

KENT'S PLAN BEE



January 2023 Summary Newsletter

New Year's Resolutions for Pollinators

At the beginning of January, we launched our campaign to get you thinking about how you can incorporate pollinators into your New Year's Resolutions. Thank you to everyone who picked a resolution on our Let's Talk page. We will be doing some number crunching and letting you know soon how many people took part. We will also be updating our Let's Talk page shortly so that you can upload your photos and stories of how you are getting on. You can also [email](#) us your photos and updates, we always love to hear how you are incorporating pollinator features into your gardens, allotments, and community green spaces. In the meantime, if you would like more information on how to complete your chosen resolution, we have compiled all the information that we posted throughout January into a new [photo album](#) on our Facebook page.

You are not the only ones setting out your New Year's Resolutions. Here are some details on what Kent's Plan Bee and Kent County Council (KCC) hope to achieve this year:

1. Continue to review KCC's land management practices and put in place, where it can, revised grass-cutting and maintenance regimes and apply pollinator-friendly planting.
2. Continue to review and hope to reduce the use of glyphosate across land owned or managed by the County Council, except where no viable alternative exists.
3. Work with Kent's planning authorities to deliver improvements for pollinator habitats at the local level.
4. Develop a pollinator pledge tool for parish and town councils and community groups.
5. Re-run our No Mow May campaign, to raise awareness and showcase KCC land taking part, plus seeing where Kent's residents and organisations are also participating from.
6. Get KCC more involved in some well-established pollinator citizen science projects, such as the UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme Flower-Insect Timed (PoMS FIT) Count and the Bugs Matter survey.

For more information on our aspirations for the year, see our [Facebook post](#).

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION FOR POLLINATORS



How to help pollinators in winter

There has been lots of great advice on social media about how to help any pollinators you find this winter. We have summarised some of the best advice here for you:

[Bumblebees](#)

Mostly it is only the queens for the next year that hibernate, but some buff-tailed bumblebee colonies can be found still active, especially in Kent where it is warmer during the winters. You can help these bees by making sure you have winter flowers in your garden and leave areas of your garden undisturbed, particularly areas of leaf litter and well-drained soils that are suitable for nests and hibernating queens.

[Butterflies](#)

If you find an adult awake in your house over winter, gently catch it in a cardboard box and take it somewhere cool and dry for the rest of the winter, such as a shed. Make sure to let it out when it gets warmer consistently outside.

Many butterflies overwinter as caterpillar or pupae. Help them by leaving your garden unmanaged this season. Long grass and piles of fallen leaves are great places for them to hide in during the winter.



Buff-tailed bumblebee



Peacock butterflies overwinter as adults

A gardener's guide to the lifecycle of solitary bees

Over 200 species of solitary bee live in Britain; some are probably in your garden. Gardeners can support solitary bees throughout their lifecycle.

Adults emerge from nests

Males usually emerge first, followed by females. Courtship and mating then take place. Look for these common garden bees during their different flight seasons:

- Hairy-footed flower bee – late February to June
- Red mason bees – March to July
- Tawny mining bee – late March to mid-June
- Wool carder bee – late May to late August
- Patchwork leafcutter bee – mid-June to early September
- Ivy bee – August to October

Gardens that provide pollen and nectar from late February to October will help these bees breed successfully. The [Bumblebee Conservation Trust](#) gives advice on solitary bees' favourite flowers.



Hairy-footed flower bee and red mason bee



Ivy bee and wool carder bee

Egg-laying

Solitary bees lay eggs in individual cells in the ground or in hollow plants and holes in dead wood, walls and in bee hotels. Wherever they are, they need a sunny site. Each cell must be provisioned so a good nectar and pollen forage supply is essential. Solitary bees need construction materials which include mud, leaves, plant hair and resin.



Patchwork leafcutter bee



Overwintering

Solitary bees overwinter in their birth cells, usually as prepupae or as fully developed non-emerged adults. Tiny volcano-like spoil heaps on bare earth and lawns indicate solitary bee nests so leave them undisturbed. Keep bee hotels cool and dry over the winter and look forward to adult bees emerging from them in the spring.

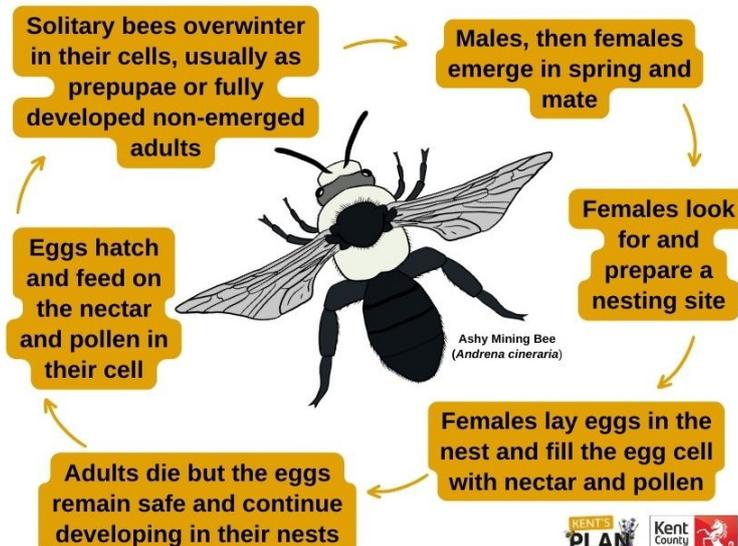
How can gardeners help solitary bees?

- Make sure to have a selection of flowers all year round for solitary bees in your garden. This feeds the adults, plus nectar and pollen is stored in the nests with the eggs ready for when they hatch.
- Provide undisturbed nesting sites for a variety of bees; not all species use bee hotels, try having some dead wood, bare earth, and long grass available too.
- Have nest construction materials in your garden for the bees to put in the egg cells. Some species need mud, others cut circles out of leaves such as roses (this does not harm the plant), and some collect hairs from hairy plants such as lambs' ear.



Tawny mining bee

SOLITARY BEE LIFE CYCLE



We've put all the information on the solitary bee life cycle into a simple diagram. Knowing the life cycle of solitary bees is helpful so that we can make sure that the things they need to complete their life cycle (nectar and pollen, construction materials and nesting sites) are available at the right time of year.

Further information:

[Gardening for a Wilder Kent](#)
[The Wildlife Trusts: Identify Solitary Bees in the UK](#)
[Bumblebee Conservation Trust: Other Bees](#)
[Natural History Society of Northumbria: a Short Guide to Solitary Bees](#)

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 February

February is the final month of winter, with many pollinators starting to emerge next month. For now, expect to only see those that have overwintered as adults appearing on warmer days. This includes buff-tailed bumblebees, peacock, and comma butterflies, or even a few fly species. Some new moth species are starting to appear. Moths in February include The Satellite, Grey Shoulder-knot, and Dotted Border, along with those that overwinter as adults such as the Herald and Common Plume.

Wildflowers to spot over this month include Gorse, Common Chickweed, Groundsel, Red Dead-nettle, Shepherd's purse, and White Dead-nettle. Early spring flowers such as Snowdrops and Lesser Celandine flowers are important nectar sources if pollinators do venture out on warmer days. These flowers are celebrated in February; snowdrops on the 2nd for Candlemas, and celandines on the 21st.

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 WINTER



Buff-tailed bumblebee
Bombus terrestris

Peacock
Aglais io

Comma
Polygonia c-album

The Herald
Scoliopteryx libatrix

Marmalade Hoverfly
Epsirrhphus balteatus

Others to See
Small Tortoiseshell - *Aglais urticae*
Winter Moth - *Operophtera brumata*
Common Plume - *Emmeline monodactyla*
Common Drone Fly - *Eristalis tenax*

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



Events in February

Wild About Gardens

The next Wild About Gardens event is taking place on 4 and 23 February. Book onto this and other events through the [Kent Wildlife Trust website](#).

Wild About Gardens
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

Kent's Magnificent Moth Task Days

There are a few days lined up to help improve the habitat of some of Kent's rarest moths. Email Emma at epestridge@butterfly-conservation.org for more details and to get involved!

- 5th February 2023, 10:00am-3:00pm, Fanscombe Bank - Black-veined Moth Habitat Task Day
- 9th February in Swalecliffe - Fisher's Estuarine Moth Task Day

February Half Term Boredom Busters

Try these pollinator activities this half term:

- Update your pollinator diary with any pollinators you have seen.
- Make a Valentine's day card with a pollinator pun on it. You can add "Bee my Valentine" to your card.
- Go on a wildflower walk and see how many flowers you can see in bloom. Our list above should help you to know what to expect this time of year.
- Winter is the best time to plant a tree so pick one that provides food for pollinators and get it in the ground.
- Get your herbs for pollinators growing inside. Try growing mint, sage, chives, oregano and thyme, pollinators love their flowers.

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

