is also a vital source of food in autumn and winter for a whole range of wildlife. Species-rich grassland beneath the trees can be a haven for pollinators and biodiversity, especially if they contain the native, naturally occurring wildflowers.

Pollinators like wild bees, hoverflies and moths have a vital 'pollination service' role in orchards, with almost all fruit resulting from pollination by a bee or other insect. In turn, fruit trees provide nectar and pollen, essential for the survival of these important insects.



Download our guide on Traditional Fruit Trees & Orchards for Pollinators

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Tidy Towns Pollinator Award 2026

The winners of the 2026 Tidy Towns Pollinator Award have been announced. The Pollinator Award has run since 2016 as a Special Award in the annual Supervalu Tidy Towns awards. It is administrated by the local authority Heritage and Biodiversity Officer network and the National Biodiversity Data Centre. The aim of the award is to encourage and reward pollinator-friendly actions by Tidy Towns groups in line with the recommendations of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. Each winner is awarded a prize of €1,000.

Raheny Tidy Village Group were the overall winners this year. Quin Village Tidy Towns were awarded 'best newcomer', and regional awards were given to Abbeyleix Tidy Towns, Cavan Tidy Towns, Belmullet

Tidy Towns, Tralee Tidy Towns, Sneem Tidy Towns, Enniscorthy Tidy Towns and Tullahought Tidy Towns.

The quality of applications this year was so high that 21 further Tidy Towns were highly commended for their work for pollinators for scoring over 70 in their applications. Huge congratulations to all the winners and highly commended towns. All applicants will receive detailed feedback in the new year to help inform their future work.





New Dúlra Agreement puts pollinator-friendly schools on the map

The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan is delighted to support the Dúlra Agreement, an initiative encouraging education system leaders and educational organisations to pledge their support for schools in helping biodiversity on school grounds.

The Dúlra Agreement has grown out of the Irish School Sustainability Network (ISSN), a community of students and teachers who are committed to teaching climate and ecological literacy in schools across Ireland. The Dúlra Agreement is supported by a steering committee and driven, in practice, by the Biodiversity Working Group for Schools. The National Biodiversity Data Centre has been a member of the working group since it was established in 2025.

Mapping is written into the Dúlra Agreement, with schools encouraged to engage with the AIPP and map grounds for biodiversity using the online mapping system ‘Actions for Pollinators’.

Launching on 12th November 2026, the Dúlra Agreement (dúlra is the Irish word for nature) is a commitment for the leaders of Irish education to sign, promising to make school grounds better places for nature and to make biodiversity a priority in how schools are run. Find out more below. (Pic: ISSN)



[Latest news: New Dúlra Agreement puts pollinator-friendly schools on the map]

Guest blog: Orchids appear in Riverwood's 'no mow' verge

Riverwood Biodiversity Group in Castleknock, Dublin, discovered two species of orchid growing in their no-mow verge this summer. In this guest blog, they tell us how reducing mowing helped these beautiful wildflowers grow naturally

"In 2025, Riverwood Biodiversity Group together with Fingal County Council's Dublin 15 Operations Crew, started managing a 'No Mow' verge on Riverwood Road, Castleknock, Dublin 15. We couldn't believe it when in the first year we saw Pyramidal Orchids (Anacamptis Pyramidalis) growing for the first time in a public space in Riverwood."

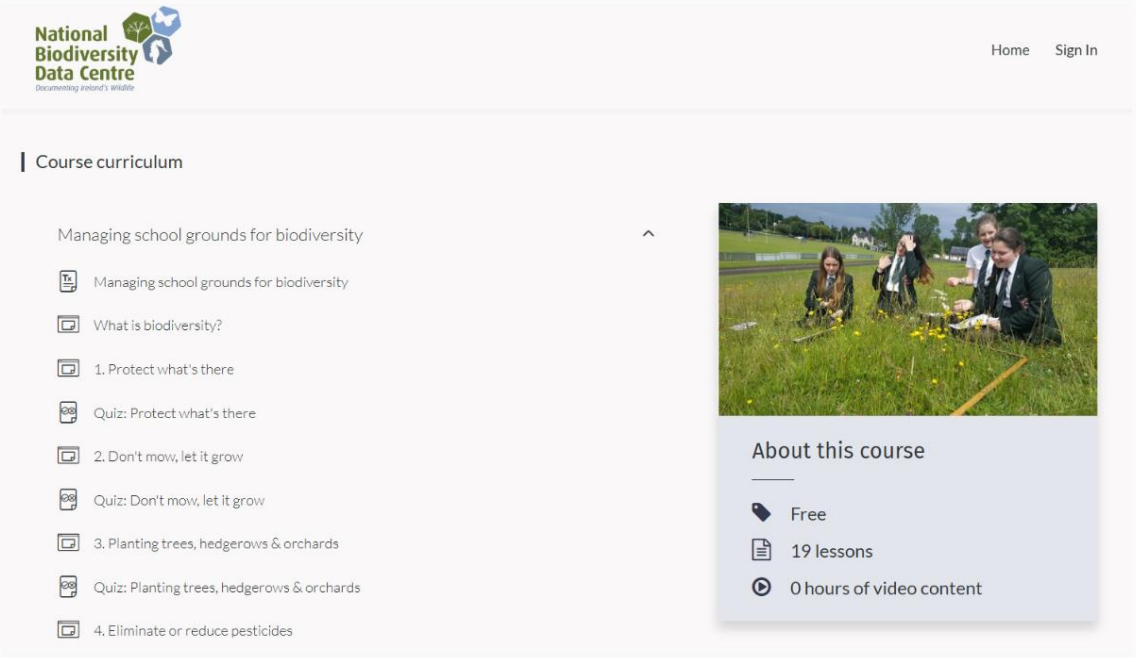
Read more in the new guest blog, written by Riverwood Biodiversity Group.

[Guest blog: Orchids appear in Riverwood's no mow verge]



Free online course: Managing School Grounds for Biodiversity

A free online course for Managing School Grounds for Biodiversity' is available on the National Biodiversity Data Centre learning platform. Developed in collaboration with the Department of Education in the Republic of Ireland, and with input from teachers and school staff across the island, this course is aimed at caretakers, groundskeepers, and those responsible for caring for school grounds. From pesticide alternatives to plant lists, biodiversity-friendly mowing tips to ideas on getting the school community involved, this is an opportunity for any school wanting to manage their grounds for nature, no matter their size, space, or previous experience.



Course: Managing school grounds for biodiversity

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