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Business Supporters Newsletter: February 2023

Dear All

We are delighted to welcome the following companies/organizations as business supporters of the AIPP.

New Business Supporters include: Optel Group, plus we are delighted to say that Codec and Wicklow Way Wines have re-committed in 2023.

Impacts & Dependencies - AIPP an entry-level to biodiversity on any site
In the language of biodiversity we often talk of 'impacts' and 'dependencies'. Simply put - we are '*dependent*' on pollinators (wild bees) for pollination of crops, trees, flowers etc. and we know we can have an almost immediate '*impact*' on their environment by delivering AIPP evidence-based actions. We also know that as we start taking action for pollinators, we are impacting on wider biodiversity.

So, don't overthink what your company might do for biodiversity. Focus on pollinators first, an entry-level (which can be cost-neutral or low cost) and then add other biodiversity year on year.

Mapping Actions

Many thanks to all businesses who have mapped evidence-based actions on our GIS '[Actions for Pollinators](#)' - biodiversity-accountability mapping portal. Mapping actions is now MANDATORY and it is part of the requirement for participation in AIPP. N.B. No physical site? No problem; there are lots of communication actions in which you can participate. Delivering physical actions for a third party? If you have permission from the landowner (re GIS mapping),

map what you are doing on their site. OR You can list what you are planting on their site as a communication action.

Sarah Kelly

Agri-business Officer

*The [All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025](#), co-ordinated by the [National Biodiversity Data Centre](#), actively addresses the time-critical pollinator-biodiversity challenge. It is a shared plan of action for the island now in its sixth year, which builds on the targets within [The EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy](#), Ireland's *National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021* (Objective 4) and is mentioned in Northern Ireland's *Biodiversity Plan to 2020*, to halt and reverse pollinator decline by 2030. It responds to the Irish Government's 2019 Biodiversity Emergency Declaration which happened alongside the Climate Declaration. It is also aligned with Bord Bia's Origin Green programme with reference to 'pollinator actions', and, supports members' biodiversity targets.

BEE WATCH: keep an eye out for large bumblebee queens emerging from hibernation

The two most common bumblebee queens you will spot this month are the Buff-tailed bumblebee (*Bombus terrestris*) and the White-tailed bumblebee (*Bombus lucorum*). They are similar to each other – both have one band on the thorax, one band on the abdomen and a whitish tail. The Buff-tailed bumblebee has orange bands and a buff or off-white tail. The White-tailed bumblebee has lemon yellow bands and a clean white tail. Submit your sightings to the *National Biodiversity Data Centre*. You can attach a photo if you're not sure if you have the correct identification.



TO DO THIS MONTH: check your business has early food sources for pollinators

Most wild bees don't come out of hibernation before March, but you will see some early bumblebees this month (like the two above). From next month, many native plants will begin flowering again, but in this early 'hunger gap', business sites and employees gardens can be very important sources of food in terms of ornamental planting. It's the reason we promote bulb planting in autumn! It's a good idea to have a look at your business site/garden and check if there are any early flowering ornamental plants you could add.

Are your **employees** aware of this important action for pollinators? REVIEW '[Pledge Your Garden](#)' and [Pots for Pollinators](#).



[More information](#)

TOP TEN BULBS

In April, the AIPP will launch a new Top Ten planting guideline with pollinator friendly plants for different situations. These are mostly pollinator-friendly *ornamental plants* and the guide is intended to help you choose the best plants in business and garden settings.

We are delighted to have collaborated on this with Dr Noeleen Smyth in UCD. Below, is a 'taster'

of our top ten bulbs for pollinators. Your business site/garden might have these already. If not, you should make a plan to add some in the autumn. *Remember: the likes of Daffodils and Tulips, though beautiful, have virtually no pollen value.*

Are your **employees** aware of this important action for pollinators? REVIEW **'Pledge Your Garden'** and **Pots for Pollinators**.

ORNAMENTAL POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY PLANTS

Bulbs

These colourful non-native plants brighten up gardens and parks in winter and early spring. Only single flowered varieties are of benefit to pollinators. Whilst not as valuable as native species, they can still supplement the food provided by native plants but should be kept to gardens and parks.



When to plant:

Plant spring-flowering bulbs in autumn, and summer and autumn-flowering bulbs in spring. The planting depth recommended is usually 1.5 to 2.5 times the size of the bulb. Take care to follow instructions on the packet and plant bulbs the correct way up. Look for a flat root plate or dried roots, and you'll know this is the bottom. The top of a bulb is also usually narrower than the bottom.

How to manage:

These are all perennial and will grow year after year. Once planted they require little maintenance. If you want to extend your bulb area you can divide and plant the smaller bulbs and corms that form after flowering. Always allow foliage to die back naturally as it provides the bulb with food for the next flowering season. If you remove foliage too early, the flowers will become smaller in subsequent years.

<p>Grape Hyacinth Muscari spp.</p>  <p>☀️</p>	<p>Wood Anemone Anemone nemerosa</p>  <p>☀️</p>	<p>Snake's Head Fritillary Fritillaria meleagris</p>  <p>☀️</p>	<p>Camassia Camassia leichtlinii and cultivars</p>  <p>☀️ ☀️</p>	<p>Star of Bethlehem Ornithogalum umbellatum</p>  <p>☀️</p>
<p>Ornamental Allium Allium spp. and cultivars</p>  <p>☀️</p>	<p>Autumn Crocus Colchicum spp.</p>  <p>🍂</p>	<p>Snowdrop Galanthus spp.</p>  <p>❄️</p>	<p>Winter Aconite Eranthis hyemalis</p>  <p>❄️</p>	<p>Crocus Crocus spp.</p>  <p>❄️ ☀️</p>

Flowering time:
 ☀️ Spring ☀️ Summer 🍂 Autumn ❄️ Winter

Note: Wood Anemone occurs as a native plant but is also commonly purchased as a spring flowering bulb from garden centres or nurseries. Purchased plants should never be added to the wider landscape.



www.pollinators.ie

Native trees can be excellent sources of food for pollinators on your business site, especially in spring and early summer. Within the Pollinator Plan, we are delighted to release a new free resource: a flyer with guidance on planting trees for pollinators, produced with the support of the *Tree Council of Ireland*, the *Native Woodland Trust*, and *Trees on the Land*.

Remember: check the provenance of native trees is from this island. e.g. a *Blackthorn* from *Central/Eastern Europe* will flower at the wrong time of year for our pollinators. Always seek expert advice on tree planting for your business site.

PLANTING TREES FOR POLLINATORS

All-Ireland Pollinator Plan

Pollinators like wild bees need nectar and pollen for energy and protein. Tree flowers can provide both, often when other food is scarce in spring and early summer.

Planting trees is a great way to create 'wildlife corridors'. Bumblebees tend to forage up to 1km from their nest, and solitary bees only forage within a few hundred metres. The more connected their habitats are, the easier it is for them to find the resources they need. Plant trees to create wildlife corridors between existing valuable habitats such as species-rich grassland and native flowering hedgerows.

Right Tree


Trees are crucial to a healthy ecosystem and can support a huge variety of species. Local provenance native trees are best for our native wildlife as they have evolved alongside each other. If grown locally there will be a lower risk of importing pests and diseases.


On the back of this flyer is a selection of native trees that are particularly good for pollinators.


Right Place


A variety of habitats is needed for a healthy ecosystem. Some habitats are already valuable to biodiversity, so it is best to avoid planting trees in these areas.


They include species-rich grassland, wetlands or areas adjacent to streams, coastal habitats, bogs, heathland, or sites with rare or protected species.














Native Pollinator-friendly Trees


Hawthorn/Whitethorn



Hawthorn/Whitethorn is a common hedgerow species but can also be grown as a standalone tree producing lots of flowers for pollinators and red haws in autumn for birds to enjoy. Hawthorn supports c.149 insect species.

Height: 15m


Blackthorn



Blackthorn provides a home for 109 insect species. Related to cherries and plums, the fruit of the blackthorn resemble small plums and are enjoyed by lots of animals, including wood mice, finches and foxes.

Height: 6-7m


Willow



Willow supports 266 insect species and 160 lichens. Goat or Grey willows are wonderful plants for pollinators as they provide lots of pollen and nectar in their tiny flowers in early spring when there is little else in flower. Willows can be grown easily from cuttings.

Height: 10m


Rowan



Rowan is also known as 'Mountain Ash' as it has similar leaves to the ash tree. Rowan supports 28 insects and 125 lichens. It is a very attractive tree, with white flower clusters in spring for pollinators, and red berries in autumn.

Height: 8-10m


Wild Cherry



Wild Cherry is a pretty native tree that will provide food for pollinators as well as fruit for birds. Its beautiful blossom makes it a popular choice for towns and parks.

Height: 18-25m

Crab Apple



Crab Apple can be found in many of our old native hedgerows. It supports 93 insect species, including pollinators, and crab apples provide food for birds and mammals in autumn.

Height: 10m

*Insect & lichen diversity based on UK Research and refers to Britain: Southwood, T.R.E (1961) The number of species of insect associated with various trees. J. Animal Ecology 30:1-8; Rose F. & Harding, P.T. (1978) Pasture and woodlands in Lowland Britain and their importance for the conservation of the epiphytes and invertebrates associated with old trees. Nature Conservancy Council & The Institute of Terrestrial Ecology

[Read more](#)

LOOK WHO'S TALKING: what do AIPP Comms actions for business look like in 2023 across the 'value chain'?

When referring to biodiversity we talk about '*dependencies*' and '*impacts*'.

We are '**dependent**' on pollinators (for pollination) - our 100 wild bee species on this island are struggling to survive - AND we can have an almost immediate '**impact**' by taking *AIPP evidence-based actions* - an entry-level into biodiversity on any site. We also know that as we take evidence-based actions for pollinators we impact on wider biodiversity. [READ HERE Physical Actions](#).

Biodiversity Actions, Monitoring & Measurement

Consider AIPP in the context of deliver on (if applicable) the *Taskforce on Nature Related Financial Disclosures* and the *Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive* (CSRD).

Your SUPPLIERS - consider simple SMART targets

- Have you sent your suppliers the [AIPP Business Guidelines](#).
- Are suppliers signed up to [AIPP](#) as an evidence-based biodiversity initiative.

- Encourage Landscape Contractors/Grounds Maintenance company to follow the AIPP [evidence-based guidelines](#) (including mapping).

Your EMPLOYEES - consider simple SMART targets

Invite employees to:

- [Pledge Your Garden](#) (including mapping) OR [pot/planter](#).
- Conduct garden monitoring April-Sept ([FIT Counts](#) - via easy App) and [Citizen Science - Beginners Guide to Recording](#).
- Participate in an in-house 'Wild Bee Garden' competition to celebrate [World Bee Day - 20 May](#).
- Engage on socials: Twitter [@PollinatorPlan](#) / Instagram [@allirelandpollinatorplan](#).
- Progress [e-Learning](#) - free pollinator/biodiversity courses.
- Share with family/community: [Junior Pollinators](#), [Sports/GAA Clubs](#), [Golf](#), [Faith Communities](#).
- Participate in an in-house 'Assign a planter' for employees to plant and manage.
- For multi-site corporates - create an inter-company 'hay meadow' competition.

Your COMMUNITY - consider simple SMART targets

- Work with the local authority, local community and other groups to create pollinator-wildlife [corridors from your site](#). Include a '[connecting habitat](#)' initiative with neighbouring businesses ([double materiality](#)) e.g. to support our beautiful and rare [Large Carder Bee](#).
- Sponsor a local [Tidy Towns](#) initiative or spring bulb planting at a local community centre.
- Print the [Junior Pollinator Plan](#) or [Bee Posters](#) for a [local school](#).
- Encourage your local community to participate in an [AIPP/ChangeX](#) project. Or [fund a project](#) in your area.
- If in a rural area consider how your business is supporting local farmers.

Your BUSINESS - consider the following

Online / on site / on socials

(No land/micro-enterprise OR small SME? Follow the first five bullet points below.)

- Add our logo to your website (and sustainability reporting).
- Display our certificate on your premises/intranet.
- Follow us on socials: Twitter [@PollinatorPlan](#) / Instagram [@allirelandpollinatorplan](#)
- Send the *AIPP Business Supporters newsletter* to colleagues/friends or invite them to sign up directly (skelly@biodiversityireland.ie). Display the newsletter on your intranet.
- Develop an in-house Green Team/appoint a Pollinator-Biodiversity Champion on your site(s).

ESG

- *Procurement/Buying*: include awareness of pollinators-biodiversity in your procurement process with AIPP as an *Essential Criteria* in tenders. Shape buying patterns: i.e. is your business buying/using Peat-Free/ Pesticide-Free (neonicotinoid) products? Is the provenance of native trees Irish? (e.g. if you purchase a *Blackthorn* from Central/Eastern Europe it will flower at the wrong time for our wild bees). Are you choosing an alternative action to wildflower seed sowing - a horticultural action NOT a biodiversity action.
- Evolve your business model to nature-positive integrating AIPP/Biodiversity into your ESG/CSR? [AIPP is aligned to ISO14001:2015 and UN SDGs \(2021-2025\)](#).
- Invite an ecologist to conduct a *Baseline Survey* on your site(s) to [track changes](#) over time and repeat every 5 years.
- Sign up to [Business for Biodiversity Ireland - National business and biodiversity platform](#).

Tracking/Monitoring

- Map [evidence-based actions](#) on the [GIS system 'Actions for Pollinators'](#).
- Conduct citizen science monitoring on site via staff (e.g. [Bumblebee Monitoring Scheme](#)).

THINK TWICE - choose an alternative action

- PLEASE AVOID sowing/scattering wildflower seed mixes (AND choose alternative corporate gifts to seed packets). To do so is NOT a biodiversity action; it is a horticultural action. Make the distinction. [Non-native wildflower seed may contain invasive species such as Black Grass](#), which if

spread could be devastating to the Irish agricultural industry. Instead adopt a [pollinator-friendly mowing regime](#) allowing natural wildflowers to develop.

- PLEASE AVOID honeybee hives/development of an apiary - honeybees are a managed pollinator, not under threat and may create competition for food for the island's 100 wild bee species. To have honeybee hives is NOT a biodiversity action. Honeybee hives are wonderful as a hobby and if you already have hives - please don't increase numbers. Always seek expert advice from your local beekeeping association when considering.



BUMBLEBEE POSTER

In preparation for bumblebees reappearing to brighten up our lives again, now is a great time to remind employees of what the different species look like. We have lots of *National Biodiversity Data Centre* resources to help. CHECK OUT:

- [Free poster](#)
- [Free online identification course](#)
- [Swatches - online shop](#)



THINK TWICE: with regard to planting/sowing wildflower seed

Our pollinators need the native flowers they have evolved alongside.

Studies have shown that the seeds in many wildflower seed mixes are imported from other countries, and are NOT native, despite what the packet might say. There is a huge risk of accidentally bringing in invasive species like *Black grass* that, if spread, would be devastating to the Irish agricultural industry.

Wildflower seed mixes are much more attractive to humans than to pollinators. If you decide to buy wildflower seed, source it very carefully, and never plant outside garden settings.

If you really want to help pollinators & biodiversity, our advice is always to **Don't Sow, Let it Grow**



[Read more](#)

LOOK WHO'S WALKING (the walk): check out how your competitors and neighbours supported pollinators-biodiversity in 2022

REVIEW the written report [HERE](#) and see the evidence-based actions mapped on **[Actions for Pollinators](#)** (GIS) by businesses in 2022.

Ninety-three new companies joined in the past 12-months. In joining, they committed to taking evidence-based actions for pollinators and reporting on their activities. This brought the total number of business supporters to well over 400. N.B. As of 2022, both annual reporting (written) AND mapping are mandatory for AIPP Business Supporters.

To maintain the integrity of this network, those who did not submit an update of their activities in support of the Plan in 2022 were removed from the supporters list (they can re-engage at any point). The adjustment is reflected in the overall figure for AIPP Business Supporters, which now stands at **340**.

The **Business Supporters** network continues to grow underpinned in 2022 by continued funding from **Bord Bia Origin Green**, and, also in 2022 funding from Ireland's new **Business for Biodiversity** Platform (N.B. Platform partners include *Natural Capital Ireland, Business in the Community and the National Biodiversity Data Centre*). Our thanks to the funders for making the crucial interaction between the AIPP and its Business Supporters, including this report, possible.

Interested in other annual reporting from the AIPP? Check out the **All-Ireland Pollinator Plan: Annual Review 2022** (Partners), and **Council Partners Annual Review 2022**.



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