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Business Supporters Newsletter: February 2024

Dear All

We are delighted to welcome the following companies/organizations as business supporters of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (AIPP): Valeo Foods Ireland, William's Gate Master Victualler (BWG), Greencoat UKW and Belfast Zoological Gardens.

We encourage you to review the graphic representation (logos) of AIPP's [Business Supporters](#) based on the submissions to the Annual Review 2023.

February is the month to 'Plan for Pollinators'

This month we encourage you to map your site (or a site you manage) from a satellite image to identify this year's No Mow areas. You can also find out which biodiversity is already on or 'adjacent' to your site through [Biodiversity Maps](#).

Remember to use our [Resources](#) when planning / managing or specifying / procuring.

Sarah Kelly
Agri/Business officer

[Business for Biodiversity \(BFB\)](#)

For businesses keen to explore the emerging nature/biodiversity reporting structures and types of approaches to consider, check out the government-backed national platform [Business for Biodiversity Ireland](#) which is now 'live'. The platform will be [providing webinars, knowledge and learning](#) opportunities in the years to come.

National Biodiversity Data Centre

The [All-Ireland Pollinator Plan](#) (AIPP) is a framework bringing together different sectors across the island of Ireland to create a landscape where pollinators can thrive. Implementation of the AIPP is coordinated by the [National Biodiversity Data Centre](#).

WILD BEE WATCH: keep an eye out for large bumblebee queens that have emerged 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 a photograph with any records if you're not sure about identification.

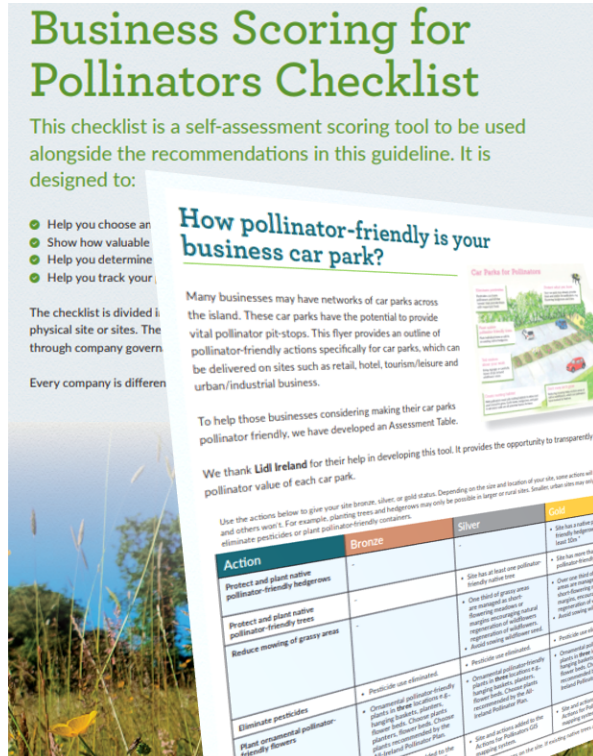


SUBMIT: bumblebee sightings

NEW RESOURCE: Businesses: actions to help pollinators

The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan is delighted to launch a new version of '[Businesses: Actions to help pollinators](#)'. First published in 2016 in collaboration with Bord Bia, the new guidelines provide further structure to the evidence-based actions for pollinators. It is an entry-level into biodiversity, with 33 accessible actions for businesses of all sizes and sectors. New features include actions around 'communications and governance', as businesses increasingly move towards nature-positive through their value chains and procurement. Also featured are two new scoring and assessment mechanisms to help businesses keep track of their progress.

We would like to thank Bord Bia Origin Green who provide funding for the Agri-business officer position and marketing collateral, including this guide, and have supported the AIPP since it's inception.



REVIEW & DOWNLOAD **Businesses: actions to help pollinators**

TO DO THIS MONTH: make a plan for how your business can help pollinators in 2024

We're often asked about the best ways to help our declining wild pollinators. For businesses that will depend on the business sector, size of site(s) and may even focus on communication and governance actions if there is no land available. The updated guidelines **Businesses:actions to help pollinators** and a range of companion **resources** will help with decision-making on on-site/physical actions as you plan your year in support of pollinators. There is also guidance on how to 'spread the word' within your value chain (suppliers, local community, employees). To start off, read the snapshot 'Top Ten ways to help pollinators'.

Top Ten Ways to Help Pollinators

We're often asked about the best ways to help our declining wild pollinators. Here are the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan's top ten evidence-based actions you can take to help these important insects.

If you'd prefer, you can watch our [Top Ten Actions for Pollinators video](#), which takes you through each of the recommendations.

You'll also find links to information about how you can help pollinators every month, what plants they visit and which species you might spot. We'll be adding a new page every month between February and October 2024.

1. Don't mow, let it grow!

Reduce mowing to allow native wildflowers like Dandelions, Clover and Birds-foot Trefoil to naturally return over time.

Why? This action helps to restore species-rich grasslands: a vital habitat providing food and shelter for pollinators. Species-rich grasslands have been decimated in Ireland in recent decades. By reducing mowing – even to once a month – you will help them to slowly return, one pocket at a time



Pollinator-friendly mowing. Pic: Dara Stanley

TOP TEN ways to help pollinators

NEW RECOMMENDED SPONSORSHIP ACTIVITIES:

Ensure to elicit an evidence-based action with local community or employee sponsorship

Many businesses are seeking mechanisms through which they can support biodiversity/nature.

- Pages 23-25 of the updated guidelines [Businesses: actions to help pollinators](#) provides AIPP a *Recommended sponsorship activities* table. Use this table in conjunction with the [companion resources](#).
- Identify what to choose and what to avoid to support pollinators with the Procurement table on Page 29 of [Businesses: actions to help pollinators](#).

Recommended sponsorship activities

The below activities are suggested for larger corporates and SMEs.

Sponsorship by smaller SMEs and microenterprises could take the form of allowing employees to participate for one day a year in a community pollinator activity e.g., bulb or tree planting. Each of these activities may be used as a stand-alone action or as part of a wider initiative e.g., creating a Biodiversity Walking Trail or a pollinator-friendly car park.

Cost	Action	Links: Review individual AIPP guidance at https://pollinators.ie/resources/
££	Sponsor a Biodiversity Survey for a local group	For many local groups, commissioning a biodiversity survey can be prohibitively expensive. Approved ecologists who carry out biodiversity surveys can be found through www.cieem.net N.B. If sponsoring an ecological survey, specify that it should include the National Pollinator Monitoring Scheme recommended methodology.
£	Sponsor an All-Ireland Pollinator Plan Community Resource Pack	All-Ireland Pollinator Plan community resources e.g., Hard copy guidelines, flyers, and posters can be purchased directly from http://www.tagline.ie/
£-££	Sponsor native pollinator-friendly trees	It is vital that any native trees you sponsor are of local Irish provenance to ensure they are of value to pollinators. See Native Pollinator-friendly Trees .
£-£££	Sponsor new native pollinator-friendly hedgerows	It is vital that any native hedgerow plants you sponsor are of local Irish provenance to ensure they are of value to pollinators. See How-to-guide: Hedgerows for Pollinators .
££	Sponsor a meadow cut and lift	Cutting and lifting large volumes of grass from long-flowering meadows can be a challenge for local groups. Can you hire a contractor or ask your own landscaper to cut and lift a local meadow? See How-to-guide: Creating and restoring meadows in local communities and gardens .
£-££	Support your local community in celebrating a pollinator-biodiversity event	This could be paying for a training workshop or local biodiversity walk by an ecological expert. It might also involve providing resources or refreshments for a local biodiversity action day.
£££	Sponsor a local biodiversity walking trail	Consider sponsoring a Biodiversity Walking Trail in your local community using the suggestions on Page 32.
Horticultural actions		
£	Sponsor a heritage fruit tree orchard(s)	An orchard should contain at least five fruit trees. Heritage fruit trees can be sourced from Irish Seed Savers. See How-to-guide: Traditional orchards and fruit trees for pollinators .
£	Sponsor pollinator-friendly bulb planting	Sponsor a 'bucket of bulbs' for a local group. Choose pollen and nectar-rich species e.g., Snowdrop, Crocus or Grape Hyacinth. Ensure bulbs have not been treated with pesticides. See the Top Ten pollinator-friendly plants for different situations Page 11 Bulbs.
££	Sponsor a community herb bed	Sponsor a bed or planter of herbs for pollinators and people to use. Choose delicious pollinator-friendly species e.g., Chives, Rosemary, and Sage. See the Pollinator-friendly Herbs flyer .
££	Sponsor a sensory garden	Help create a sensory garden of pollinator-friendly plants representing the five senses, e.g., Lavender (sight and smell), Lamb's-ear (touch), Chives (taste). This would be a particularly good activity for schools and healthcare sites. See the Sensory Gardens for Pollinators flyer .
££	Sponsor a perennial flower bed	Pollinator-friendly perennials provide food for insects for many years to come. Choose a range of plants to flower from spring through to autumn, e.g., Heather (spring), Salvia (summer), Rudbeckia (autumn). See the Pollinator-friendly Planting Code .

REVIEW & DOWNLOAD Businesses: actions to help pollinators

NEW INITIATIVE: pollinator, native plant, and action of the week

Across the island of Ireland, pollinators are still in decline, but our data shows that local populations are increasing where actions are taken to help them. Every month between February and October, we'll share ideas on how you can support these important insects with evidence-based actions. We'll also be celebrating the connection between native plants and pollinators by shining a spotlight on different species. Each week on social media we will release a pollinator of the week, a native plant of the week, and an action of the week. You can also get the monthly summary on our website. Find out more about pollinators in February below.



FEBRUARY: pollinator, native plant and action of the week

THINK TWICE: Please think twice about 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.

The Pollinator Plan does not endorse any seed suppliers or wildflower seed products. If you really want to help biodiversity, our advice is always to **Don't Sow, Let it Grow**.

If keen to create a wildflower area, regenerate it naturally through a *reduced mowing regime* on your business site(s). See Actions 5 & 6 on Pages 9 & 10 of Businesses:actions to help pollinators which includes advice on post-construction works.

Don't Sow, Let it Grow



[READ MORE](#)

SUBSCRIBE: Business Supporters monthly newsletter (encourage employees and colleagues)



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