

Pollinator-friendly Pesticide Code



Best Practice in the Use of Pesticides

In addition to the Honeybee who lives in hives, we also have 21 different types of Bumblebee and 77 different types of Solitary Bees in Ireland. Bumblebees and Solitary Bees live entirely in the wild. We need healthy populations of all these bees to carry out pollination if we want to have wildflowers in the landscape; be able to grow our own fruits and vegetables; or buy affordable, locally grown apples or strawberries in our shops. Bees and other pollinators can only survive in a landscape that provides them with food, shelter and safety throughout the year. Already, one-third of our 98 wild bee species are threatened with extinction from Ireland.

Insecticides pose the greatest direct hazard to insect pollinators. However, herbicides are having a much greater negative impact on pollinators because they are so widely used.

Even if Herbicides, Fungicides and Plant Growth Regulators have little or no toxicity to pollinators, many of the plants we spray as 'weeds' are actually vital sources of food for pollinators, especially in early spring. Pollinators need a range of flowers to feed on from spring through to autumn. The overuse of these chemicals is making it very difficult for them to find enough food to survive in our landscape.



DO

- ✓ Check the label and select pesticides that are less harmful to pollinators
- ✓ Always read, understand, and follow the product label instructions fully
- ✓ Treat only the target area
- ✓ Spot-treat rather than use blanket sprays
- ✓ Follow the buffer zone instructions on the product label
- ✓ Leave areas of pollinator-friendly habitat free from all pesticides. These include areas of clover or wildflowers, the base of hedgerows, and any natural areas.
- ✓ Minimize spray drift to non-target areas by:
 - Using equipment that reduces drift
 - Checking the weather forecast before application and being mindful of changing conditions.
 - Ensuring you spray when the wind is blowing away from pollinator-friendly habitat.



Don't

- ✗ Do not apply pesticides to bees or other pollinating insects
- ✗ Do not spray flower-rich areas (including weeds) when flowers are in bloom and providing food for bees. Plants we might consider weeds (e.g. Dandelions, Vetches, Clovers, Dead-Nettles, Knapweed) are important food sources, as they provide high quality pollen and nectar for bees.
- ✗ Do not apply pesticides to areas that have been identified as important nesting areas for pollinators.
- ✗ Do not apply pesticides to standing water.

* Pesticides should always be used sparingly and only when absolutely necessary, such as in treatment of invasive species, e.g. Japanese Knotweed.