

# Ecological Corridors for Pollinators



[www.pollinators.ie](http://www.pollinators.ie) / [www.biodiversityireland.ie](http://www.biodiversityireland.ie)

## What are ecological corridors

Ecological corridors connect isolated habitats, helping insects, birds and mammals move safely through the landscape. They can include hedgerows and roadside verges, watercourses, and greenways. They can also include built up areas where rows of gardens and community spaces connect urban parks.

In all cases, ecological corridors – and the habitats they connect - must be managed in a way that helps biodiversity. This means taking the right actions, letting native plants grow, and avoiding pesticides.

## Why are they important for pollinators?

On the island of Ireland, pollinators are in trouble due to a loss of food and shelter. It is vital that our landscape provides them with the resources they need – at regular intervals - to ensure their survival.

## How can you create ecological corridors?

Farms, businesses, councils, and communities can all play a role in creating ecological corridors. The first step is to identify existing habitats and make a plan to connect them by managing the areas in between for biodiversity.

*On farmland, native flowering trees and hedgerows can create ecological corridors between species-rich grasslands and woodlands.*



# Creating ecological corridors

## Communities .....

### Tips on getting started:

- **Identify existing habitats:** Parts of your community will already be good for biodiversity. Look for native meadows, wild areas, native flowering trees and hedgerows. Prioritise protecting these areas.
- **Join the dots.** Draw lines between these habitats. Ask yourself: how could they connect? How could the spaces in between help biodiversity? There might be roads with verges that could be mown in a pollinator-friendly way, hedgerows that could be allowed to blossom, or gardens that could be 'pledged for pollinators'.
- **Make connections.** Reach out to the landowners, or whoever is responsible for managing these spaces. Invite them to join your community

ecological corridor. The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan has many free guidelines that can help you start these conversations. Visit [pollinators.ie](http://pollinators.ie) to find free resources for businesses, farms, gardens, schools, sports clubs, and faith communities.

**Tip:** Aim for a source of pollen or nectar every 200m.

- **Create a map:** Use the online mapping system *Actions for Pollinators* to build a map of your area – add the different sites and use it to keep track of your ecological corridor as it grows. Visit the website at [pollinators.biodiversityireland.ie](http://pollinators.biodiversityireland.ie)

**Tip:** *Actions for Pollinators* (pictured below) can help you identify local areas that are already being managed for pollinators.



# Creating ecological corridors

## Councils .....

Many councils are developing Blue Green Infrastructure strategies. These typically have three key aims:

- To create interconnected habitats for nature.
- To use natural solutions to protect water sources, and as mitigation against climate change and extreme weather events.
- To create amenities that support human health and well-being and establish a sense of place.

Creating ecological corridors can help achieve these aims.

### Choosing the right actions:

Some actions will support all three aims, but others will not. For example, sowing a non-native wildflower seed mix might result in an attractive feature for humans, but it is not a biodiversity action. A Green Wall might be useful for improving air quality or urban cooling, rather than biodiversity.

It is important that within any Blue Green Infrastructure strategy, there is a standalone ecological corridor layer that is based on evidence-based actions for biodiversity.

### Mapping an ecological corridor:

Councils will have their own GIS-based systems which can be used to map existing habitats and other natural amenities.

Plan your ecological corridor strategically, linking existing habitats with new ones as opportunities arise. For example, a verge that the council begins to mow in a pollinator-friendly way, a new native hedgerow, or a native tree planting initiative.

### Creating connections:

Ecological corridors on council-managed land can be greatly enhanced by working with the community. Local groups, residents' associations, faith communities, sports clubs, schools, businesses and even people in their own gardens can help join the dots by taking actions for biodiversity on the land they manage.



SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL'S GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE MAP

- Existing Long Meadows
- Existing Short Meadows
- Bulb Areas
- Trees
- County Boundary
- Hedgerows
- Lakes
- Water Features
- Proposed Mini Woodlands
- SDCC Parks

# Examples of Ecological Corridors

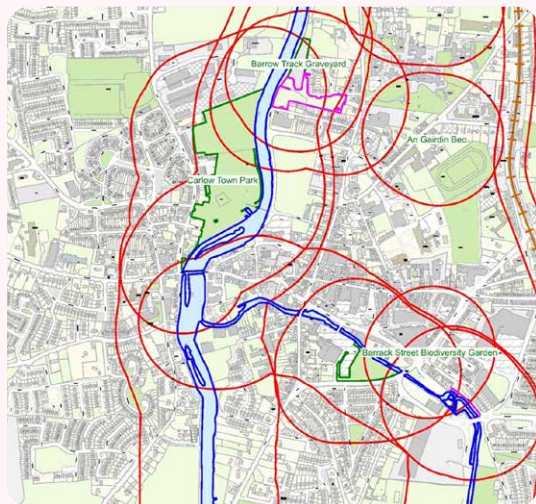
## Blarney Street Pollinator Path

A group of neighbours in Blarney Street, Cork City, got together to create a network for pollinators – Blarney Street Pollinator Pathway. The idea behind it was simple. All they asked people to do was: pick a place, mow less, and spray less pesticides.

Working with a local designer to create eco-friendly window stickers, they organised door to door visits to have friendly chats with the neighbours. Each household received a window sticker, and were invited to make their garden part of the Pollinator Path. This simple, inspiring idea not only helped pollinators, but also brought the community closer together.



Pollinator Path sticker, photo Aaron Ross @aaross\_creative



Carlow Pollinator Foraging Network, image by Shane Casey

## Carlow County Council Pollinator Foraging Map

In 2023, Carlow County Council decided that “No pollinator in County Carlow’s towns and villages will have to travel more than 200m in order to find a food source.”

They adopted a Green Infrastructure Strategy which included steps to identify, protect and enhance urban pollinator foraging networks. They developed a pollinator foraging map, which was initially trialled in Carlow Town. This helped identify green spaces managed for biodiversity, as well as ‘pollinator commuting zones’ around them. Each area was then managed under pollinator-friendly regimes including pesticide reduction, reduced mowing, and native tree planting where appropriate.

## Nature Recovery Networks Northern Ireland

Creating Nature Recovery Networks has required a strategic, long-term, and cross-sector approach to map, manage, restore, enhance and create habitats and landscapes in Northern Ireland. The NRN approach aims to identify and protect the most critical habitats, focus on conserving biodiversity at a regional and landscape scale, and highlight the link between the status of the natural world and human well-being. The result will be a well-connected network of sites to allow wildlife safe passage through the landscape.



© Northern Ireland Landscape Partnership