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## Business Supporters Newsletter: November 2024

Dear All

We are delighted to welcome the following companies/organisations as business supporters of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (AIPP): Concern Worldwide, Transdev Luas, Mallon Foods, ED&F Man Liquid Products Ireland Limited, Horse Racing Ireland, PHX Ireland - United Drug and Sow Grateful. We are also delighted to welcome back Radharc Landscaping.

### Annual Review 2024 & 'Actions for Pollinators' GIS mapping

- Work is continuing a pace to collate the 2024 Annual Review for business supporters. A huge THANK YOU again for all the written submissions and logged [Actions for Pollinators](#) on the AIPP's publicly available GIS. There are some really exciting projects underway and more planned for 2025! The Annual Review will be published in January 2025. **NOTE:** We're in Phase II (2021-2025) Year 9. We're already working on Phase III 2026-2030 and will publish the Phase III plan in January 2026.

### ESG//BIODIVERSITY-RELATED STAKEHOLDERS

- **Business for Biodiversity (BFBI)** - Keen to explore the emerging nature/biodiversity reporting structures and types of approaches to nature-positive, check out the national platform [Business for Biodiversity Ireland](#) which is [providing webinars, knowledge, learning](#) and Communities of Practice opportunities for businesses. For more information contact [lucy.gaffney@businessforbiodiversity.ie](mailto:lucy.gaffney@businessforbiodiversity.ie)

- **Business in the Community Ireland (BITCI) - Seeking EESG** guidance, [BITCI's Business Working Responsibly Mark \("The Mark"\)](#) is Ireland's *Environmental, Economic, Social and Governance* (EESG) standard. Third-party verified by the [National Standards Authority of Ireland](#), it is the standard for sustainability that fosters a culture of continuous improvement, ongoing accountability, and leadership.

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## WILD BEE WATCH: Keep an eye out for queen bumblebees

The normal lifecycle of most Irish bumblebees ends when the workers and males die off and the newly mated queens hibernates through the colder winter months. Occasionally, at this time of year you can still see some bumblebee queens fattening up for hibernation. If you spot any queen bumblebees that you're able to identify, it's very useful to let us know what plant it was feeding on. Last November, queens were observed feeding on Ivy and on garden plants like Mahonia, Comfrey and Hebe. PIC: Buff-tailed Bumblebee (Joe Curtis).



**SUBMIT** bumblebee sightings

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## TO DO THIS MONTH: Plant bare root fruit trees

Bare-root fruit trees are generally cheaper to buy than potted trees, and the time to buy and plant them is from November to March. Consider adding a small orchard to your garden, local community, business site or farm. As well as containing some of our rare heritage fruit tree varieties, a small orchard can be valuable for biodiversity. They're made up of several habitats, including elements of woodland, hedgerow and meadow. This mosaic of habitats is home to a range of biodiversity, including bees, butterflies, birds, bats, mosses, beetles, fungi and lichen. Windfallen fruit is also a vital source of food in autumn and winter for a whole range of wildlife. Species-rich grassland beneath the trees can be a haven for pollinators and biodiversity, especially if they contain the native, naturally occurring wildflowers.

Pollinators like wild bees, hoverflies and moths have a vital 'pollination service' role in orchards, with almost all fruit resulting from pollination by a bee or other insect. In turn, fruit trees provide nectar and pollen, essential for the survival of these important insects.



**DOWNLOAD GUIDE Traditional Orchards & Fruit Trees for Pollinators**

## PLAN TO PLAN 2025: Biodiversity through pollinators

Plan ahead to deliver evidence-based actions for pollinators-biodiversity using the [Checklist \(Page 34-35\) of Businesses: actions to help pollinators](#). **REMEMBER:** Although genuine, neither [managing honeybee hives](#) nor [sowing/gifting wildflower seed mixes](#) are biodiversity actions, they are reflexive responses to the biodiversity crisis without a scientific basis.

Check the [Checklist](#) (Pages 34-35) as to the AIPP **evidence-based actions** derived from the amazing scientific research delivered by the [Irish Pollinator Research Network](#), and consider allocating a pollinator-biodiversity action (or actions) for each quarter.

**Q1 Jan-Mar** [Plant/restore a native hedgerow](#) (Action 7), [plan for a REDUCED-MOWING long-flowering meadow](#), [identify a local community sponsor recipient](#) (Action 6), and start on 1 March your [Bumblebee Monitoring Scheme](#) (Action 21). Don't forget when planning for reduced mowing (short or long flowering) you must lift the cuttings!

**Q2 Apr-Jun** Celebrate 'No Mow May' with a [short-flowering REDUCED-MOWING regime every 4-6 weeks from 15 April to end Sept](#) (Action 5), [plant pollinator-friendly plants](#) (Actions 7-13), begin from 1 Ap [Flower Insect Timed Counts](#) and create a [Pesticide-free policy](#) (Action 17) for your site.

**Q3 Jul-Sept** Review your [pollinator-friendly procurement](#) (Action 32), [hold-off cutting your long-flowering area until end of September](#) (Action 6) and set your pollinator-biodiversity budget for 2026 using the [Checklist Page 34-35](#) to refine your thinking.

**Q4 Oct-Dec** Plant (Oct) [pollinator-friendly spring bulbs](#) Page 11 (Action 12), [5 x bare-root fruit trees](#) (Action 9 - Nov), consider gifting [herb packets \(rather than a wildflower seed mix/seed ball type products\)](#), and [commission a baseline ecological survey for spring 2026](#) (Action 4) N.B. Include the *National Pollinator monitoring methodology* available from AIPP).

**NOTE:** Align your biodiversity messaging to your value chain using the monthly [AIPP Key Campaigns & Messages](#). The 2025 version will be available in early January. Request a copy from [skelly@biodiversityireland.ie](mailto:skelly@biodiversityireland.ie) PIC: *Large Carder Bee* - Steven Falk



**DOWNLOAD GUIDE Businesses: actions to help pollinators**

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## **POLLINATOR AWARD ANNOUNCED: Tidy Towns 'Pollinator Award' 2024**

The winners of the 2024 Tidy Towns *Pollinator Award* have been announced. The *Pollinator Award* has run since 2016 as a Special Award in the annual *Supervalu Tidy Towns* awards. It is administrated by the local authority Heritage and Biodiversity Officer network and the National Biodiversity Data Centre. This year Sneem Tidy Towns were the overall winners. Ballymun Tidy Towns were awarded 'best newcomer', and regional awards were given to Athboy Tidy Towns, Clonmel Tidy Towns, Kilsheelan Tidy Towns, Raheny Tidy Village Group, Oranmore Tidy Towns, and Belmullet Tidy Towns/ Baile Slachtmhar Bhéal an Mhuirthead. The quality of applications this year was so high in 2024 that eight further Tidy Towns were highly commended for their work for pollinators. Huge congratulations to all the winners and highly commended towns.

The aim of the award is to encourage and reward [pollinator-friendly actions by Tidy Towns](#) groups in line with the recommendations of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. As we collate the Annual Review for Business Supporters 2024, it is clear that MANY AIPP business supporters have sponsored their local Tidy Towns.

**Business sponsorship:** If you are not already sponsoring your local Tidy Towns, do consider supporting their work towards the *Pollinator Award* as a biodiversity action for your business in 2025. Review [Action 24 of Businesses: actions to help pollinators](#). PIC: Sneem Tidy Towns (Sneem River Walk)



**READ MORE** Tidy Towns 'Pollinator Award' winners 2024

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## **DRIVE DATA CAPTURE: 'Partner' with the National Biodiversity Data Centre in 2025**

Understanding the scientifically robust mechanisms to measure and monitor biodiversity available from the *National Biodiversity Data Centre* will help your business establish how biodiversity is being maintained and restored over time.

**Where to start?** Check the [Checklist on Pages 33-35 of the 'Businesses: actions to help pollinators'](#) to identify which actions you are planning to deliver.

\***Action 3** Print your own local site report through [Biodiversity Maps](#) (includes e.g. SACs).

\***Action 4** Commission a Baseline Ecological Survey via the [Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management](#). Ask the ecologist to include the *National Pollinator Monitoring methodology* available from AIPP.

\***Action 19** [Log 'Actions for Pollinators' on the biodiversity-accountability GIS platform](#) and [submit a written annual review](#) (both mandatory) due by 30 September each year.

\***Action 22** Begin 10-minute, beginner level [Friday FIT Counts \(Flower Insect Timed Counts\)](#) via App (1 Apr-30 Sept).

\***Action 21** Begin a monthly [Bumblebee Monitoring Scheme transect](#) plus web upload (1 Mar- 30 Oct).

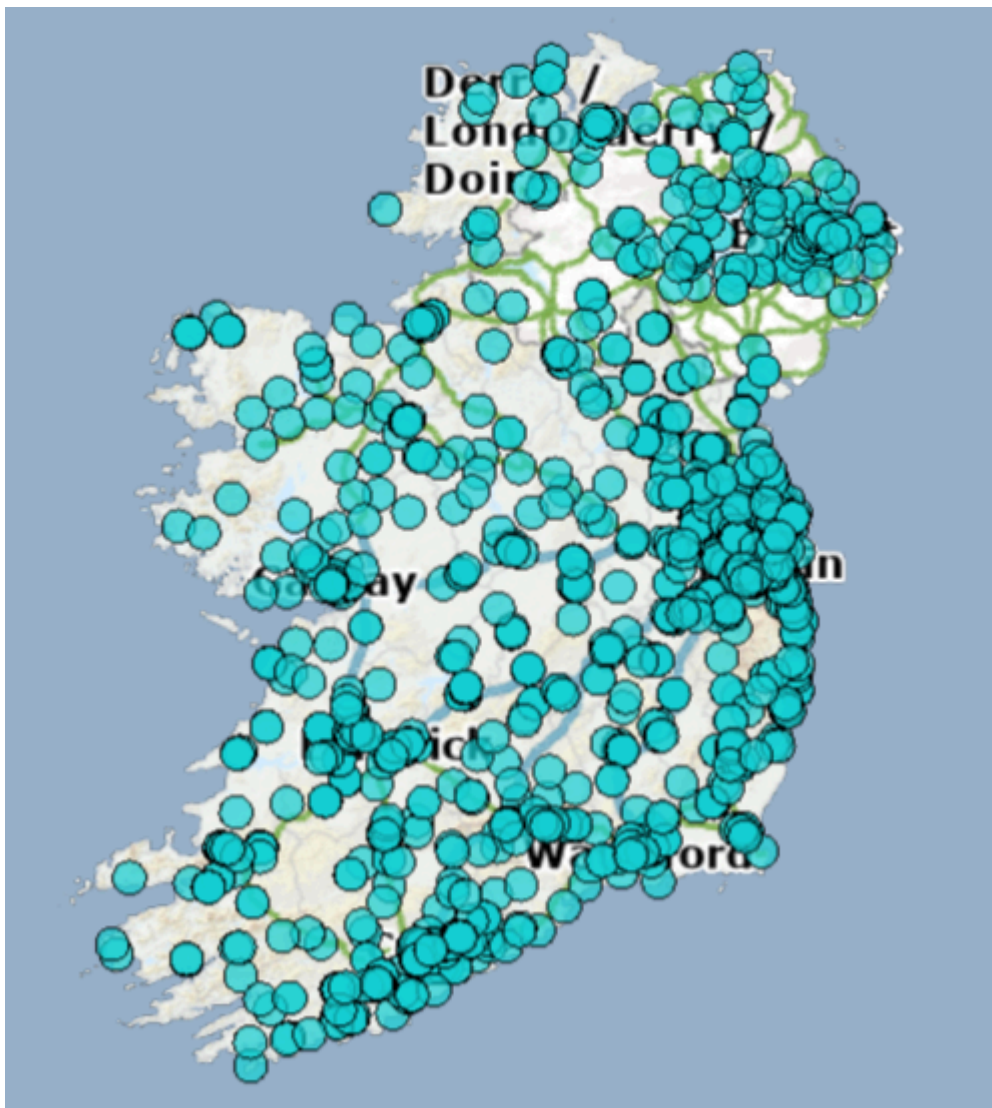
\*Consider participating in the [Irish Butterfly Monitoring Scheme](#), the [Biodiversity on your Farm](#) initiative, or submit individual ('casual') biodiversity records e.g. [Bee orchids](#).

\***TOP TIP:** Set up a specific email address for NBDC platforms e.g. [biodiversity@companyx.ie](mailto:biodiversity@companyx.ie)

**In preparation to drive data consider the following:**

\***Action 29** Nominate/identify Biodiversity Champion on each site and set up a Green Team. You might also consider engaging with your [local Biodiversity Officer](#) and review the local [Biodiversity Action Plan](#).

\* Don't forget, free online courses are available via [National Biodiversity Data Centre](#) and [Pollinator-friendly farming](#).



READ MORE HERE

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## POLLINATOR NOTICEBOARD: November 2024

- **Thinking of festive gifts? Think carefully by reading [Dr Noeleen Smyth's article on the issues with wildflower seed mixes](#). Consider, instead festive gifts such as a [Bumblebee poster](#), [herb packets](#) (Page 12), [sunflower seeds \(Helianthus annuus - Page 27\)](#), or [bulbs \(Page 11\)](#).**

### RESOURCES - BLOGS - WEINBARS - EVENTS etc.

- **READ the latest from Dr. Dara Stanley as part of the ['Dispatches from Researchers' series on 'Pollinators and Irish crops'](#).**
- **READ Ruth Wilson's blog ['Where do pollinators go in winter?'](#)**
- **Check out the winners of the [Green Flag Pollinator Awards 2024](#).**
- Check out the [AIPP business supporters case studies](#).

### POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY CONSIDERATIONS

- **Why you should consider an [ALTERNATIVE](#) action to honeybee hives.**
- **Why you should consider an [ALTERNATIVE](#) action to sowing/gifting wildflower seed mixes.**
- **What you should consider as an alternative to a wildflower seed mix after earthworks? [REVIEW Page 10 Businesses: actions to help pollinators](#)**

## POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY IDEAS

- Identify AIPP pollinator-friendly procurement (tendering/specifying) and sponsorship.
- How pollinator-friendly is your car park (Page 31)?
- Develop an ecological corridor with business neighbours in your business/technology park.
- Create \*thematic\* places for pollinators - sensory garden, herb garden or moon garden as part of a biodiversity walking trail.
- **Geographic-based local actions:** Shrill Carder Bee - Roscommon, South Galway or The Burren), Great Yellow Bumblebee - Mullet Peninsula/ Belmullet, Co. Mayo, and Large Carder Bee - coastal areas across the island.

## POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- Reduced mowing/ meadows (and lift the cuttings!). Establishing a meadow after construction works? Review the advice on Page 10 of Businesses: actions to help pollinators.
- Native hedgerows, Nesting habitat, Orchards
- Solar Farms and Wind Farms.
- **Planting & Management:** Top Ten Guide, Pollinator-friendly planting code, Planting/Management on New Developments (incl. SUDs).

## TRACK - MEASURE - MONITOR

- Engage your value chain with AIPP evidence-based actions and set simple SMART targets.
- Score your business (Page 33-35) sites on pollinator-friendly actions.
- **MAP EARLY, MAP OFTEN** - add pollinator-biodiversity actions to Actions for Pollinators (GIS).
- Identify which biodiversity is on or 'adjacent' to your site via Biodiversity Maps.
- Track and measure what's happening to pollinators on your site in a scientifically robust manner e.g., FIT Counts (entry level App) and Bumblebee Monitoring Scheme (intermediate level).
- Map, track and manage invasive species via www.invasives.ie
- Healthy meadow indicators: Track/record rare bee orchids on your site.

## TOOLS - CONTACTS

- Align social media messaging with the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan Key Campaigns and Messages 2024
- Invite colleagues/Green Team to sign up to the AIPP business supporters monthly newsletter.
- **Discover what's happening in your area** via Action for Biodiversity (e.g. Local BAPs) and via your local Biodiversity Officer.
- Join with others on the ESG/CSRD biodiversity journey with Business for Biodiversity Ireland (BFBI).
- Seek support from Business in the Community Ireland with their Business Working Responsibly Mark (ESG) - including nature.

PIC: *Red-tailed bumblebee* - Cathal Noonan



**DOWNLOAD GUIDE Businesses: actions to help pollinators**

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**SIGN UP - business supporters newsletter for Green Team,  
Biodiversity Champions and employees**



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