

Creating a pollinator-friendly Sensory Garden

Sensory gardens are spaces that offer opportunities to connect with nature through the five senses: sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste.

Studies show that spending time in nature and connecting with the world around us is good for our health and wellbeing. Big or small, a sensory garden can be a wonderful addition to a community space, school, healthcare site, business, or even your own home.

Fill it with pollinator-friendly plants that feed our wild bees, stimulate the senses, and create a vibrant and relaxing haven for people and pollinators.

Taste delicious homegrown fruit and vegetables like Apples, Tomatoes and Raspberries.

Feel grass beneath your toes, mow every 6 weeks to let Dandelions and Clover grow.

Hear the sound of bees and birds in native trees and hedgerows.

Smell pollen and nectar-rich herbs like Lavender, Rosemary, and Thyme.

Look at colourful pollinator-friendly flowers in recycled containers.



Creating a pollinator-friendly sensory garden can be a fun and rewarding project.

Before you start, consider:

• What's already there?

Identify and protect existing habitats like native wildflowers and trees.

• Who's it for?

Who will use the sensory garden and how will they use the space? Will they need secluded benches, areas for group activities, or mobility accessible pathways?

• What will it be like in each season?

Make sure your sensory garden supports pollinators and people from spring to winter, providing a haven for biodiversity and stimulating the senses all year round.



- Create swathes of colourful pollinator-friendly plants of different shapes and sizes.
- Native species are best for biodiversity, but there are many ornamental plants that can also help pollinators, like the ones below:

BLUE: Catmint, Bellflowers, Grape hyacinth

RED/PINK: Dahlias, Coral bells, Heathers

PURPLE: Lavender, Wallflower, Allium

YELLOW: Coneflower, Goldenrod, Winter aconite



- Plant herbs such as Lavender, Thyme, Lemon Balm, and Rosemary to fill your garden with fragrance. These sweet-smelling plants are great sources of pollen and nectar.



- Build a Willow arch or sculpture, and listen to the buzzing of queen bumblebees on its early spring flowers.
- Enjoy the trickle and splash of a small wildlife pond.
- Fill your garden with birdsong by planting native trees like Holly, Ivy, and Rowan.



- Plant fruit trees like apple or plum. Their blossom feeds pollinators in spring, and in autumn you can enjoy their delicious fruit.
- Plant raised beds of Tomatoes, Beans and Raspberries, or containers of herbs like Chives, Oregano and Thyme. These are all a great source of tasty homegrown produce, and will help feed bees too.



- Create different grass textures by mowing less, and watch wildflowers like Dandelions and Clover appear.
- When Dandelions set seed, have fun blowing their 'clocks'.
- Lambs-ear is a pollinator-friendly ornamental plant. Its soft leaves are covered in fine hairs which some bees use to line their nests.

Learn more at
www.pollinators.ie

