

KENT'S PLAN BEE



November 2022 Summary Newsletter

Kent's Plan Bee Virtual Summit 2022

We had our virtual summit on Tuesday 22 November, discussing how integrating good land management practices can support pollinators. This is the third year we ran the event, and with 126 delegates attending it proved to be as popular as ever.

We heard from a good range of voices on how they are helping pollinators at a landscape level, with speakers from Natural England, Kent Wildlife Trust, KCC's Country Parks Team, the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, plus local farmers, landowners, and parish councils. We want to thank all our brilliant speakers again and everyone that made this year's summit possible!

Visit <https://vimeo.com/774196475/d1deb45654> to view a recording of the Plan Bee Summit.



Land management practices for pollinators

Bouygues' Sittingbourne depot transformed for pollinators



Upcycled bollards into planters



A beautiful flower border in the depot yard

Some of KCC's contractors at Bouygues' Sittingbourne have added some off-the-radar Social Value to their local area by planting for pollinators in their depot yard.

The depot at Sittingbourne is a typical industrial estate, very bleak and devoid of vegetation. The staff decided to do something about it and have upcycled old bollards into new planters either side of the door to the yard. The bollards would normally end up being taken for recycling but have been given a new lease of life with colourful pollinator-friendly flowers now spilling out of them.

Staff have also planted a variety of pollinator-friendly flowers in pots along a border. Plus, they have installed insect and bird boxes to encourage bees, insects, and other wildlife.

We have loved seeing the images from the depot and the commitment from the staff at Bouygues to do something for pollinators. It may be small scale, but it all helps!

Have your organisation or community group done something to help pollinators? We would love to see and share your stories in our Newsletter and on social media. Email your story and pictures to planbee@kent.gov.uk and we could feature you in our next edition.

Kent's Plan Bee Revised Action Plan

Following a review this year, our refreshed and revised Action Plan is now available on the Kent County Council website!

Since the launch of Plan Bee in 2019, much has changed and we wanted our action plan to reflect that. The revised action plan has a new foreword from our Founder and chair, Seán Holden, as well as Kent County Council Cabinet Member for Environment, Susan Carey, and our new Parliamentary Patron for Kent's Plan Bee, Tracey Crouch CBE (MP for Chatham and Aylesford). The plan also has an update on our objectives and monitoring measures, plus a new section on our actions and successes since 2020, such as changes to Kent County Council's rural swathe cut. Give it a read to find out how Kent County Council hope to support and consider Kent's pollinators in many areas of our work going forward.



**OUR REVISED ACTION
PLAN IS NOW LIVE!**

Find it on our
KCC Webpage



Click this image to go to the website

A gardener's guide to the bumblebee life cycle

This month, with the help of our Wild About Garden's volunteers, we are learning about the bumblebee life cycle. Understanding bumblebees' life cycle is the key to enabling them to thrive.

Queen bees emerge from hibernation

- They need food to build up their strength. Gardens with lots of early spring flowers are good for bumblebees.
- Queens then begin the search for a suitable nest site to start the colony. Old rodent burrows, compost heaps and gaps under sheds may be used as nest sites. Carder bees' nest in long grass and tree bees often use bird boxes. Leave these areas undisturbed to encourage bees to nest.



Development of the colony

- The queen lays eggs and starts collecting pollen and nectar to feed the larvae. Adult females (workers) are first to emerge, and they forage for the colony. The queen stays in the nest and keeps laying eggs. Towards the end of the colony's life, the queen lays male eggs, and some females are fed more to become queens.
- Male bees leave the nest. A few days later, new queens leave the nest and mate.



New queens

- Some may start a new colony. Later-emerging queens will look for somewhere to hibernate. Underground beneath hedges, sheds and under tree roots are popular places.
- New queens need pollen and nectar in autumn and when they are active on mild winter days.
- Gardens with flowers blooming throughout the year support bumblebees at every stage in their lifecycle.



To provide food for new bumblebee queens over winter, consider having some later-flowering plants such as hellebore, Winter-flowering *Viburnum Bodnantense* or winter jasmine. Not only are they great for bumblebees and other pollinators in winter, but they provide some colour in the garden.

BUMBLEBEE LIFE CYCLE



Did you know?

There are 24 species of bumblebee in the UK. Kent is home to 22 of these bumblebee species, including many that are rare or scarce. Bee species of national priority in Kent include England's rarest bumblebee, the Shril Carder bee, which is only found in a handful of locations in south Wales and southern England and generally scarce even there.

Further information:

[Gardening for a Wilder Kent](#)

[Urban Pollinators: Where do pollinators go in winter?](#)

[Bumblebee Conservation Trust: Habitats](#)

[Bumblebee Conservation Trust: Bumblebee Nests](#)

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

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 December



December marks the first proper month of winter, and very few pollinators are active except on the warmer days. Very few new pollinators can be found, but some winter moth specialists can be seen, including the Chestnut, December Moth, Mottled Umber, and the Satellite. Many pollinators you will likely spot are those that overwinter as adults, such as buff-tailed bumblebees, peacock, and comma butterflies. On the warmest days you may even see a marmalade hoverfly. Check out our [October edition](#) for the full list of winter pollinators and wildflowers. Spotted any pollinators or wildflowers recently? Post them on our [Facebook page](#), or [email us](#) your photos.

Tree Week 2022

[Tree Week](#) takes place on the last week of November, going into December (26 Nov - 4 Dec). It is the UK's largest annual tree celebration, run by the Tree Council. This week marks the start of the winter tree planting season.

We posted lots of resources on our Facebook page, including info on which trees support pollinators. With flowering dates, how the trees are pollinated, and human uses, it's a one-stop shop on trees for pollinators.

If you missed any of these, they are available in our new Facebook photo album, [Trees for Pollinators](#). Please feel free to share them and download the images.



Events in December

Kent's Magnificent Moths Community Conservation Day – 4 & 11 December

Butterfly Conservation's project, Kent's Magnificent Moths, need you to help grow their foodplant, Goldenrod, to increase possible habitat for this little moth. They will be hosting a festive day on Sunday 4 December at Kent Oasis Community Garden to help increase this foodplant throughout local woodlands. Book your place on [Eventbrite](#).



Or if you fancy getting out in the winter sun, join a habitat management day at Denge Wood on the following Sunday 11 December to help the Duke of Burgundy and White-spotted Sable there! Email aceward@googlemail.com for more information.

Pollinators at Christmas

Keep an eye on our Facebook page throughout December for pollinator gift ideas and craft activities to make. And don't forget about last year's decoration instructions [12 Pollinators of Christmas](#) in our Facebook photo albums for more crafting inspiration.

Kent's Plan Bee wishes you a Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year!

Wild About Gardens

The next Wild About Gardens events are taking place in January 2023. Get ready for the New Year and book onto these events through the [Kent Wildlife Trust website](#). These make great Christmas gifts for those who love wildlife-friendly gardening.

Wild About Gardens
KENT WILDLIFE TRUST

AUTUMN & WINTER ONLINE WORKSHOPS
£5 per person

- Thurs 12 January 7.30-9pm: Gardening in a changing climate
- Thurs 26 January 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

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

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

