

KENT'S PLAN BEE



February 2023 Summary Newsletter

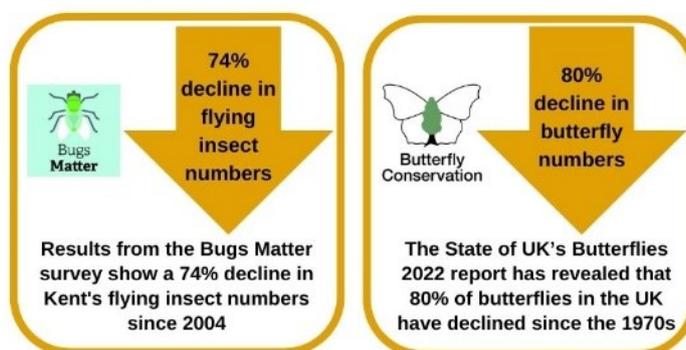
Reports show worrying declines in pollinator numbers

February saw a few sad reports published concerning pollinators numbers. Kent Wildlife Trust and Buglife published results from their 2022 Bugs Matter survey, showing a dramatic decrease in flying insect numbers in Kent. Sadly, the number of flying insects sampled on number plates has declined by a massive 74% since 2004, and an increase from last year's decline of 72%. It is also higher than the average for the UK, which came in at a 64% national decline. Find the full report on the [Kent Wildlife Trust website](#).

Also, Butterfly Conservation released their State of UK's Butterflies 2022 report, which covers the whole of the UK. The report says that 80% of butterflies in the UK have declined since the 1970s. Read the full report on the [Butterfly Conservation website](#).

Both these reports show worrying declines in pollinator numbers, and a trend that cannot be allowed to continue.

Reports published this week have shown a dramatic decline in pollinator numbers...



Both these reports show worrying declines in pollinator numbers. Without pollinators many of our ecosystems could collapse, which would have disastrous consequences for us all.



Without pollinators such as flies, butterflies, and moths, many of our ecosystems could collapse, which would have disastrous consequences for us all.

Tell us how your Resolution for Pollinators is going!

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION FOR POLLINATORS



In January, an amazing
153 resolutions
were set to help pollinators
in 2023!

Head to letstalk.kent.gov.uk/plan-bee
to share your photos and stories of
your completed resolutions

Our Plan Bee Officer Hannah has posted the first story on our newly reopened resolution website. She's been planting herb seeds inside to get a head start on growing flowers for pollinators this year. Read [her full story](#) on our Storyboard and check back to see how she continues to improve her garden for pollinators.

We've done the number crunching and can tell you that in January, an amazing **153 resolutions** were set to help pollinators this year! That is an incredible number of actions that will hopefully take place this year. With 10 likes each, the top resolutions were:

- Plant more pollinator-friendly flowers in the garden
- Go peat-free for the year

Thank you to everyone who took part and pledged to take action for pollinators in 2023!

Now, it's time to hear how you are getting on! The Kent's Plan Bee New Year's Resolution page is now updated and live again, ready for you to start adding your completed resolutions to. Simply head over to the Storyboard and add how you have completed your resolution, maybe add a photo to show and inspire others. The ideas board has also been left up so that you can find out more information on how to complete your resolution or continue to add your ideas. We can't wait to see what you get up to this year! Head to our [resolutions page](#) to share your photos and stories.

A gardener's guide to the life cycle of butterflies and moths

This month let's dive into the life cycles of butterflies and moths. Butterflies and moths have a similar lifecycle, but in order to thrive, each species has some very precise requirements.

Eggs and larvae

Gardeners can help butterflies and moths by providing breeding sites for them. Eggs are normally laid on or near the food plants for the larvae (caterpillars). Many larvae will only eat specific plants.

Butterfly Conservation gives advice about larval food plants for [butterflies](#) and [moths](#).



Mullein moth and Peacock butterfly caterpillars

Adult butterflies and moths

Butterflies feed on nectar in flowers. Your garden will be particularly beneficial to butterflies if you:

- Have a wide variety of flowers to suit different species
- Plant them in a sunny and sheltered site
- Grow them in large clumps
- Have flowers from spring to autumn.

Flowers for butterflies will also benefit species of moth that feed on nectar. Night-scented and tubular flowers are especially good for moths.

Butterfly Conservation gives advice on nectar plants for [butterflies](#) and [moths](#).

Meadow Brown



Skipper



Overwintering

Butterflies and moths may overwinter as eggs, larvae, pupae, or adults. Leave these areas undisturbed to protect them in winter.

Overwintering sites include:

- Below ground
- Plant debris on the ground
- Sheltered crevices
- Twigs and hollow stems



Pupa on grass, Red Admiral on apple

How can gardeners help butterflies and moths?

- It's important to know which butterflies and moths are visiting your garden. Try doing a [PoMS FIT Count](#) from April to September to see which pollinators are using your garden. For nocturnal moths, try using a moth trap.
- Once you know which butterflies and moths use your garden, understanding their lifecycle and specific requirements, particularly as larvae and when overwintering, can help you provide the conditions for them to thrive.
- Have a variety of flowers and foodplants in your garden to support feeding adults and growing larvae.
- Both butterflies and moths will benefit if you avoid using pesticides on plants.

Elephant hawk moth



Orange-tip



Holly Blue

Burnet companion

Small Copper

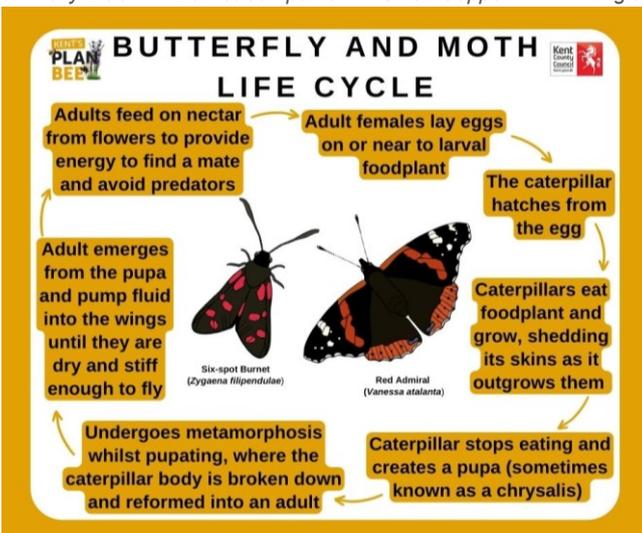
Ringlet

Small Tortoiseshell

Comma

Humming-bird Hawk moth

Painted Lady



We've put all the information on the butterfly and moth life cycle into a simple diagram. Knowing the life cycle of butterflies and moths is helpful so that we can make sure that the things they need to complete their life cycle (nectar sources, food plants and overwintering sites) are available at the right time of year.

Further information:

- [Gardening for a Wilder Kent](#)
- [Butterfly Conservation: gardening for butterflies](#)
- [Butterfly Conservation: A – Z of butterflies](#)
- [Butterfly Conservation: gardening for moths](#)
- [Butterfly Conservation: A – Z of moths](#)

Thank you to our wonderful Wild About Gardens volunteer Penny Brook for writing this month's article.

Photo credits: P Brook & soil burrow Rosie Bleet

Pollinators to see in March

Spring is here, and many of our pollinators can sense it. Start keeping an eye out for pollinators emerging from their winter hibernation on warmer days.

Bees: Hairy-footed Flower Bee - *Anthophora plumipes*, Early Bumblebee - *Osmia bicornis* and Red-tailed Bumblebee - *Bombus lapidarius*

Butterflies: Brimstone - *Gonepteryx rhamni*, Red Admiral - *Vanessa atalanta* and Small Tortoiseshell (butterfly) - *Aglais urticae*

Beetles: Pollen beetles - *Epuraea aestivalis*

Moths: Common Quaker - *Orthosia cerasi*

Flies: Yellow Dung Fly - *Scathophaga stercoraria*

Wasps: Red Wasp - *Vespa rufa*

Wildflowers to spot this month include Colt's-foot, Lesser Celandine, Marsh Marigold, Primrose, Red-dead Nettle, Violets, and Wood Anemone.

Spotted any of these or any other pollinators and wildflowers? Post them on our [Facebook page](#), tag us in your photos @KentsPlanBee or [email us](#) your photos.

POLLINATORS TO SEE IN MARCH



Others to See

Red-tailed Bumblebee - *Bombus lapidarius*
Common Quaker (moth) - *Orthosia cerasi*
Yellow Dung Fly - *Scathophaga stercoraria*
Small Tortoiseshell (butterfly) - *Aglais urticae*

Spotted any of these? Why not share them on our Facebook page @KentsPlanBee



Upcoming Events and Resources

Wild About Gardens

The next Wild About Gardens event is taking place on 18th on weeds and wildflowers for pollinators and 23 March for nature-friendly lawns. Book onto this and other events through the [Kent Wildlife Trust website](#).

Kent Wildlife Trust

AUTUMN & WINTER ONLINE WORKSHOPS

£5 per person

Thurs 12 January 7.30-9pm: Gardening in a changing climate

Thurs 2 February 10.30am-12: Managing pests & diseases in a nature friendly way

Sat 4 February 3-5pm: Building & Maintaining a garden wildlife pond

Thu 23 February: 7.30-9pm: Helping Hedgehogs in gardens

Sat 18 March 3-4.30pm: Using weeds & wildflowers in a traditional garden to attract pollinators

Thurs 23 March 7.30-9pm: Nature Friendly Lawns

Bumblebee Conservation Trust Free Online Identification Training

The Bumblebee Conservation Trust are hosting several free online events to improve your bumblebee identification skills. Book your free place through the Trust's [events calendar](#) on their website.

Entry-level sessions: 6 April, and 12 May

Immediate-level sessions: 24 April and 23 May

Flowers for Bumblebees

Download our latest [infographic](#) about which flowers suit different bumblebee tongue lengths.

Bumblebee	Tongue Length	Spring	Summer	Autumn
Buff/White tailed	Short	Comfrey	White Clover	Ivy
Common Carder	Long	Dead-nettle	Lavender	Heather
Early	Medium	Comfrey	Viper's Bugloss	Do not fly in autumn
Garden	Long	Red Clover	Foxglove	Honey suckle
Red-tailed	Short	Ox-eye Daisy	Knapweed	Spear Thistle

Keep up to date with the latest news via our [Kent's Plan Bee Facebook page](#)

If you received this email indirectly and would like to subscribe to our mailing list, please email us on the address below with the subject line "Sign Up". If you wish to unsubscribe from this mailing list, please email us on the address below with the subject line "Unsubscribe".

Do you have a Kent pollinator news story or event that you would like featured in our newsletter? Have you created a pollinator friendly community space? Got your neighbours together to create a row of pollinator friendly gardens? Or do you have an event about Kent's pollinators you would like advertised? Email it to the address below and we will be in contact about a potential space in the Newsletter.

planbee@kent.gov.uk

All the previous editions of the Newsletter have now been added to our webpage. You can download them as PDFs or share the website address on your social media. Find all the Newsletters on the [Pollinators section of Kent County Council's website](#).

Edited by Hannah Simmons, Graduate Biodiversity Officer, Kent County Council.

For a Pollinator Friendly Garden of England

