

# Buzzing for Bees' Needs Week 2021

To mark the start of Bees' Needs Week 2021 (12 – 18 July), Environment Minister Rebecca Pow is calling on everyone – from individuals, farmers, gardeners, or managers of urban spaces – to take five simple actions to care for bees and other pollinators.

Bees and other pollinators are an essential part of our environment and play a crucial role in food production – they contribute the equivalent of more than £500 million a year to UK agriculture and food production, by improving crop quality and quantity – and are also vital to our wider, natural ecosystems.

[Five simple actions](#) everyone can take to help pollinators and make sure their populations are sustained are:

1. Grow more flowers, shrubs and trees
2. Let your garden grow wild
3. Cut your grass less often
4. Don't disturb insect nest and hibernation spots
5. Think carefully about whether to use pesticides

Bees' Needs Week 2021 will see Defra and several green organisations including the Royal Horticultural Society and Bumblebee Conservation Trust, working together to encourage everyone who can to do simple things at home, at work, and in other private and public spaces to help our precious pollinators thrive.

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow said:

Bees and other pollinators are not just a welcome and much loved sight in our gardens, parks, villages and countryside – they are vital to a healthy environment, driving our economy and boosting biodiversity.

Everyone can help them flourish by leaving patches of garden to grow wild, growing more flowers, cutting grass less often, not disturbing insect nests, and carefully considering how we use pesticides.

This is also one of the key messages of our recently launched 'Plant for our Planet' campaign – aimed at inspiring the public to support nature recovery by engaging in a variety of green activities to move us to a more sustainable future as we build back greener after the pandemic, and step up our efforts in tackling the climate crisis which is the focus of the COP26 summit.

Actions that we can take for pollinators and biodiversity will enable us to tackle and adapt to climate change – I encourage everyone to get involved.

There are thousands of pollinator species in the UK – from wild pollinators including bumblebees and many solitary bees, moths, flies and butterflies, to honeybees. But their populations are under threat from risks such as habitat loss and fragmentation, invasive species, pests and disease, climate change and inappropriate pesticide use.

Natural England Chief Executive, Marian Spain, said:

Without nature we could not live. Pollinators including bees especially show us this; holding the environment together by moving pollen between plants, enabling whole systems to be sustained and replenished, and ensuring vital food supplies for wildlife and people.

The importance of connecting with nature for our health and happiness has never been clearer. With such a growing public interest in the environment, I hope everyone can help support our wonderful and wild insect pollinators.

From changing the way you garden, to asking your council to leave long grass on road verges, parks and schools grounds, to using citizen science to learn even more about bees and other wildlife, we can all take part in Bees' Needs Week and beyond.

The public are also being encouraged to take part in the citizen science initiative – the Pollinator Monitoring Scheme (PoMS) insect counts – which is an easy and important way to monitor your local bee and pollinator populations so we can keep track of and better support our wonderful pollinators. To sign up, visit the new [website](#) or download the FIT count app ([Android](#) and [iOS](#)).

Through the [National Pollinator strategy](#) we are working with farmers, conservation organisations, researchers and businesses to provide improved habitats for pollinators on farmland, in urban areas and in gardens; address pressures on them, including by supporting Integrated Pest Management; support monitoring and research; and raise awareness across society.

This year's Bees' Needs Week follows the recent launch of Defra's new campaign [Plant for Our Planet](#), aimed at inspiring the public to get planting, helping us to build back greener from the pandemic and step up our efforts to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss. To get involved [download our partner pack here](#).

## Case studies

Natural England, a key supporter of Bees' Needs Week, is working on a variety of new and existing projects to protect our pollinators. These include:

- Porton to Plain project: connecting nature between the world's largest areas of chalk grassland, Salisbury Plain and Porton Down. Seven miles of land have been committed for a butterfly highway along the verges and

embankments of the new A303 Stonehenge tunnel scheme, covering some 150ha (200 football pitches), contributing towards a national Nature Recovery Network.

- Kent Downs: this site comprises four distinct networks which contribute towards nature's recovery focused on creating species-diverse habitats. The networks, which will contribute towards the national Nature Recovery Network, has been built by farmers and the local community over the last 20 years and includes several projects aimed at providing a better home for our pollinators. An example of one of the projects is the [East Kent Valleys project](#) where a large network of newly created species-rich grasslands has transformed the area into an insect rich landscape, allowing butterfly species such as dingy skipper, wall brown, green hairstreak and small copper to colonise.
- Lower Derwent Valley Wildflower and Pollinator Verges project: comprises three local community projects in parishes surrounding the Lower Derwent Valley National Nature Reserve working on 4km of grass verges and green spaces to provide improved habitats for pollinators. This activity has stimulated interest from further afield with more local parishes coming forward for advice to create similar areas in the wider area.