

## FLOWER-INSECT TIMED COUNT (FIT Count)

*Watch a 50x50cm patch of flowers for 10 minutes and record how many insects visit*



1. This survey takes place between the beginning of April and the end of September. Wait for a good day. The weather should be warm and dry.
  - If the sky is clear (less than half cloud) the minimum temperature for a count is 13°C
  - If the sky is cloudy (half cloud or more) the minimum temperature for a count is 15°C



2. Find a location containing target flowers. Your location can be anywhere e.g., garden, farm, park, school. You will need to watch insects in a 50cm by 50cm square patch
  - ✓ Try to select one of these flowers: Buttercup, Dandelion, Hawthorn, Bramble, Lavender, Hogweed, Knapweed, Ragwort, White clover, Red Clover, Buddleja, Heather, Thistle, Ivy
  - ✓ If you cannot find any of these flowers at your location it is fine to choose another flower that is attracting insects



3. Take a photo of your target flower patch



4. Print out the recording form and fill in the background information about the weather and your flower patch



5. Set a timer for 10 minutes. Stand close enough to the patch so that you can see insects landing on the flowers but don't lean over the top of the patch as this can prevent insects from visiting



6. Count every insect that **lands on** one of the flowers of your **target species** within the 50x50cm patch. Try to count each individual insect just once. If a bumblebee goes from flower to flower in your patch that just counts as one. Count the total number of insects. If you can, put them into the different groups on the recording form (we don't expect you to be an expert, we just ask that you do this as best you can).

7. Add your results to the online data submission system at: <https://records.biodiversityireland.ie/record/fit-count>

8. If you can carry out multiple counts e.g. once a month or even once a week during the year that would be fantastic and will add value to your data. The most useful counts are those that are repeated over time at the same location (or very nearby). You can use different target flowers at different times of year.

This survey follows the methodology of the UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme. We thank them for their generosity in sharing resources.