

# All-Ireland Pollinator Plan

Help save our bees



In 2015 bee experts in Ireland came together to produce the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020. They decided to do this because they know that lots of our bees are in big trouble and could disappear from Ireland if we don't do something to help. Without bees we won't be able to grow our own fruits and vegetables, and our wild flowers will begin to disappear making Ireland a very dull place. We don't want this to happen. We want to hear the buzz of hard working bees carrying out their important pollination work. We want them to be there so that we can grow healthy food to feed you, and so that you can grow healthy food to feed your children someday. To stop bees disappearing from Ireland help is needed. You must tell everyone how important bees are and you need to make your school and garden a safe place for bees to live.

Images and text courtesy of All-Ireland Pollinator Plan Junior Version 2015-2020

## What is Pollination?

Pollination happens when pollen is moved from one flower to another. Pollen is the powder that flowers have inside. They use it to make new seeds which are tiny little baby plants waiting to grow. To make a seed, plants need to move pollen from one flower to another flower of the same type nearby. It's hard for flowers to do this because they can't move

like you or me. Instead, they have worked out lots of clever ways to get help. Some flowers have pollen that is so light the wind blows it from flower to flower. These are the plants that cause hay fever in summer as the pollen gets blown up your nose or into your eyes! Other flowers have bright colours and sweet smells so that they will attract a pollinator to help.




Download the full All-Ireland Pollinator Plan Junior Version 2015-2020 from [http://ark.ie/downloads/Junior\\_Pollinator\\_Plan\\_for\\_Web2.pdf](http://ark.ie/downloads/Junior_Pollinator_Plan_for_Web2.pdf)

## But What is a Pollinator?

In Europe most pollination is carried out by insects, especially bees. When you see bees and other insects buzzing around the garden they are adults looking for food. Bees have special hairs on their body that pollen gets stuck to. When bees get covered in pollen, they spit on their front legs and then brush the pollen into a sticky ball that they store on their back legs. They do this because the baby bees (larvae) back in the nest need to eat pollen to grow strong. Adults need lots of energy to collect all this pollen for their babies. They get this energy from nectar. Nectar is the sweet, sugary liquid inside flowers and bees are crazy about nectar! As the bee goes from flower to flower throughout the day collecting nectar and pollen, they are like a delivery guy, bringing the pollen from one flower to the next. And once a flower gets pollen from another flower of the same kind it can start to make seeds which will eventually grow into new plants. In return for their help, plants make lots of pollen so that the bees can bring the extra pollen home to feed their babies.

## What can you do to help

1. Plant lots of different flowers in pots or flowerpots around your school or at home. 
2. Plant a shrub that flowers in early spring - this provides very hungry queen bumblebees with lots to eat. 
3. Grow some fruits and vegetables like strawberries, raspberries, peas, courgettes or apples. 
4. Let it grow! Bees love weeds like dandelions, so let them grow instead of cutting them. 
5. Provide some safe places for bumblebees or solitary bees to make their nests, such as hedgerows, banks of bare soil, holes in wood, or bee nest boxes. 
6. Don't disturb nesting or hibernating bees. 
7. Don't use chemicals to kill weeds or pests.
8. Tell others about the importance of pollinators. 
9. Take part in the Green-Schools' Biodiversity programme (Rep. of Ireland)/ Eco-Schools (N. Ireland).