

Public urged to join collective action to protect plant health

Leading nature charities, trade bodies and the Government have committed to improving public engagement with plant health and biosecurity in a major new agreement announced today (Monday 23 May) at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

The Public Engagement in Plant Health kickstarts a national conversation around biosecurity and promotes the actions that the public can take to protect tree and plant health.

Twenty-nine organisations are set to sign the Accord, including Defra, the Royal Horticultural Society, National Farmers Union, National Trust, Tree Council and Horticultural Trades Association – amounting to a total membership of over seven million people across the country.

The signatories will work together to raise public awareness of plant health.

The joint campaign will encourage plant lovers not to bring home plants, trees, fruit and seeds from overseas, as doing so could inadvertently bring pests, diseases and invasive species into the UK, alongside an awareness campaign which will educate the public to buy plants, trees and seeds from responsible suppliers, and ensure everyone knows how to report sightings of pests and diseases.

Lord Benyon, Minister for Biosecurity, said:

This Accord will change the face of plant biosecurity in this country, with leading organisations from across society setting out a long-term shared vision for public engagement, awareness raising and behavioural change.

Safeguarding the health of our plants and trees will require people, the government and partners to work together as we strive to deliver on our ambitious tree planting targets and leave the environment in a better state than we found it, as outlined in our 25 Year Environment Plan.

Professor Alistair Griffiths, Director of Science and Collections at the Royal Horticultural Society, said:

The RHS believe that the collective actions of each and every one of our nation's 30 million gardeners can play a pivotal role in protecting our tree and plant health, and natural environment.

We will continue to work with government, industry, and the wider public to safeguard and preserve our natural environment for

generations to come.

Sarah Lom, CEO, The Tree Council, said:

We need everyone in Britain to become a tree health hero and take action to protect our trees and other plants. By making the right choices, we can ensure a healthy future for trees, from growing and nurturing, to protecting them from pests and diseases. The Tree Council is delighted to be a partner in this important Accord. The health of trees and plants affects everyone and so it is essential we work together if we are to safeguard the future.

Pippa Greenwood, Horticultural Manager, Horticultural Trades Association (HTA), said:

As the trade association which represents all parts of the garden industry supply chain, the HTA aims to continue to play a significant part in raising awareness and understanding of plant health and biosecurity along the length of that chain – from seed producer, through plant producer and retailer, to landscapers and the end user – the great gardening public! So, we are very pleased to support the Plant Health Accord.

The increasingly globalised plant trade along with climate change continue to present immediate and emerging threats to our biosecurity from pests and diseases. If introduced to the UK, pests and pathogens can cause serious and lasting harm to our biodiversity, farmlands, ecosystems and native species. Promoting positive behavioural change through public engagement is therefore necessary to safeguard the benefits trees and plants provide for society, the environment and the economy.

The 29 organisations which have signed the Accord will work closely to share best practice and research findings to ensure future plant health interventions are evidence-led and encourage behavioural change. They will also collaborate to develop new and innovative partnerships which will maximise the health and wellbeing benefits of our plants and trees.

The Public Engagement in Plant Health Accord has been announced today on the Animal and Plant Health Agency's stand at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2022. The theme of the stand this year is the long-running 'Don't Risk It!' campaign, which aims to raise awareness of the risks of moving plants and associated pests through international travel.

Today's announcement also comes ahead of the publication in summer this year of the new GB Plant Biosecurity Strategy, which will set out a biosecurity vision for the UK for the next five years. Building upon work achieved under the existing strategy published in 2014, the Strategy aims to deliver a step change in our plant health protections, actions and behaviours. The Public

Engagement in Plant Health Accord will be published in full as part of this Strategy.

[Public urged to help bees, butterflies and other pollinators](#)

The public are being encouraged to count bees, butterflies and other pollinators as part of the latest drive to protect and increase these vital species launched today (Monday 23 May).

The free '[FIT Count](#)' phone app – supported by Defra – will help track pollinator numbers and movements, providing crucial data that can be used to support pollinators in our natural environment. It could reveal previously unknown colonies of pollinators, where numbers are diminishing, or how populations are shifting in response to climate change.

It is part of a survey being co-ordinated by the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology. Their Flower-Insect Timed Count (FIT Count) survey asks people to spend 10 minutes a day collecting data on the number of insects that visit particular patches of flowers, including dandelion, buttercup and lavender.

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow made the call to action at this year's Chelsea Flower Show, alongside the launch of the government's new Pollinator Action Plan (PAP), which sets out how government, beekeepers, conservation groups, farmers, researchers, industry and the public can work together to help pollinators in England thrive. This will build on the progress of our world-leading Pollinator Monitoring Scheme (PoMS) established through the National Pollinator Strategy launched in 2014.

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.

Today's announcement is part of the government's drive to improve nature recovery and reverse declines in species, such as pollinators. The Pollinator Action Plan will support this, and support the delivery of the commitments in the Environment Act 2021, which requires legally-binding targets to be set to halt the decline in species abundance by 2030.

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow said:

We all want to see an abundance of butterflies and bees in our gardens, parks and countryside. We are encouraging people to give just 10 minutes of their time to count the pollinating insects they

see using this app to help us track their numbers and movements, and support our efforts to reverse the decline of these vital species.

I am very excited to be launching the latest Pollinator Action Plan at this year's Chelsea Flower Show, where the essential role of bees and pollinators are rightfully taking centre stage. It sets out a range of actions over the next few years to support these species, and is part of our wider drive to improve nature recovery and increase biodiversity through our world-leading Environment Act, and through a range of our new farming policies too, where restoring nature will complement food production.

The Pollinator Action Plan will focus a number of key areas, including:

- strengthening the evidence base to improve our understanding of trends and impacts on pollination;
- managing our land more effectively to encourage better connected habitat and recovered species;
- sustaining pollinator health of managed and wild populations' by supporting beekeepers and bee farmers, ensuring there is surveillance of diseases and invasive species, as well as research and advice; and
- engaging the public through Bees' Needs events, alongside celebrating successes and promoting a wide range of training.

Dr Claire Carvell, UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH), said:

FIT Counts are a great way for people to connect with nature. We would like to thank the hundreds of volunteers who have submitted more than 8,000 counts to the UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme so far.

This data is helping us build a unique picture of the changing patterns of pollinator visits to flowers across the gardens and countryside of the UK.

Dr Chris Hartfield, Senior Regulatory Affairs Adviser, NFU Plant Health Unit, said:

The NFU has been involved with the National Pollinator Strategy since its inception and the strength of the strategy has always been how it has followed the science and evidence, and as part of this approach has established the world-leading pollinator monitoring scheme 'PoMS'.

We look forward to continuing to help steer the work under the new Pollinator Action Plan.

Five simple actions everyone can take to help pollinators and make sure their populations are sustained include:

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

[New funding to protect biodiversity in UK overseas territories](#)

News story

Threatened species will benefit from funding to tackle invasive species and strengthen climate change mitigation.



Credit: Colin Davies Getty Images

Threatened species across the UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs) are set to benefit from £6.4 million government funding announced today (Monday 23 May).

Green turtles and the West Indian whistling duck are just some of the species that will be boosted by a share of the [Darwin Plus initiative](#). A total of 20 environmental recovery projects will be supported to deliver marine conservation, research into threatened species, and improve resilience to climate change.

The UK Overseas Territories are unique and globally significant nature hotspots. Made up of thousands of small islands, vast oceans and dense rainforests, these areas are thriving with unique wildlife and contain 94% of the UK's biodiversity.

Since 2012, the government has contributed more than £38 million towards 180

projects in the UK Overseas Territories through Darwin Plus, and has committed £30 million over the next three years to support even more environmental projects in these areas.

Funding through Darwin Plus and the Darwin initiative will help to deliver the commitments set out in the Environment Act to halt and reverse the decline of biodiversity and improve species abundance by 10% by 2042.

Lord Zac Goldsmith, International Environment Minister, said:

From rare sea birds to threatened coral reefs and plants, the Darwin Plus initiative is instrumental in protecting and restoring our precious natural environment across the Overseas Territories.

This investment will enhance our global capability to respond to climate change, address biodiversity decline and help safeguard the future of these unique habitats for the next generation.

Jonathan Hall, Head of UK Overseas Territories at RSPB, said:

This is some of the most cost-effective conservation funding there is. We're delighted Defra has increased this vital Darwin Plus fund, which is helping Territory conservationists deliver incredible work to protect vast marine reserves, fragile albatross islands and key carbon-rich habitats such as mangroves.

Habitats and projects set to benefit from the funding include:

- A cross-UKOT camera network to enhance marine predator conservation across the Atlantic, Mediterranean and Polar regions. Drones and timelapse cameras will be used to monitor and gather information on green turtles, endemic frigate birds and masked boobies in the Ascension islands, data which is not currently available and will create effective management plans to protect these species
- Investment to improve environmental protections for the East Caicos wilderness area. The funding will support the creation of a locally owned resource management plan to safeguard against inappropriate development on the uninhabited island to protect nesting turtles, plant species unique to those islands, and native birds, such as the West Indian whistling duck
- A project to turn the tide on plastic pollution in Ascension and St Helena. Researchers will explore the drivers of plastic pollution and trial innovative solutions to reduce single-use plastic and improve waste management efficiency
- Action to improve the New Island National Nature Reserve in the Falkland Islands and protect the sites' world-renowned seabird colonies from invasive mammals and conserve its carbon-rich peatlands.

Communities in these areas are reliant on the natural environment for their

economic welfare and security. This funding injection will also help provide local people with the skills and tools to manage the natural world and encourage tourism in a sustainable way.

Further information:

- Darwin Plus (also known as the Overseas Territories Environment and Climate Fund) is a competitive UK government grants scheme which is part of the Biodiversity Challenge Fund (BCF) that provides funding for environmental projects in UKOTs
- The funding also supports fellowships for UKOT Nationals to increase their knowledge and ability to meet long-term strategic outcomes for their natural environment.
- Darwin Plus supports projects across all 14 UKOTs which are: Anguilla; Bermuda; British Antarctic Territory; British Indian Ocean Territory; The British Virgin Islands; The Cayman Islands; The Falkland Islands; Gibraltar; Montserrat; The Pitcairn, Henderson, Ducie & Oeno Islands; Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha; South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands; Sovereign Base Areas, Akrotiri and Dhekelia (Cyprus); and, The Turks & Caicos Islands.
- Primary responsibility for biodiversity conservation and wider environmental management in the UK Overseas Territories has been devolved to the OT governments, who, with the support of the UK government, are responsible for developing appropriate, applicable, and affordable environmental policies, legislation and standards.
- The Darwin Initiative provides Overseas Development Aid (ODA) to protect biodiversity worldwide. 2022 marks the 30th anniversary of the Darwin Initiative, to celebrate Defra is raising the ambition for the fund and awarding new, larger grants to environmental projects.
- Since 1992, the Darwin Initiative has awarded over £164m to more than 1,143 projects across 159 countries.

Published 23 May 2022

[April 2022 Transaction Data](#)

News story

This data provides information about the number and types of applications that HM Land Registry completed in April 2022.



Image credit: NicoElNino/Shutterstock.com

Please note this data shows what HM Land Registry has been able to process during the time period covered and is not necessarily a reflection of market activity.

In April:

- HM Land Registry completed more than 1,752,360 applications to change or query the Land Register
- the South East topped the table of regional applications with 416,705

HM Land Registry completed 1,752,363 applications in April compared with 2,125,508 in March and 1,760,322 last April 2021, of which:

- 335,442 were applications for register updates compared with 390,596 in March
- 932,281 were applications for an official copy of a register compared with 1,141,724 in March
- 214,760 were search and hold queries (official searches) compared with 265,590 in March
- 16,013 were postal applications from non-account holders compared with 19,507 in March

Applications by region and country

Region/country	February applications	March applications	April applications
South East	440,118	490,963	416,705
Greater London	339,757	386,977	315,971
North West	216,620	244,964	200,963
South West	178,861	209,168	170,684
West Midlands	156,319	177,003	145,566
Yorkshire and the Humber	149,242	166,917	137,836
East Midlands	136,288	156,855	126,524
North	90,326	107,426	84,798
East Anglia	79,717	89,455	74,659

Region/country	February applications	March applications	April applications
Isles of Scilly	42	100	42
Wales	83,412	95,565	78,518
England and Wales (not assigned)	124	115	97
Total	1,870,826	2,125,508	1,752,363

Top 5 local authority areas

April 2022 applications

Top 5 local authority areas April applications

Birmingham	25,455
City of Westminster	20,731
Leeds	20,441
Buckinghamshire	18,129
Cornwall	17,090

March 2022 applications

Top 5 local authority areas March applications

Birmingham	29,962
City of Westminster	25,617
Leeds	24,294
Cornwall	22,554
Buckinghamshire	22,058

Top 5 customers

April 2022 applications

Top 5 customers April applications

Infotrack Limited	129,112
Enact	46,811
O'Neill Patient	25,287
Optima Legal Services	24,038
Avail AI Ltd	23,384

March 2022 applications

Top 5 customers March applications

Infotrack Limited	151,371
Enact	65,731
O'Neill Patient	31,569
Optima Legal Services	31,077
TM Group (UK) Ltd (Search Choice)	28,064

[Access the full dataset on our Use land and property data service.](#)

Next publication

Transaction Data is published on the 15th working day of each month. The May data will be published at 11am on Thursday 23 June 2022.

Published 23 May 2022

PM call with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese: 23 May 2022

The Prime Minister spoke to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese of Australia this morning to congratulate him on his election win at the weekend.

The Prime Minister told the new Australian leader that he wanted to congratulate him fulsomely on the big moment and said he looked forward to strengthening the UK – Australia relationship even further.

Prime Minister Albanese thanked the Prime Minister and noted that the UK and Australia had a strong and historic friendship, stemming from their close Commonwealth ties. The pair agreed that there was more that could be done together.

Both leaders agreed that there was strong alignment between their Governments' joint agendas, spanning across global security, climate change and trade.

Discussing AUKUS, the leaders strongly agreed on its vital importance and the exciting opportunities it provided. The Prime Minister said he thought the trilateral grouping could go further together in other domains, where both countries could collaborate for the global good.

The pair also paid tribute to the extraordinary resistance of the Ukrainian people in the face of ruthless Russian aggression, and the Prime Minister thanked Australia for its principled position and strong support to Ukraine.

The leaders agreed that it was important that the war in Ukraine did not embolden other countries to undermine global stability.

The Prime Minister said that now was an important moment for democracies to stand together and prove their worth, and it was important that coercive autocracies were sent a message of strength and unity.

On trade, both leaders agreed the Free Trade Agreement was incredibly

important to both countries going forward, as well as the UK's accession to the CPTPP trade bloc.

The leaders agreed to stay in close touch, and hoped they would be able to meet in person soon.