Pollinator Project Award 2024

Application Form

Name of Park or Green Space: _____

Managing Organisation: _____

Application cont_____

Email address: _____

Contact Phone Number: _____

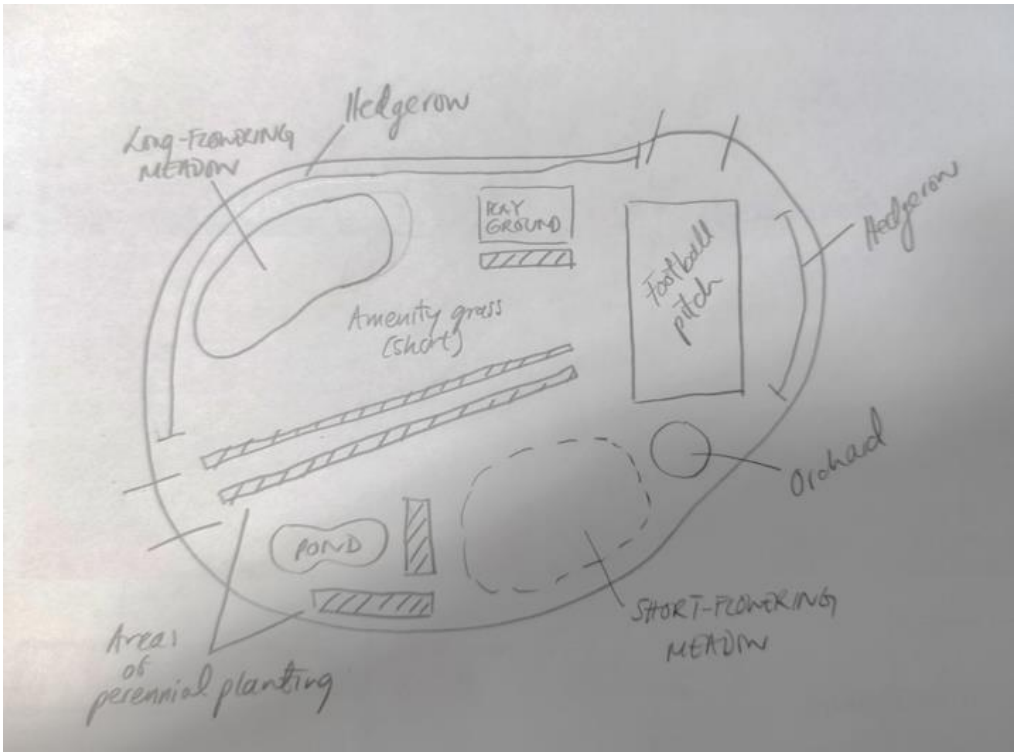
Category (Please tick the most appropriate one)

Town Park	✓
Country Park/Demesne	☐
Walled Garden	☐
Community Award	☐

The assessment criteria for the Pollinator Award have been developed from the evidence-based recommendations of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. Free guidelines and resources to help you choose the best actions for pollinators (including for councils and community groups) can be found at https://pollinators.ie/resources/

Where relevant, please provide details on how your project delivers on the following pollinator-friendly actions. Don't worry if some actions don't apply to your site. Please include photographs throughout your application to help explain the actions you have taken. Visit the Green Flag for Parks Pollinator Awards pages on the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan website to see an example of a completed application form.

The inclusion of a map of your park/garden is very helpful. Please mark all areas (and approximate size/length of features) where actions for pollinators have been carried out.

A: Identify and protect existing areas that are good for pollinators
1. Protect existing sources of food and shelter
Create a simple map showing existing areas that are already good for pollinators and biodiversity in the park, e.g. native flowering trees, hedgerows, and wild areas. 
Outline how you are protecting these existing areas for pollinators and are aiming to connect them to create ecological corridors. Currently we have areas of hedgerows, long and short-flowering meadows, a small orchard, and various areas of perennial planting. We also have lots of native trees as well as non-native trees and shrubs dotted around the park (not mapped). In each case we are managing these according to the Pollinator Plan guidelines. We have identified where we have gaps between the different pollinator actions and are currently investigating how to fill these. Ultimately, our aim is that each pollinator food source will not be further than 100m from the next.

Provide a list of pollinators that have been recorded in your area. Carry out an area-based search on Biodiversity Maps (https://maps.biodiversityireland.ie/). Any pollinators recorded in your area will be listed under the datasets: Bees of Ireland; Hoverflies of Ireland.

Barbut's Cuckoo Bee (Bombus (Psithyrus) barbutellus), Bombus (Bombus) lucorum, Bombus (Bombus) terrestris, Bombus lucorum agg., Common Carder Bee (Bombus (Thoracombus) pascuorum), Early Bumble Bee (Bombus (Pyrobombus) pratorum), Heath Bumble Bee (Bombus (Pyrobombus) jonellus), Honey Bee (Apis mellifera), Large Red Tailed Bumble Bee (Bombus (Melanobombus) lapidarius), Moss Carder-bee (Bombus (Thoracombus) muscorum), Small Garden Bumble Bee (Bombus (Megabombus) hortorum)

Eristalis pertinax, Marmalade Hoverfly (Episyrphus balteatus), Scaeva pyrastri, Volucella bombylans

Have you had an ecologist/ Biodiversity Officer conduct a biodiversity survey in your park and provide tailored advice for managing it? If so, give details below.

No, but we plan to discuss this with our Biodiversity Officer later in the year.

B: Reduce mowing of grassy areas

2: Create a long-flowering meadow

Describe how you have managed some areas of the park as long-flowering meadows (one cut and lift per year). Include the area.

We have started managing an area close to our main hedgerow as a long-flowering meadow (approx. 40 x 8m). At this small size we are confident that we can cut and remove the grass each September. We started this management three years ago and have been delighted to see more species naturally appearing year on year. We have used interpretation to explain the reason for managing the grass this way and have mown a path through the meadow so visitors can enjoy it. We are fortunate that in September, we can give the grass cuttings to a local allotment for their composter.

This year, we are planning on expanding the area of long-flowering meadow slightly and are planning on running a community hay-making day in September to scythe the meadow, teach traditional skills, and raise awareness of its biodiversity value.

3: Create a short-flowering meadow

Describe how you have managed some areas of the park as short-flowering meadow (cut every 4-6 weeks starting in mid-April). Include the area.

We have another area of short-flowering meadow (approx. 30m x 15m). We cut this once a month, after the Dandelions have finished flowering in April. We mow a more regular strip along paths and areas of high footfall to show management is deliberate. We have been delighted to see species like Clovers and Selfheal appearing later in the year, providing important food for pollinators.

4: Let Dandelions Bloom

Describe how you have managed grassy areas so that Dandelions are allowed to bloom in spring (first grass cut of the year in April after they have flowered). Include the area.

We delay mowing in all areas of the park (approximately 3,000m²) until mid-April to let Dandelions bloom.) We use signage to explain why certain areas are unmown, and the value of Dandelions to pollinators.

C: Pollinator-friendly planting

Native *plants (trees, shrubs, wildflowers) are always the best choice for our pollinators. They are the plants our pollinators have evolved alongside, so are perfectly adapted to give them what they need. But in some areas of parks, non-native* ***'ornamental'*** *species can help provide additional sources of food. These species should never be planted in natural or semi-natural areas, or the wider landscape.*

Native planting:

5: Maintain or plant a native flowering hedgerow

Describe how you manage or have planted native flowering hedgerow in the park. Include the length of the hedgerow.

We have 500m of Hawthorn hedgerow in the park which flowers every May. It is only cut occasionally for health and safety reasons.

6: Plant native pollinator-friendly trees

Provide a list of the native pollinator-friendly trees in the park (e.g. Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Willow, Rowan, Wild Cherry, and Crab apple). Ensure there is a range flowering from March through to October.

We have over 40 native pollinator-friendly trees including Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Rowan, Wild Cherry and Rowan. We plan to source native Crab apple and to add them later this year.

Ornamental planting:

7: Plant an orchard of flowering fruit trees

Provide a list of pollinator-friendly fruit trees in the park, or add at least five fruit trees to make an orchard.

We have one small orchard in the park, consisting of three apple trees, one pear and one plum tree. We encourage the local community to use the fruit in autumn.

8: Plant pollinator-friendly bulbs

Provide a list of pollinator-friendly bulbs you have planted in the park. If you can, tell us what percentage of bulbs are pollinator-friendly (aim for 50%).

We have large amounts of spring flowering bulbs in the park. Many of these are Daffodil and Tulip to provide colour for the public. But we also try to plant more pollinator-friendly species and have added Crocus and Grape Hyacinth. Currently these account for approx. 30% and we plan to slowly increase this in coming years.

9: Plant ornamental trees and shrubs

Provide a list (up to 10) of key ornamental pollinator-friendly trees and shrubs in the park.

We have a range of pollinator-friendly trees and shrubs. These include trees like Lime, Laburnum, Field Maple and Juneberry Tree. Some of our shrubs are used for defensive planting like Firethorn and Berberis. We also have Viburnum. We often spot winter bumblebees on our Mahonia and Daphne.

10: Plant pollinator-friendly perennials

Tell us about pollinator-friendly perennials in your beds and planters. Ensure there is a range of species, flowering between February and October.

We have a wide range of pollinator-friendly perennials in our beds and borders. We have assessed these to make sure we have something in flower from early spring through until the autumn. Some of the most important are:

Spring – Lungwort, Comfrey, Perennial Wallflowers
Summer – Hebe, Lamb's-ear, Lavender
Autumn – Heathers, Michaelmas Daisy, Vervain

D: Provide wild pollinator nesting habitat

11: Provide nesting habitat for bumblebees

Describe how you protect or manage areas of long grass as nesting sites for bumblebees and other insects. Provide an area.

Hedgerows: Long grass is left to grow at the base of our hedgerows and is unsprayed and undisturbed to provide nesting habitat for bumblebees. This is approximately 500m along the base of our Hawthorn hedgerow.

12: Provide nesting habitat for mining solitary bees

Describe how you manage or have created areas of bare earth for mining solitary bees. Provide an area.

There are some existing bare earth slopes near the back of the park. These were south-east facing and had evidence of solitary mining bee activity. We don't spray these areas and manually scrape back vegetation every year. Altogether these areas are approximately 10m^2.

13: Provide nesting habitat for cavity-nesting solitary bees

Describe how you manage or have created nesting sites for cavity-nesting solitary bees.

We worked with the local Men's Shed to drill holes 10cm deep into small, unvarnished wooden blocks, which we have placed in several locations around the park close to a food source.

E: Eliminate or reduce the use of pesticides

Note: Please answer either 14 or 15, you do not need to answer both.

14: Tell us about how you have eliminated pesticide use (note that herbicides can still be used on invasive species)

This year we finally eliminated all pesticides in the park. We are working with our local authority to trial alternative methods of removing unwanted plants where necessary, but mostly we're letting plants like Dandelions bloom and provide food for pollinators.

15: If you haven't eliminated pesticides, tell us about how you are reducing their use as a step towards total elimination, including the percentage of reduction.

We have a pesticide reduction policy in the park. We have been cutting down on pesticide use year on year, with the goal of total elimination by the end of 2025. Since implementing this policy three years ago, we have cut down on pesticide use by 75%. Where pesticides are still used, we implement best practice use to limit the impact on biodiversity.

F: Raise awareness of pollinators in your local area

16: Run pollinator events

Tell us about a pollinator event you have run in the park in the past year.

In the summer we ran a guided pollinator walk around the park with the help of our Biodiversity Officer and a local ecologist. It was very well attended and we hope to run more next year.

17: Put up pollinator signage or interpretation in the park

Tell us about any signage or interpretation you have in the park that raises awareness of pollinators and your actions to help them.

In our long-flowering meadow we have a 'Managed for wildlife' sign to show the public that this area is being managed deliberately. Near the entrance we have an interpretation board with information about which pollinators to look out for in the park. We're planning on adding more signs to the park as part of our upcoming biodiversity trail.

18: Create a biodiversity or nature trail around the park.

Tell us about any biodiversity or nature trails you have created around the park. Include the length and describe the habitats on the trail.

We are a relatively small park, but this is something we are working towards. Currently we have mapped all the different biodiversity features so that we can better identify where we have gaps. We hope to create a 1km loop through the park that can also be used for health/fitness. We would like to add a small sensory garden with seating at the beginning/end of the route. We plan to use signage to indicate all the different biodiversity features such as our long-flowering meadow, Hawthorn hedge, and bare earth banks for nesting mining bees, as well as the horticultural actions that are supporting our flower visiting insects. When completed, we hope to encourage the local schools to use this as a nature trail.

G: Tracking progress and receiving recognition

19: Add your park and the actions you've taken on the publicly available Pollinator Plan mapping system 'Actions for Pollinators'.

Have you added your park to the Actions for Pollinators online map? If so, please include the username used to add your site.

GreenPark_123

20: Take part in the Bumblebee Monitoring Scheme.

Have you taken part and submitted date to the Bumblebee Monitoring Scheme run by the National Biodiversity Data Centre? If so, please provide the name of your transect route.

We have not yet joined the bumblebee monitoring scheme, but this year we plan to take the free online course to learn to identify the different species. We hope to then join the scheme in the following year. We hope to use our future 1km biodiversity trail as the route.

21: Submit annual Flower-Insect-Timed (FIT) Counts.
Have you submitted an annual FIT Count? If so please provide the recorder name used to submit the data. We have been submitting FIT Count data which we found very convenient to do using the app. This year we aim to submit at least 20 ten-minute counts from the park across the season. A number of staff are involved, so recorders names include John Murphy, Karen Kelly and Jim Byrne.

Please return your application form to ecullen@eeu.antaisce.org before the 2nd September 2024.