

Habitats for Pollinators

Gardens, parks and small patches of ground have become important refuges for pollinators, especially in urban areas. There are so many types of invertebrate with such varied needs and most do well in small spaces, so don't worry about only having a small area - every little bit of habitat helps. Please make sure you have the permission of the land owner before you start creating any habitats though.

Generally, pollinators need three things: flowers for nectar (sugary liquid) and pollen (protein and minerals for developing larvae), and a place to shelter and build their nest.

A mixture of flowers, habitat piles (logs, rocks, leaves etc), ponds and boggy areas, flowering shrubs, trees, climbers, compost heaps and undisturbed wild areas are all great features to include in a pollinator patch.

Here are some suggestions of things to include in your pollinator patch:

- A selection of flowers of different shapes will appeal to different species. Open, daisy-type flowers and umbels are great for hoverflies and many solitary bees, whilst some other bees, butterflies and moths prefer tubular flowers. Also plant night-scented flowers for moths, such as Jasmine and Honeysuckle. Try selecting ones that flower at different times of year, so you can provide food for as much of the year as possible.
- Flowers are best planted in large groups or patches of the same kind, so that the bees have good foraging sites. Bumblebees in particular like to stick to one type of flower while foraging, and can waste energy scouting around for more forage.
- Make an area of grass into a Bee-lawn by leaving it to grow a little longer. You can also let flowers like clover and buttercups grow in the grass.
- Try growing some Ivy if you have a fence or wall on your site. The autumn flowers of mature ivy are a vital late nectar source for pollinators
- A part of the site should be left less intensively managed and more informal, to provide suitable undisturbed nesting sites.
- Let dead leaves lie as food for worms and other decomposers which are good for the soil.
- Think about creating artificial nesting sites.
- Avoid showy annual bedding plants which have little pollen or nectar and fancy double-petalled varieties which insects cannot access.
- Create a pond - one of the best things you can do for wildlife. It will attract aquatic invertebrates, breeding dragonflies and many others to its margins.
- If you don't want standing open water, try creating a bog garden. These are shallow wet areas planted with marsh plants for wetland bugs.

Make a mini meadow

Creating wildflower habitat in an urban space is great for pollinating insects and is so simple to do. All you need is a spade or rake, and around 3g of wildflowers per 1m² of ground.

Start by raking over the soil so that the surface is loose. Scatter the seeds on to the bare earth, and then tread lightly on them to push them into the soil. They don't need to be buried, and the soil doesn't want to be too rich. The best time to sow the seeds is in autumn or early spring, so they have chance to germinate by the summer. Each September or October, once they are finished flowering, cut back or strim the seed heads, so they don't enrich the soil over winter.

You can also enhance an existing wildflower area by planting plug plants of different pollinator friendly species, to increase the diversity of flowers available without having to completely re-seed an area.



Some plants for pollinators:

Helebore	Winter	Cranesbills (wild Geraniums)	Summer
Autumn Crocus	Autumn/Winter	Snapdragon (<i>Antirrhinum</i>)	Summer
Heathers	Winter	Coneflower (<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>)	Summer
Snowdrops	Winter/Spring	Aquilegia vulgaris (single flowered only)	Summer
Winter Honeysuckle (<i>Lonicera x purpusii</i>)	Winter/Spring	Larkspur (<i>Consolida</i> , single flowered only)	Summer
White Deadnettle (<i>Lamium album</i>)	Spring	Delphiniums (single flowered only)	Summer
British Bluebell (<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>)	Spring	Viper's Bugloss (<i>Echium vulgare</i>)	Summer
Crocus	Spring	Black horehound	Summer
Grape Hyacinths (<i>Muscari</i>)	Spring	Honeywort (<i>Cerinth</i>)	Summer
Lungwort (<i>Pulmonaria</i> species)	Spring	Yellow Flag Iris (<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>)	Summer
Snakeshead (<i>Fritillaria meleagris</i>)	Spring	Lavender	Summer
Rosemary (<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>)	Spring	Purple Toadflax (<i>Linaria purpurea</i>)	Summer
Cotoneaster (e.g. <i>horizontalis</i>)	Spring	Bell Heather (<i>Erica cinerea</i>)	Summer
Ceanothus	Spring	Chives and ornamental garlics (<i>Alliums</i>)	Summer
Flowering Currant (<i>Ribes sanguineum</i>)	Spring	Bellflowers or Campions (<i>Campanula</i> sp.)	Summer
Redcurrants, Blackcurrants, Gooseberries	Spring	Comfrey (<i>Symphytum</i>)	Summer
Willow (<i>Salix</i>)	Spring	Borage (<i>Borago officinalis</i>)	Summer
Thymes (<i>Thymus</i>)	Spring	Brambles (wild or cultivated)	Summer
Perennial Cornflower (<i>Centaurea montana</i>)	Spring	Raspberries and Blackberries	Summer
Winter Heather (<i>Erica carnea</i>)	Spring	Dog roses and other single flowered roses	Summer
Bugle (<i>Ajuga reptans</i>)	Spring	Rest-harrow	Summer
Pears, cherries or plums	Spring	Bittersweet	Summer
Red dead-nettle	Spring	St John's wort	Summer
White dead-nettle	Spring	Honeysuckle	Summer
Ground ivy	Spring	Burdock	Summer
Dandelion	Spring	Red bartsia	Summer
Pea (everlasting, sweet) and Beans (runner and broad)	Summer	Scabioues (<i>Knautia</i> , <i>Scabiosa</i> , <i>Cephalaria</i>)	Summer
Hyssop (<i>Agastache</i>)	Summer	Cat's-ear	Summer
Foxgloves (<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>)	Summer	Hawk-bits	Summer
Catmint species (<i>Nepeta</i>)	Summer	Hogweed and other umbels	Summer
Vetches (Tufted-vetch, Bush vetch, Common vetch, White and Yellow melliot)	Summer	Michaelmas daisy (<i>Aster Novi-angliae</i> or <i>Aster amellus</i> are not invasive.)	Late summer
Woundworts and Betony	Summer	<i>Buddleja x weyeriana</i> (orange Buddleia)	Late summer
Lupins	Summer	Cornish Heath (<i>Erica vagans</i>)	Late summer
Knapweeds (<i>Centaurea scabiosa</i> , <i>Centaurea nigra</i>)	Summer	Culinary sage, Meadow Clary and other blue-flowered Salvias	Late summer
Oregano and Marjoram	Summer	Devil's Bit Scabious	Late summer
Calamint species	Summer	Marsh Woundwort (<i>Stachys palustris</i>)	Late summer
Speedwells (<i>Veronicastrum</i>)	Summer	Dahlias (single- flowered)	Late summer
Hebe	Summer	Mallow (<i>Malva</i> and <i>Lavatera</i>)	Late summer
Sea Hollies	Summer	Ivy	Autumn
Globe Thistle	Summer	Bird's-foot trefoil	Long season
Thistles (<i>Onopordum</i> , <i>Cirsium</i>)	Summer	Red clover	Long season
Myrtle (<i>Myrtus communis</i>)	Summer	White clover	Long season

