Our pollinating insects are in decline, with one-third of our 98 wild bee species at risk of extinction. The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan aims to reverse these declines and make the island a place where pollinators can survive and thrive. By taking simple steps in your garden, you will help provide much-needed food and shelter for our pollinating insects, while creating a beautiful, colourful garden.

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Put your garden on the Map!
The Pollinator Plan’s online mapping system tracks actions for pollinators across the island. Please add your pollinator-friendly garden to our map at: pollinators.biodiversityireland.ie

Here are just some ideas for ways you can help pollinators each month:

January
- Make a pollinator plan for your garden
- Wild pollinators are hibernating now and don’t need our help just yet, but you can use this time to get prepared. Look through all our tips, videos and plant lists at www.pollinators.ie, and draw up a ‘pollinator plan’ for your garden.

February
- Create solitary bee nesting sites
- Expose a south/west-facing bank by removing vegetation for mining bees. Or erect a small bee hotel for cavity-nesting bees. See ‘Creating Wild Pollinator Nesting Habitats’ guide at pollinators.ie/gardens

March
- Let Dandelions Bee
- Even if you only have a very small garden or none at all, you can still help. Plant a ‘pot for pollinators’ to flower on your patio, balcony or window sill throughout the season. See instruction guide at pollinators.ie/gardens

April
- Pots for Pollinators
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May
- No Mow May
- Could you leave your lawn mower in the garage during May? This will allow Red and White Clover to bloom in your lawn to feed the hungry bees. (True bee-lovers cut their grass just once a month – at the end of June, July and August – to let wildflowers bloom all summer!)

June
- Ask your garden centre for pollinator-friendly plants
- Look for seedlings of native species, such as Ragwort or Pettywax, and traditional bedding plants, such as Begonias or Pelargoniums. See our guide ‘Collecting and using pollinator-friendly Wildflower Seed’ at pollinators.ie/resources

July
- Hanging baskets can be pollinator-friendly too
- Considering a hanging basket? Make sure it contains Boreas or Bocconia, pollen-rich flowers that do well in containers.

August
- Collect wildflower seeds
- It is important to only plant native wildflower seed of local provenance. August is a good time to collect seed locally from your favourite wildflowers. This can be grown on in pots and then added as plugs to your wildflower patch. See our guide ‘Collecting and using pollinator-friendly Wildflower Seed’ at pollinators.ie/resources

September
- Cut long-flowering native hedgerow
- If you have a long-flowering shrub or tree to your garden that will flower and provide food for pollinators for years to come. There are lots of different types and sizes to choose from!

October
- Plant a shrub, tree or native wildflower
- Add a pollinator-friendly shrub or tree to your garden that will flower and provide food for pollinators for years to come.

November
- Plant bee-friendly bulbs
- Plant pollinator-friendly bulbs such as Crocus or Snowdrops now, to flower next February/March. This will give early bees a good start to the new year.

December
- Take willow cuttings locally
- Plant pollinator-friendly willow cuttings easily from cuttings. (It’s best to plant them away from houses to avoid damaging pipework.) Don’t forget you can also create pollinator-friendly gardens in your school, business, or housing estate. Winter is a good time to make plans.
A pollinator-friendly garden provides **FOOD** in the form of pollen-rich flowers, **SHELTER** for nesting, and **SAFETY** by eliminating chemicals. Try to make sure your garden has pollinator-friendly flowers in bloom from mid-February through to the end of October.

**FOOD**

- Plant pollinator-friendly shrubs.
- Add pollinator-friendly flowers such as Bidens or Bacopa to hanging baskets and window boxes.
- Create a herb bed to benefit your cooking as well as the bees!
- Plant big patches of each pollinator-friendly plant for better foraging efficiency.
- Reduce mowing to allow wildflowers to bloom around your lawn in patches or strips (you don’t have to buy wildflower seed! just stop mowing).
- Plant pollinator-friendly containers. Choose pollinator-friendly bulbs, such as Crocus, which will flower in early spring.
- Allow Ivy and Bramble to grow in a corner of your garden as they provide important food sources in late summer and autumn for pollinators.
- Plant pollinator-friendly trees such as Apple trees, or native trees such as Wild Cherry or Rowan.
- Native flowering hedgerows, such as Hawthorn or Blackthorn provide important food in spring.
- Your fruit and veg. patch will benefit from pollinators and vice versa.

**SHELTER**

- Areas of long grass for bumblebees to nest.
- Erect a small bee hotel for cavity-nesting solitary bees.
- Earth Banks - bare soil/dry stone walls for nesting solitary bees. Did you know only 10 species of Irish bees are likely to use a garden nest box, but we have 62 species of mining bees?
- Grafton banks to benefit your cooking as well as the bees!
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**SAFETY**

- Avoid using harmful chemicals.
- While reducing mowing and planting native trees and shrubs is always best for biodiversity, there are also lots of pollinator-friendly ornamental plants. Here is just a small selection:

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