



# POLLINATOR PATCH

## What we'd like you to do

- ✓ Choose an area of your park and turn it into a haven for bees, butterflies and other pollinating insects.
- ✓ Create an area full of the plants pollinating insects need to feed and reproduce.
- ✓ Ensure that forage and shelter for pollinators is available for as much of the year as possible.
- ✓ Do something **NEW** that will make a significant positive impact for wildlife.
- ✓ The scope of the work should reflect the resources you have and the location and size of your park.
- ✓ For example, a large park might create a large herbaceous border; a small park might put in a planter near reception. A residential park might encourage residents to get involved by growing pots filled with wildflowers.

## Why take the challenge?

Pollinating insects are vital for the health of the countryside, but they need help to thrive. They are fascinating and beautiful and their presence on your park will captivate everyone.

## Key steps

### 1. Decide what you're going to do ...

- ✓ Decide which area/s of your park to work on – this might be part of an herbaceous border, corner of a field, a strip along a fence, hedge or woodland edge or an under-used patch of grassland.
- ✓ If you can, work on more than one patch.
- ✓ Research what plants to put in. Use the [good ideas](#) and [resources](#) below as a start.
- ✓ Get help from a local wildlife group.

### 2. Make a plan...

- ✓ Once you've decided what you're going to do, put together a simple plan with actions and goals - time-tabled if possible. You can use the wildlife plan template [here](#).
- ✓ Your aim should be to create a new area filled with a wide variety of long-flowering plants that provide food for pollinating insects for as much of the year as possible.
- ✓ You should also plant a mixture that provides places for insects to shelter and lay eggs which can act as host plants for caterpillars.
- ✓ Think about putting in an insect hotel or a bug box to provide an artificial habitat.
- ✓ Take photos of the area as a visual record of your 'starting point'. If possible, do a biodiversity survey to set yourself a benchmark.
- ✓ Be ambitious!
- ✓ We would be delighted to receive a **copy of your plan**, along with **some photos** so we know what you're working on. Upload your plan and photos [here](#).

- ✓ Putting a [plan](#) together will help us know whether the scope of what you've got planned is 'enough' to win the challenge.

### 3. Put your plan into action ...

- ✓ Put someone with the necessary skills in charge of the job and give them the time and resources they need to get on with it.
- ✓ Let everyone know what you're doing and keep them updated on progress.
- ✓ Use your challenge to educate everyone. Make the challenge part of what your park is 'all about'.

### 4. Report on your success ...

- ✓ When you've reached your project goal or a first major milestone let us know – send us details of what you've achieved and upload your report and photos of the results [here](#).
- ✓ If you are due an advisory visit, show your advisor what you've achieved.

### 5. Winning the challenge ...

- ✓ Once we've received details of what you've done, we'll review the information.
- ✓ If you have done enough you'll win the challenge and get a badge to prove it!
- ✓ If not, we'll let you know what you still need to do.

**NB: There are no strict deadlines for completing the challenge. An ambitious plan might take more than one year to put in place.**

### [Good ideas for your plan](#)

- ✓ If possible, do a **biodiversity survey** so that you have a baseline from which to work. Repeat the survey at regular intervals to monitor progress. Your local Wildlife Trust should be able to help.
- ✓ Your aim should be to create an area filled with a wide variety of long-flowering plants that **provide a good supply of pollen and nectar**. Choose plants that are appropriate to your location, weather, soil etc.
- ✓ **Choose a mix of species** that flower at different times of the year – ideally from at least March to November. This is vital because some insects emerge from hibernation early in the year, while others are still feeding well into autumn. Providing a continuous supply of pollen and nectar will ensure that butterflies, moths, bees and other insects never go without food.
- ✓ Include **spring and summer flowering bulbs** and flowering trees and shrubs.
- ✓ If the patch is next to a wall or fence, then **plant climbers such as honeysuckle**.
- ✓ You should include host **plants for caterpillars** – look online to see what plants the caterpillars of different butterflies need to survive.
- ✓ Plant a **nectar-rich wildflower seed mixture** in the grass around your pollinator patch.
- ✓ Use predominately local, **native species**, although plants such as buddleia are also excellent choices.
- ✓ **Open a bee hotel**: a bee hotel provides a place for a variety of bees and other insects to lay their eggs. Commercial versions are available online. You can also make your own out of a bundle of 10-20 cm long sections of dried river reeds. Position the hotel in a sunny spot out of the rain.

- ✓ **Put up signage** to tell people what you've planted and why.
- ✓ Use the challenge to **get your guests planting for pollinators** too – around their pitches or in their own gardens when they return home. Give out information sheets with advice on what to grow.

## Online Resources

For detailed information on gardening for honey bees, take a look at the [British Beekeepers \(bbka.org.uk\)](https://www.bbka.org.uk) website and guides.

[Buglife](https://www.buglife.org.uk) runs the B-Lines project that could help your Pollinator Patch challenge. B-Lines aims to create and restore at least 150,000 hectares of flower-rich habitat across the UK. Information on the project and how to get involved can be found [here](#). You'll also find lots of information and resources for helping pollinating insects.

The [Bumblebee Trust \(bumblebeeconservation.org\)](https://www.bumblebeeconservation.org) provides lots of good information on gardening for bees.

[Butterfly Conservation \(butterfly-conservation.org\)](https://www.butterfly-conservation.org) provides lots of advice on the best plants to grow for butterflies, including lots of [wildlife gardening plans](#).

The [Royal Horticultural Society \(rhs.org.uk\)](https://www.rhs.org.uk) produces a range of downloadable lists of plants that are good for pollinating insects. Look out for its *Plants for Pollinators* logo.

[Wild About Gardens \(wildaboutgardens.org.uk\)](https://www.wildaboutgardens.org.uk) has lots of great advice on how to provide the right plants for pollinators, including a guide to making a butterfly garden.

Check out this guide to bee-friendly planting from [Friends of the Earth \(friendsoftheearth.org.uk/nature/bee-friendly-plants-every-season\)](https://www.friendsoftheearth.org.uk/nature/bee-friendly-plants-every-season).