

How to win the Tidy Towns Special Pollinator Award: Case study of the 2016 national champions (large town category)

Case study # 2: “Monaghan: Trees for Bees - Biodiversity Town and the Push for Pollinators”

Group: Monaghan Tidy Towns

Sector: Local Communities

County: Monaghan

Introduction

Monaghan Tidy Towns are certainly worthy winners of the 2016 Tidy Towns Special Pollinator Award (large town category). Their efforts to help pollinators began several years ago- even **before** the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan was published- as part of their biodiversity work.



All Tidy Towns groups competing for the Special Pollinator Award are encouraged to plan their projects using the Pollinator Plan guidelines: “Local communities: Actions to help pollinators.” This guideline document suggests more than 20 pollinator friendly actions local communities can take. Monaghan Tidy Towns used these guidelines and furthermore found innovative ways specifically suited to their community to implement the suggested actions.

One specific reason Monaghan claimed the 2016 Pollinator Award was because they strategically planned for pollinators. Through collaborations with experts the group identified existing habitats that benefit pollinators, like a local meadow and their Greenway. Areas that were lacking food and shelter for pollinators were then identified. The group recognized that to really benefit their pollinators, they needed to find a way to link up pollinator friendly habitats. To do this, they launched the Dispersed Urban Orchard project. Monaghan Tidy Towns purchased heritage varieties of fruit trees from SeedSavers and sold them for a fiver to Monaghan Town residents. The location of the planted trees were mapped to ensure that a network of flowering resources could provide food for local pollinators.

Another impressive project involved making a 7km stretch of the Ulster Canal Greenway pollinator friendly. Thanks to previous work by the Tidy Towns group in collaboration with Monaghan County Council, the greenway was already designed to benefit biodiversity and educate the public; outdoor classrooms and QR-coded trail markers were used to highlight the importance of the trail’s wildlife. But now specific actions have been taken on the trail to benefit pollinators. Native wildflowers are allowed to bloom to benefit bees and hoverflies, and embankments were created to allow solitary ground nesting bees to make their homes. The Greenway is recognised as an important linear habitat for pollinators in the area.



Monaghan Tidy Towns are a great example of how a small group of residents can make a big difference for pollinators. If you want advice for how to make your local community a better place for pollinators, download “Local Communities: Actions to help pollinators” from our website (www.biodiversityireland.ie/pollinator-plan).

Funding for the 2016 Tidy Towns Special Pollinator Award was provided by the Heritage Officers & Biodiversity Officers of Local Authorities across Ireland.