



Brief summary note on the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020

1. **Pollinators are valuable:** The annual value of pollinators for human food crops has been estimated at €153 billion world-wide, and at least €53 million in the Republic of Ireland. The free service they provide is worth over £7 million per annum for apples in Northern Ireland and €3.9 million for oilseed rape in the Republic of Ireland. Other pollinator-dependent crops in Ireland include apples, strawberries, raspberries, currants, tomatoes, peas and courgettes.
2. **In Europe, bees are the main pollinators:** Bees are entirely dependent on flowers for their food. Other insects (flies, butterflies, moths, wasps, ants, beetles) are frequent flower visitors and do carry out some pollination, but for many crops and wild flowers most pollination is carried out by bees. The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan is focussed on bees to better target the message and deliver the most benefit from a pollination perspective. Actions identified will benefit insects generally.
3. **Ireland's bees:** In Ireland, there are 98 different species of bee, including the honeybee which is a managed pollinator, and then 97 wild bee species. These include 20 bumblebee species and 77 solitary bee species. One third of our wild bee species are known to be threatened with extinction in Ireland.
4. **Why are bees in trouble?** Pollinators are declining because we've drastically reduced the areas where they can nest and the amount of food our landscape provides for them. We've also inadvertently introduced pests and diseases that negatively impact their health, and we subject them to levels of pesticides that make it difficult for them to complete their life cycles. We are asking them to perform their free services in an increasing inhospitable environment.
5. **Starvation:** If you're a pollinator, finding enough food is the biggest challenge you face. Declines in wildflowers are subjecting our pollinators to starvation. Fertiliser application has resulted in increased crop yields, but also in severe declines in wildflowers in managed fields

and in adjacent semi-natural habitats. Our tendency to tidy up the landscape rather than allowing wildflowers to grow along roadsides, field margins, and in parks and gardens is playing a big part in reducing these resources for bees.

6. **Five things you can do to help in your garden:** (1) make sure you have at least one flowering food source from spring right through to winter (2) leave small areas of your lawn uncut to allow clovers to flower (3) don't view dandelions as a weed but as a vital spring food source for hungry bees (4) avoid using pesticides (5) try to avoid disturbing nesting or hibernating bees in area like long grass, bare soil, dead wood or walls.
7. **The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan:** A shared plan of action has been developed by a fifteen member steering group and identifies 81 actions across five objectives. Sixty-eight partner organisations from both public, private and NGO sectors have supported the Plan, with responsibility for delivering the 81 actions shared out between these organisations. It is a voluntary Plan.
8. **The Pollinator Plan has 5 key objectives:**
 1. Making Ireland pollinator friendly (farmland, public land & private land)
 2. Raising awareness of pollinators and how to protect them
 3. Managed pollinators – supporting beekeepers and growers
 4. Expanding our knowledge on pollinators and pollination service
 5. Collecting evidence to track change and measure success

Examples of actions to make Farmland more pollinator friendly:

- Incorporation of pollinator friendly actions into Agri-environment schemes
- Encouraging all farmers to take five voluntary actions to make their land pollinator friendly
- Maintaining data on the pesticides that are used in Ireland, where and what for?
- Adoption of pollinator friendly management within agricultural and horticultural colleges as a teaching and awareness raising tool

Examples of actions to make Public and semi-state land more pollinator friendly:

- Making information on pollinator friendly management available through Tidy Towns
- Pollinator friendly management incorporated into the Green Schools and Eco-Schools initiatives
- Investigation of how local communities can be encouraged and supported to take pollinator friendly management actions by Local Development Companies
- Creation of pollinator highways along our transport routes (road, rail, waterway towpaths, greenways)
- Reduction in the use of pesticides on public land
- Pollinator friendly management of sites owned by the National Trust, BirdWatch Ireland, RSBP, Bord na Mona

Examples of actions to make private land more pollinator friendly:

- Pollinator friendly garden actions promoted through the Grow it Yourself (GIY) network
- Encouraging businesses to make their outdoor spaces pollinator friendly by providing guidelines that are in line with environmental systems used

Examples of actions to raise awareness:

- Creation of infographics with key pollinator messages distributed through social media
- Education on pollinators incorporated within the curriculum of primary, secondary and third level institutes.
- Publication of freely available 'how-to' guides for implementation of key pollinator actions.

Examples of actions to support bee keepers and growers:

- Maintaining data on honeybee distribution and on disease prevalence
- Ensure the ongoing regulation via health certification of the importation of honeybees and bumblebees
- Providing bee keeper training in disease identification

Examples of actions to expand our knowledge:

- Identify and publish the most appropriate native wild flower species for pollinators in different environmental conditions in Ireland
- Identify areas of importance to pollinators and prioritise plans for the restoration of pollinator habitat to yield greatest expected net benefits
- Better understand the economic value of pollination for food and non-food crops in Ireland

Examples of actions to track change and measure success:

- Increase the number of volunteer records who can accurately identify pollinator species
- Continue to support and grow the All-Ireland Bumblebee Monitoring Scheme as a means of tracking changes in wild pollinators within the landscape (volunteers across the island carry out a fixed route 1-2km walk once a month and record the bumblebees they observe).
- Development of a publicly available online management system to track progress in the 81 actions within the Plan. Organisations with responsibility for an action will be requested to submit annual progress updates.
- Development of a publicly available online mapping system where all those who have taken pollinator friendly actions (farmers, schools, land managers, individuals) can log their location and the action(s) taken, and progress in the creation of pollinator friendly habitat across Ireland can be mapped.

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