



Business Supporters Newsletter: April 2024

Dear All

We are delighted to welcome the following companies/organisations as business supporters of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (AIPP): Schlotter Ireland DAC, Shackletons Milling Ltd., Ashford Castle Hotel Ltd., FP McCann, BioSense, and Apex Housing Association + Apex Ireland.

April is the month when we #Let Dandelions Bee

- Raise awareness about 'reduced mowing' and removal of grass cuttings across [employees](#), [suppliers](#) and the [local community](#).
- Also, remember to review our [Resources](#) this month when planning / managing (or sponsoring) for pollinators-biodiversity.

Looking ahead to May

Don't forget May is a busy month for all things pollinators including [No Mow May](#), World Bee Day (20th May), National Biodiversity Week (17-24 May), and the (virtual) Festival of Farmland Biodiversity. Don't forget too that Bord Bia's Bloom event, at which the AIPP will feature, begins on 30 May this year.

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' and is [providing webinars, knowledge and learning](#) opportunities. Review 2024's sectoral [Energy Communities of Practice](#).

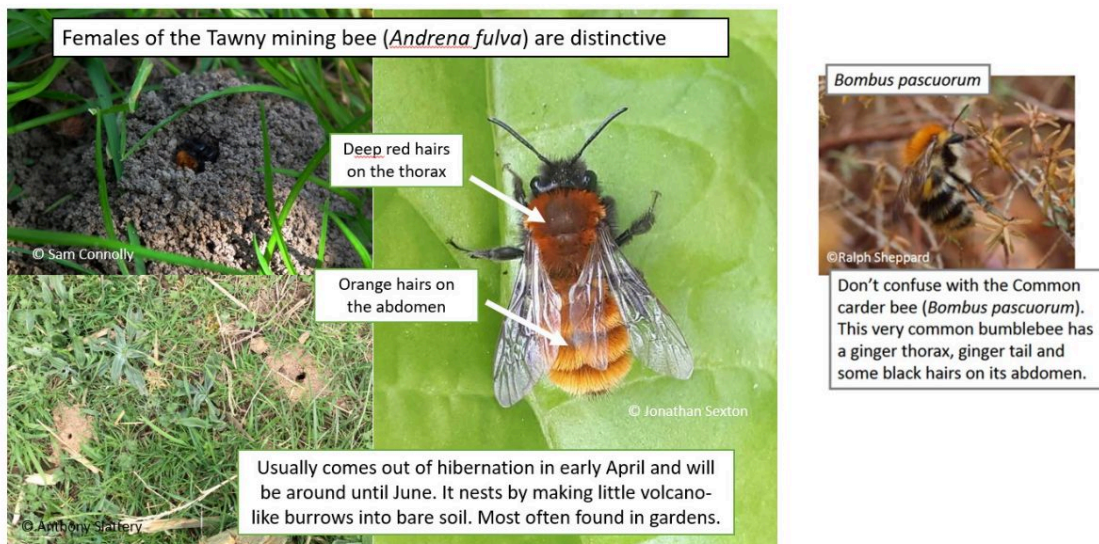
National Biodiversity Data Centre

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: Spot the Tawny Mining Bee

This is one of our most distinctive solitary bees – look out for deep red hairs on the thorax and orange hairs on the abdomen. It usually comes out of hibernation in April and will be around until June. It nests by making little volcano-like burrows into bare soil and can be found in gardens. The Tawny Mining bee (*Andrena fulva*) was thought to be extinct for 87 years in Ireland, before being rediscovered in 2012. It is now known from counties Down, Dublin, Wicklow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Kildare, Carlow & Waterford.

Can you help discover more new populations?



SUBMIT: Solitary bee sightings

TO DO THIS MONTH: #Let Dandelions Bee

April's reduced mowing tips

This month will see the biggest bloom of Dandelions. These native wildflowers are vital sources of nectar and pollen. Records sent to the National Biodiversity Data Centre in 2023 showed that Dandelions were the most popular food source for wild bees. Help feed hungry pollinators this month and #LetDandelionsBee.

Reducing mowing even to once a month can help feed our hungry pollinators. By mowing less, you are giving native wildflowers a chance to pop up naturally. Over time this will result in pockets of species-rich grassland: a vital habitat providing food and shelter for pollinators. **If your business is taking part in No**

Mow May this year and you're worried about grass growth, cut the grassy area/ lawn before the end of April. This will ensure the height is manageable when it's time to mow again. REMEMBER - remove grass clippings to help wildflowers grow.

No land? No problem. For alternative AIPP evidence-based actions, including pollinator-friendly planting and/or community sponsorship review [Businesses: actions to help pollinators](#).

Create a short-flowering meadow

By mowing just once a month, you can give native wildflowers and insect friendly grasses a chance to pop up naturally and help feed hungry wild bees. No seeds needed!



April:

#Let Dandelions Bee



When you mow, make sure you remove grass clippings so wildflowers can grow.

May:

#No Mow May



June:

#Let it Bloom June



Be creative when you mow! Cut pathways, spirals, and shapes.

July:

#Help Them Fly July



August:



If your grass gets too tall at any stage, trim it with blades raised high to save the wildflowers. Leave some corners to grow long.



Want to do more? Create a long-flowering meadow by cutting once a year in September.

Find out more at www.pollinators.ie

Photos: Steven Falk

[READ MORE HERE](#)

NEW RESOURCE: Ecological Corridors

We are delighted to release a new resource on ecological corridors for pollinators. This short booklet provides an introduction to ecological corridors and tips on how to create them. Ecological corridors connect isolated habitats in both urban and rural settings, 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 business sites, technology parks, community spaces and gardens which connect with urban parks. Use tools such as [Actions for Pollinators](#) (GIS) and [Action for Biodiversity](#), if considering partnering with neighbours to create an ecological corridor.

Ecological Corridors for Pollinators

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.



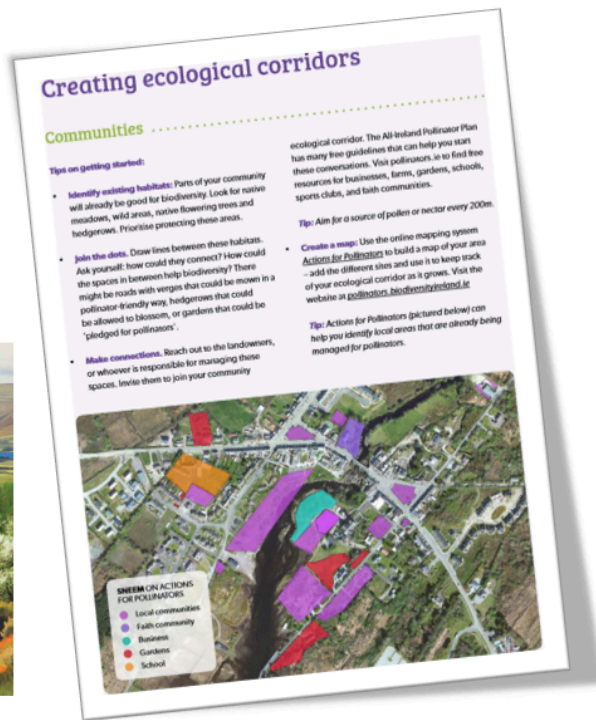
www.pollinators.ie / www.biodiversityireland.ie

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.



READ & DOWNLOAD ECOLOGICAL CORRIDORS

WEBINAR: Origin Green 'Pathways to Pollinator-biodiversity - a company viewpoint

26 April 2024, 1100-1200

Origin Green, Bord Bia's food sustainability programme, in conjunction with the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (AIPP), invite you to the next webinar in the *'Pathways to Pollinator-biodiversity – a company viewpoint'* series.

This webinar will focus on how companies are interacting with the evidence-based All-Ireland Pollinator Plan now aligned with Origin Green Members' biodiversity targets (optional).

The webinar will include three 10-minute 'short talks' from:

- Brendan Moran - Sustainability Project Lead for Aurivo Ltd.
- Trish Feury – Operations Support Manager for Ballygowan: Britvic Ireland
- Sadhbh McCarrick - Sustainability Manager for Dawn Farm Foods

Each speaker will highlight, as a case study, their company's biodiversity actions both on site and across the 'value' chain and relate each back to the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan evidence-based actions within the **Businesses: actions to help pollinators** [Businesses » All-Ireland Pollinator Plan \(pollinators.ie\)](https://www.pollinators.ie) guidelines.

BOOK HERE: [Origin Green Webinars](https://www.origin.ie) | [Sustainable Enterprise Skillnet](https://www.skillnet.ie)



An initiative by

BORD BIA
IRISH FOOD BOARD

BOOK FOR THE WEBINAR

MAP EARLY, MAP OFTEN: 'Actions for Pollinators' (GIS) and your business site's evidence-based actions

A massive thank you to those businesses actively mapping their AIPP evidence-based actions on [Actions for Pollinators](#) (GIS), now mandatory for AIPP business supporters. We really appreciate it and will be using the layered data in the coming years to interpret the 'impact' of those actions delivered.

A few pointers when mapping:

(i) Click 'SAVE' on repeated actions: When you sign-in to your 'Actions for Pollinators' GIS account, your 2023 on-site actions will still be visible. Edit/overwrite last year's actions with 2024's actions; then click 'SAVE'. N.B. If you are repeating on-site actions in 2024 that your business delivered in 2023 you must still click 'SAVE' on each action.

(ii) Naming protocol 'Site Name': Please list your business name first e.g., *Company X – reduced mowing*.

(iii) Garden on your business site? Please list sector as 'Business' and list business name first as e.g., *'Company X (Garden) – reduced mowing'*.

(iv) Asset Manager (or delivering for a third party)? Please list the landowner first e.g., *'Company X (Garden/Residential Dev.) – reduced mowing'*.

(v) Start to provide, where possible, accurate measurements e.g., linear metres native hedgerow.

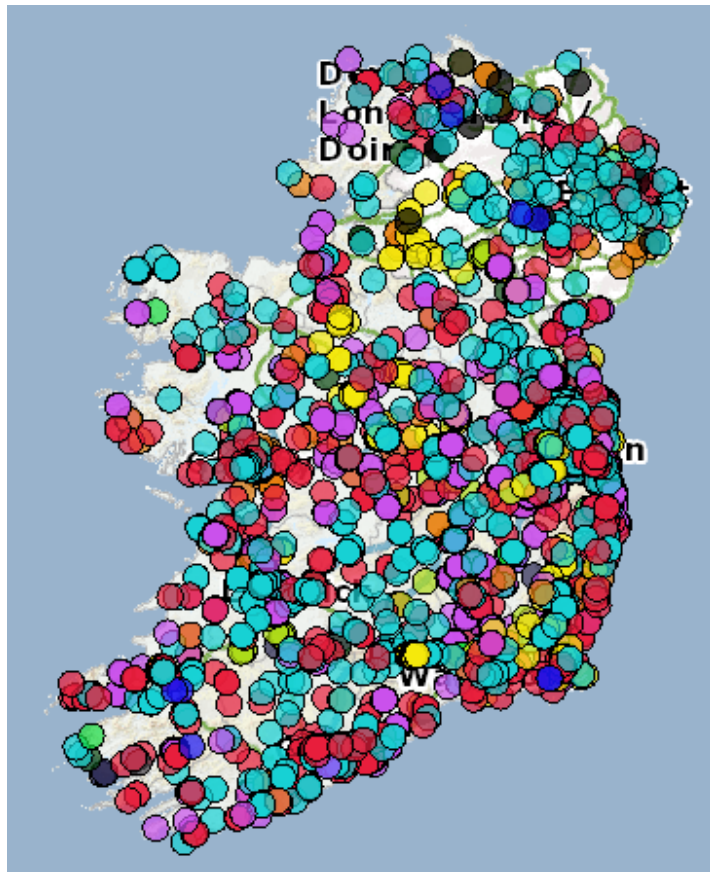
(vi) Invite local community sponsor recipients to add your business name to the mapped action: e.g., *Local school Y (sensory garden) sponsored by Company X*.

(vii) Add your company logo: Click 'Add Image'.

Other guidance:

- **Limited land footprint OR a micro-enterprise?** Please map AIPP Comms Actions.
- **DCs for Bees/Host in Ireland participants:** Please list as e.g. Company X (DCs for Bees) 2024.
- **Need help mapping?** Contact Sarah Kelly skelly@biodiversityireland.ie

Not sure what pollinator-friendly, evidence-based actions look like? Review the [Businesses: actions to help pollinators](#) and [companion resources](#).



MAP EVIDENCE-BASED ACTIONS ON 'ACTIONS FOR POLLINATORS'

AIPP NOTICEBOARD: April

NEW RESOURCES/ ARTICLES/ PUBLICATIONS

- Review [The Grasslands Trail highlighting Ireland's Great Irish Grasslands](#).
- Review the 6 new [AIPP business supporters case studies](#).
- Check out [Kate Chandler's April: Pollinator, native plant and action of the week](#).
- Review ['It's Bluebell season!' Ruth Wilson's new native bluebell blog](#).
- PREP for [No Mow May](#) on your business site.

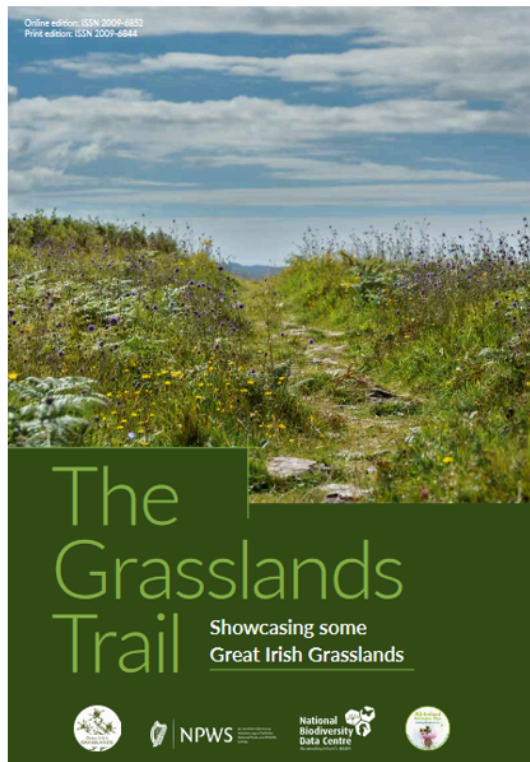
TRACK PROGRESS

- Engage your ['value chain' with AIPP evidence-based actions](#) and set simple SMART targets.
- Identify AIPP pollinator-friendly [procurement and sponsorship](#).
- (Self)-[Score your business](#) (Page 33-35) on its pollinator-friendly actions.
- Assess how [pollinator-friendly your car park](#) (Page 31) is.
- [Track and measure what's happening to pollinators on your site](#) in a scientifically robust manner.
- Map pollinator-biodiversity actions on [Actions for Pollinators \(GIS\)](#).
- Identify which biodiversity is on or 'adjacent' to your site via [Biodiversity Maps](#).
- Map, track and manage invasive species via [www.invasives.ie](#).

TOOLS/CONTACTS

- Align social media messaging [AIPP abridged Comms Plan](#) and AIPP evidence-based actions.
- Invite colleagues/Green Team to sign up to the [AIPP business supporters monthly newsletter](#).
- Seek support from Business in the Community Ireland with their [Business Working Responsibly Mark \(ESG\)](#) - including nature.

- Join with others on the ESG/CSRD biodiversity journey with [Business for Biodiversity Ireland \(BFBI\)](#).
- Identify what is happening in your local authority area via [Action for Biodiversity](#).
- Contact your local [Biodiversity Officer](#) for help with e.g., iterative signage.



Semi-natural grasslands

All the grasslands on the Grasslands Trail are what ecologists call 'semi-natural grasslands'. They are not fully natural habitats because their existence is dependent on some human management. Without this, most would change to scrub or woodland. Semi-natural grasslands have not been heavily altered by agriculture, but instead, are managed in a less intensive way.

Grassland types

Just as there are different types of woodlands, there are different types of semi-natural grassland on the island of Ireland. Broadly, a grassland can be wet or dry, acidic or calcareous (= lime-rich), and rich or poor in nutrients (e.g. nitrogen, phosphorus). The type of grassland is also influenced by the soil, geology, climate, and past management. All of these factors combine to give us an amazing array of subtly different grassland types in Ireland.

The Grasslands Trail is a tour through the amazing diversity of Ireland's semi-natural grasslands. From dry grasslands managed to balance leisure activities with nature at Ballycristle Golf Course, coastal grasslands on calcareous soil (machair) at Sheshmore Nature Reserve, and suburban/parkland areas managed as hay meadows at Newbridge House and Farm, Castletown House or Tymon Park. There is a diverse farmland pasture managed by grazing, a site within the unique limestone pavement of the Burren, a damp grassland in the Doneraile Estate, and a pasture within the wooded Glangarriff Nature Reserve.

Accessibility:

Note that while most of these sites have footpaths or relatively even areas for walking, many will not be fully wheelchair accessible. If you have accessibility or other queries, it's best to contact the location directly.



ABOUT US

This booklet has been developed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, with support from the National Biodiversity Data Centre and the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. Visit the [Great Irish Grasslands](#) website for more information.

READ & DOWNLOAD 'THE GRASSLANDS TRAIL'

'FRIDAY FIT COUNTS': Flower-Insect Timed (FIT) Counts around your business site (employees/ Green Team)

Flower-Insect Timed (FIT) Counts are an important, entry-level way to help us monitor pollinators. Carrying out FIT Counts is a simple and fun monitoring initiative done via mobile phone which can be carried out anywhere, and on any flower. It does however need to be sunny and at least 13C!

FIT Counts are a scientifically robust mechanism of tracking insect populations. In 2023, 673 validated FIT Counts were submitted by 126 different volunteers. The average number of insects per FIT Count was 9.

The most common insect group recorded were 'other flies' followed by bumblebees then hoverflies.

The most common habitat in which FIT Counts were carried was gardens.

Download the 2023 newsletter and see the full results of the scheme last year.

Why not invite employees/ your Green Team to participate in the 'Friday FIT Count' campaign. So not only can they get their steps in around your business site (or in the local park) in but in the last 10 minutes of their lunch hour they can do a FIT Count.

How to start?

Download the free FIT Count App, watch for 10 minutes a 50x50cm patch of flowers and count how many insects visit. In April, its especially useful to carry out FIT Counts on **Dandelion**. N.B. Each month there is a different target flower.

Why do we highlight Dandelions in April?

Every year, the National Biodiversity Data Centre receives thousands of bee sightings. In 2023, 1,824 records were submitted which included information on what flower the bee was feeding on and in which month. A huge thank you to everyone who sent in foraging data as it allows us to get a sense of which flowers they prefer. This year's data again shows the importance of native plants and of simple actions like reduced mowing! Dandelions came out top again in 2023 as a food foraging source but there are other very important plants too.



READ MORE ABOUT *FRIDAY 'FIT' COUNTS

EMPLOYEES/ GREEN TEAM WANT THE NEWSLETTER DIRECTLY?



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