

KENT'S PLAN BEE



July 2023 Summary Newsletter



We've won!



Kent County Council's Pollinator Action Plan are delighted to have won the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs' (DEFRA) Bees' Needs Champions Award 2023!

We've Won the Bees' Needs Champion Award 2023!



Kent's Plan Bee has won a national award for Kent County Council (KCC), which has been named by the government as a Bees' Needs Champion for its exceptional work in supporting our buzzy friends. We are incredibly proud of this award and the work that Kent's Plan Bee has been recognised for, along with all our team and partners that have contributed and made this possible.

Kent's Plan Bee has so far seen the council adjust the way it cuts its hedgerows, urban, and rural vegetation to better support habitats. It has also influenced landowners and building developers in the county to give over parts of their land to nature conservation, encouraging wildflowers to grow during the warmer months. And with all our communications and resources, Kent's Plan Bee have been informing and motivating the people of Kent to help pollinators in their local areas too!

For more information about the award and Kent's Plan Bee, please read our [press release](#) on our Kent County Council news website.

July Awareness Weeks

July was a busy month for awareness weeks and pollinator campaigns on our Facebook page. We started with Solitary Bee Week, where we looked at their life cycle and ecology, to identification and threats to them.

We then did it all again the following week for bumblebees as part of Bees' Needs Week. We also shared the most [recent research](#) on how climate change is changing the emergence date of bumblebees.

Finally, we celebrated the Big Butterfly Count – the butterfly and day-time moth survey set up by Butterfly Conservation – looking at some of the [butterflies](#) you were likely to see during the count. And to finish the month off, we gave our bee and wasp mimics some airtime, including some well disguised beetles, moths and [hoverflies](#).

SOLITARY BEE GROUPS



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



A gardener's guide to the lifecycle of hoverflies

Hoverflies are unsung heroes of pollination and pest-control. Often mistaken for bees & wasps, hoverflies however do not sting. They are identifiable by their single pair of wings whereas bees & wasps have two pairs. There are over 280 species of hoverfly in Britain, each with a different lifecycle story. Some of the more common lifecycle stories are highlighted here.



Migration and breeding

Episyrphus balteatus, known as the marmalade hoverfly, is often found in gardens. It is among the 3.5 trillion insects that migrate across southern England each year. Travelling north from southern Europe, hoverflies follow flowers coming into bloom. Feeding on nectar and pollinating as they fly north, they potentially link isolated plant populations, improving genetic diversity. Their journey ends when they stop and breed. The next generation heads north using inbuilt knowledge. It takes four or five generations to accomplish the spring and early summer journey north. In autumn, just one generation of hoverflies takes the long route south.

Gardeners can sustain these hungry hoverflies by providing flowers with easily accessible nectar from spring to autumn. Check the [RHS website](#) for guidance on hoverfly-friendly flowers.



Larvae, pupae and overwintering

Hoverfly eggs are laid near food for the larvae. Some larvae such as *Helophilus pendulus* and *Eristalis* species live in water or semi-liquid organic matter such as cow pats.

Most hoverfly larvae are either predators or detritivores who help to recycle nutrients, but some do feed on plants. About 40% of hoverflies prey on aphids and other sap-sucking insects such as leafhoppers and whiteflies.

Hoverflies overwinter in a variety of forms while some, such as the marmalade hoverfly, migrate southwards.

How to support hoverfly larvae, pupae, and migratory adults:

- Avoid using pesticides – wait for the hoverfly larvae to do your pest control.
- A log pile provides a home and food for detritivores
- Make a [hoverfly lagoon](#)
- Leave safe places for pupation and overwintering by being relaxed about tidying your garden.
- Nectar-rich flowers fuel migratory hoverflies

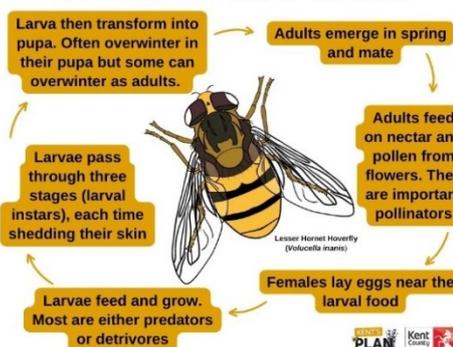


Hoverflies are pollinator superstars!

Experiments comparing hand pollination of strawberries with hoverfly pollination showed hoverflies (including the marmalade hoverfly) increased yields by over 70% and doubled the proportion of marketable fruit.

Companion planting with hoverfly-friendly plants such as borage may attract more of these amazing insects to pollinate your crops and lay their eggs where larvae can go on aphid patrol.

HOVERFLY LIFE CYCLE



We've put all the information on the hoverfly life cycle into a simple diagram.

Further information:

[Gardening for a Wilder Kent](#)

[Royal Horticultural Society: Hoverflies](#)

[Biological Recording Company: The Most Fascinating Migrants of All](#)

[Hoverfly Recording Scheme](#)

[Sussex Research Online: Companion planting to attract pollinators increases the yield and quality of strawberry fruit in gardens and allotments](#)

[British Naturalists Association: ID Guide Hoverflies](#)

Hodgkiss, D., Brown, M. J., & Fountain, M. T. (2018). Syrphine hoverflies are effective pollinators of commercial strawberry. *Journal of Pollination Ecology*, 22, 55–66. [https://doi.org/10.26786/1920-7603\(2018\)five](https://doi.org/10.26786/1920-7603(2018)five)

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 August

Look out for newly emerged Queen **bumblebees** that have left the nest, mated, and are now looking for suitable places to overwinter.

Solitary bees out now include Common Yellow Face Bee and Patchwork Leaf-cutter Bees.

August **moth** highlights include Setaceous Hebrew Character, Jersey Tiger, Red Underwing, August Thorn, plus many more.

Butterflies include Gatekeeper, Large White, Small Copper, & Chalk Hill Blue.

You may notice more social **wasps** and **European hornets** out and about looking for food to feed their larvae.

Marmalade hoverflies are still out in force but start to look for the larger hornet mimic **hoverflies**.

Wildflowers to spot this month include Burdock, Centaury, Great Mullein, Heather, Hemp Agrimony, Knapweed, Wild Marjoram, Wild Parsnip, Devil's-bit scabious, Harebell, Common Fleabane, Water Mint, Red Bartsia, Wild carrot, Tansy, Meadowsweet, and Yarrow.

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 AUGUST



Gatekeeper
Pyronia tithonus

Small Copper
Lycaena phlaeas

Jersey Tiger Moth
Euplagia quadripunctaria

Setaceous Hebrew Character
Xestia c-nigrum

European Hornet
Vespa crabro

Marmalade Hoverfly
Episyrphus balteatus

Others to See
Common Yellow Face Bee -
Hylaeus communis
Patchwork Leaf-cutter Bee -
Megachile centuncularis
August Thorn moth -
Ennomis quercinaria
Marmalade Hoverfly -
Episyrphus balteatus

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



Upcoming Events and Resources

Wild About Open Gardens

The [Wild About Open Garden events](#) are back! The final three open gardens are taking place in September. Book onto this and other events through the [Kent Wildlife Trust website](#).



SUN 3 SEP 1-5pm: Lydden, near Dover

SAT 9 SEP 1-5pm: Bearsted, near Maidstone

SAT 16 SEP 1-5pm: Langdon Court, near Faversham

Suggested donation £5 on entry
Cash & cheques only

More details can be found by scanning the QR code or visit:
<https://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/wilder-gardens>
Alternatively call 01622 662012

Insect Week Artwork Competition

Looking for a super summer holiday activity for when the weather doesn't play ball? Get creative and draw your favourite pollinator, then submit it to the [Insect Week Artwork Competition!](#) Closes 31 October.

Summer Holiday Events

Keep an eye out this summer for lots of fun-filled events happening across the county, including:

- [Sunday Funday](#) 13 August at Fort Burgoyne, Dover
- All our Country Parks have lots of wildlife events happening everyday this month. Check out their [events page](#) to find an event near you!
- Follow [Butterfly Conservation Kent and SE London Branch](#) on Facebook for their moth events!



 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

