



**LIVE
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LOVE
HERE**



Planting for Pollinators Guide

Northern Ireland is one of the most nature-depleted regions in the world, but every garden, school, and green space can help turn that around.

By planting for pollinators, you're not only supporting bees, butterflies, and hoverflies — you're also strengthening entire ecosystems from the ground up.



Getting Started

Pollinators are essential for healthy habitats and food production. They help plants reproduce, support biodiversity, and maintain balance in our ecosystems. When we make space for pollinators, we make space for all kinds of wildlife — from birds to hedgehogs — who depend on these habitats for food and shelter.

Identify What's Already There

Before you plant anything, take a look at your space:

- **Do a mini biodiversity audit** — note what plants, insects, and animals you already have.
- **BioBlitz** — get your community involved in spotting and recording local species.
- **Keep what's working** — protect and enhance existing wild corners and native plants.



Remember that working with what's already thriving is the best way to support biodiversity.

Don't Mow, Let It Grow

One of the simplest ways to help pollinators is to let nature take its course:

- Allow grass and wildflowers to grow longer between cuts.
- Mow paths through meadows to keep access while adding visual interest.
- Enjoy the beauty of buttercups, clovers, oxeye daisies, red campion, and birds-foot trefoil.

Avoid spreading wildflower seed unless you're sure it's native to Ireland. Non-native seeds can harm local ecosystems.



Attracting Pollinators

Plant Native Trees, Shrubs & Flowers

Native plants provide the right nectar, pollen, and shelter for local pollinators.



Try these species for your space:

- **Hedges & Shrubs:** hawthorn, blackthorn, dog rose, hazel, elder, crab apple, and ivy.
- **Trees:** rowan, birch, willow, wild cherry, alder, and oak.
- **Fruit & Food Plants:** apple, pear, plum, raspberry, currant, and blackberry — great for wildlife and your table!

Grow Food, Make Compost

Growing your own food supports biodiversity and wellbeing:

- Pollinators love flowering vegetables and fruit trees.
- Compost food scraps and garden waste to return nutrients to your soil.
- Studies show that gardening boosts mental health — even getting your hands in soil can release serotonin, the “happy hormone.”

Go Chemical-Free

- Avoid pesticides, herbicides, and peat-based compost.
- Let “weeds” like dandelions and nettles grow — they’re valuable nectar sources.
- A varied garden is naturally resilient and better for wildlife.



Keep Track of Your Impact

Join community monitoring projects to see how your space contributes to biodiversity:

- Flower-Insect Timed (FIT) Counts Pollinator Monitoring Scheme
- Garden Butterfly Survey
- Big Bee Hotel Experiment Buzz Club
- Big Garden Birdwatch RSPB
- Irish Hedgehog Survey
- CEDaR and National Biodiversity Data Centre — record your species sightings online!

Useful Resources

- Creating Wildlife Habitats
- All-Ireland Pollinator Plan
- National Biodiversity Data Centre
- RSPB NI

