

# KENT'S PLAN BEE

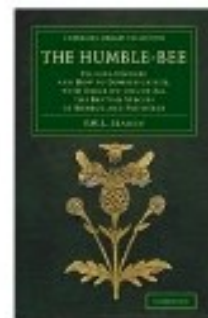


## December 2022 Summary Newsletter

### Pollinator Stories from Kent and beyond

Over the Christmas holidays, we released several Facebook posts with a few tales of two Kent naturalists and scientists who have enriched our understanding of pollination and the natural world through their careful observations and research. We started with a very thorough look at Charles Darwin and his many adventures overseas that led him to many theories on pollinators and evolution, including [flightlessness in beetles](#) and a [long-tongued moth](#) capable of pollinating a certain Madagascan orchid. A little closer to home, Darwin studied the [orchids](#) and pollinating insects around his house in Down, discovering many links on cross-fertilisation and the inter-relationship between [flower and pollinator numbers](#).

Finally, we took a brief look at [the work of Frederick Sladen](#), an entomologist and beekeeper who grew up at Ripple Court near Deal. He published his book on



bumblebees (also known as humblebees at the time) provided a guide to distinguishing the different bumblebee British species, and instructions on how to domesticate these important pollinators.

If you missed any of these stories, head over to our Facebook page to read them, or keep an eye on [Explore Kent's blog page](#) where we will shortly be releasing the stories as a blog post.

### Christmas Crafts



Christmas wreath, pollinator planter and pollinator paper snowflakes

Did you see our latest guides on pollinator crafts over Christmas? Whilst Christmas may be over, save these ready for the next one, or adapt them for anytime of year.

[Homemade Christmas Wreath Instructions](#)  
[Pollinator Planter Instructions](#)  
[Pollinator Paper Snowflakes Template](#)

If you made any of these, we would love to see your finished result. Send us your photos to [planbee@kent.gov.uk](mailto:planbee@kent.gov.uk) or tag us on Facebook.

### New Year's Resolution: How will you support pollinators in 2023?

It's the time of year that many people start making New Year's Resolutions. For 2023, why not make Kent's pollinators part of your resolutions?

Head over to our [New Year's Resolution page](#) and look through all our ideas on how to help pollinators in 2023. Once you find one you want to attempt, simply like it, or add your own idea if it is not on the list. Then complete your resolution at some point in the year, taking photos and videos so we can share them with others who may need some inspiration.

We will be posting throughout the year on our Facebook page to help you complete your resolution, so make sure to visit often for hints and tips to help you achieve your pollinator pledge for 2023. Or read our article below for more information from our Wild About Gardens volunteers for ideas and how to complete your resolution.



Head over to our [Let's Talk page](#) now to select your New Year's Pollinator Pledge!

## Your Plan Bee in '23

If flowers, butterflies and buzzing insects make you happy, try our suggestions for new year's resolutions. Whether you have a window box, balcony, or garden, you will find something here for you. Doing just one thing will make a difference to pollinators.

### Boost pollen and nectar supplies

- Choose plants that are good for pollinators.
- Grow herbs in pots – insects love them and so do we. This is great for gardens with little space or can even be incorporated into your work's office if there is some outside space.
- Collect seeds from your own flowers and grow them up or sew them to create wonderful wildflower patches or a meadow. Try to have something in flower all year.



### Provide food for larvae to help butterflies and moths

- Larvae feed on a variety of plants, shrubs, and trees. Guidance on the [Butterfly Conservation](#) website will help you choose plants to help butterflies and moths at their larval stage.

### Provide water

- Water is essential for insects as well as other wildlife. Add an insect watering station to your garden, or a wildlife pond.

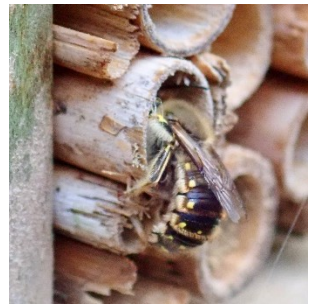
### Provide shelter

- Wildlife needs undisturbed areas for nesting and over-wintering, so leave an area of garden or allotment uncut for the year. Or why not your whole lawn as part of No Mow May.

- Maybe add a bug hotel to your garden - Solitary bees lay eggs in bug hotels.

### Enjoy your outdoor space

- Cut back on tidying and spend more time enjoying the flowers, bees, and butterflies. Or go further and create a whole zone in the garden dedicated to wildlife where it is left unmanaged.



### Create a safe environment

Encourage plants to be healthy and more resistant to "pests" by:

- Adding organic matter to soil to help strong growth. Making your own compost or buying peat-free compost is also great for your soil's health.
- Growing plants in the conditions they prefer.
- Going chemical-free will help beneficial predators to thrive and remove pests naturally.



**Bugs  
Matter**



### Other actions you can take this year

- Call on local politicians to do more for pollinators.
- Take part in a survey – there are plenty to choose from this year – Bugs Matter, the Big Butterfly Count, Moth Night, and Pollinator Monitoring Scheme (PoMS) Flower-Insect Timed (FIT) Counts.
- Complete the [Kent Children's University Pollinator Challenge](#) – our free education resource is available to download now.
- Add pollinator-friendly elements to the workplace or school - You could get your workplace or school involved in doing more for pollinators. Plant some flowers or add a bug hotel to the grounds and see which pollinators move in.



Feel inspired to make a New Year's Resolution to help Kent's pollinators? Head over to our [Let's Talk page](#) now to select your New Year's Pollinator Pledge from our ideas board. Or add your own if there is something you think we have missed. Don't forget to take photos and videos when you complete your resolution and share them far and wide, it may just inspire someone else to also have a go.

### Further information:

[Gardening for a Wilder Kent](#)

[Royal Horticultural Society: Plants for Pollinators](#)

[Bumblebee Conservation Trust: Bee the Change](#)

[Butterfly Conservation: Gardening for butterflies](#)

[Butterfly Conservation: Gardening for moths](#)

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

Photo credits: P Brook

## Pollinators to see in January

In general, January is a quiet month for pollinators. Most pollinators will be in the middle of their overwintering period, but on warmer days you may see a few buff-tailed bumblebees, peacock, and comma butterflies, or even a few flies. Some winter moth specialists can be seen, including Winter Moth, and the Satellite moth. Wildflowers have also mostly stopped blooming, but a few hardy species carry on over the winter. Those to spot over winter include Gorse, Common Chickweed, Groundsel, Red Deadnettle, Shepherd's purse, and White Dead-nettle. The Gorse and Dead-nettle flowers are important nectar sources if pollinators do venture out on warmer days.

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  
*Episyrphus 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 January

### Wild About Gardens

The next Wild About Gardens event is taking place on 12 January. Book onto this and other events through the [Kent Wildlife Trust website](#).



**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



### Other Online Events and Courses

Get a head start on your pollinator New Year's Resolution, or add to your pollinator knowledge, by joining some of the online events and courses happening this winter:

- [Gardening for Bees with Brigit Strawbridge](#) – hosted by Buglife, on 9 February at 1830-2000. Free to attend.
- [Discovering Bees Online Course](#) – hosted by the Field Studies Council. A virtual course at beginners' level of bee biology and ecology, starting on 3 April. £30 per person.
- [Bee Conservation Online Course](#) – hosted by the Field Studies Council. A virtual course running at various times across the year, with the first one starting on 16 January. £20 per person.

### Butterfly Conservation Resources

Butterfly Conservation are posting lots of useful resources to help get your 2023 off to a fluttering start.

- [Social Butterfly Year Planner](#) – a yearly planner that helps butterflies and your mental health
- [Butterflies and moths to see in January](#)
- [Where do butterflies go in winter?](#) A useful blog on what happens to some adult butterflies over winter
- [Dig it gardening blog](#) – how old Christmas trees can create habitat for garden wildlife

 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](mailto: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

