

Helping Ayrshire's Pollinators



Discover our Nectar Network

The Ayrshire Nectar Network partners, communities and volunteers inspire everyone to do something positive for pollinators. We're creating and connecting habitats where insects can flourish.

Let's join up small gardens, large amenity green spaces and farms, to make a pollinator-friendly network.



The Ayrshire Nectar Network is a project led by the Scottish Wildlife Trust

Finding out what's where

Professional and citizen scientists regularly note what insects and plants they see throughout the summer. Annual analyses of this information helps to determine whether our actions are working and what to do next. Our data is shared widely, so other pollinator projects benefit from what we learn.

Our volunteers get together for fun training sessions to build up their confidence.



Pollinator Friendly Communities

Many gardener's and groups love pollinators and already do so much for them. By signing up Pollinator Friendly Communities, the Ayrshire Nectar Network brings together like-minded folk to share ideas, resources and skills. We provide advice, events, materials, training and volunteers. They create pollinator rich gardens and greenspaces while influencing other communities to plant for pollinators.

If your community is eager to take action for pollinators, get in touch.



Scan for Pollinator Friendly Symington video



Out in the countryside

Farmer and landowners can be great supporters of pollinators in rural areas, and the opportunities to make habitat connections there are huge. We point them in the direction of grants, professional advisers and best practice guidance, as well as giving on-site advice.

Detailed surveys feed in to tailored reports that consider the specific land use and contain practical, sustainable recommendations.

If you manage some land, get in touch to see how we can help you.

Scan for species rich grassland and partner videos





Know-how

In our journey to make habitats better for pollinators, we have experimented a great deal and enjoy sharing what we've learnt.

We have transformed large amenity greenspaces into colourful wildflower grasslands by pioneering the use of 'green hay'. This involves cutting an existing flowery meadow as it is setting seed and spreading all that material on a newly prepared site.

Ground preparation is key to wildflower grassland success and varies considerably from site to site. Lightly scoring (scarifying) the ground and adding seeds can work in some places. Elsewhere, you might

need to rotavate or power harrow. Never use herbicides as they harm the very pollinators you want to encourage.

Wildflower grasslands need to be annually cut and cleared to continue being flowery. Scything is a quiet, sociable, environmentally friendly way to do that with smaller sites.

Trees have flowers too and their leaves are essential to feed the caterpillars. As well as planting trees, we use the traditional skills of hedge laying to rejuvenate old hedges, creating more pollinator and wildlife corridors.

Scan for
scything
and green hay
videos



Working together

The Ayrshire Nectar Network consists of a diverse range of partners. We want everyone to do something for pollinators on their land, regardless of the size.

Signed up partners commit to:

- Managing their site for the benefit of pollinating insects.
- Protecting the health of pollinators when managing their site.
- Promoting the Nectar Network whenever possible.



Our wild pollinators

Insect pollinators are vital for the health of our planet. As well as pollinating over 80% of flowering plants, they help to create and maintain habitats and ecosystems that many other animals rely on for food and shelter.

Meet our main groups of wild pollinators; they may be tiny, but their impact is huge.



Bumblebees

Scotland is home to 23 bumblebee species.

Well-known for their meandering, 'bumbling' flight and distinctive loud buzz – their scientific name *Bombus* means 'booming'. Most nest in colonies with a queen, female workers and drones.

They stock their nests with pollen as food for their young, gathering it in special hairs on their legs called pollen baskets.



Bumblebees

Solitary bees



Solitary bees

Around 79 solitary bee species can be found in Scotland.

A single female builds and provisions her own nest, in the ground, crevices, dead wood or walls, using mud or leaves as nesting material.

Some are furry like their bumblebee cousins while others are almost hairless and tiny. Most have special pollen-collecting hairs on their hind legs or undersides.

Butterflies

Around 37 butterfly species are seen regularly in Scotland. Adult butterflies only live a few weeks. Warm weather during this period assists flight and so breeding success.

Having no nest to return to, butterflies can travel more widely than bees, carrying pollen greater distances.

Nectar is supped through their long straw-like 'proboscis' but butterflies use their feet to taste sweet, bitter, sour and salty.



Butterflies



Moths

Moths

The majority of the 1,500 species of moth found in Scotland are nocturnal, playing a crucial role as the pollinator 'night shift'.

They heat up their flight muscles by vibrating their wings.

Some do fly during the day, warmed by the sun.

Moths have an excellent sense of smell, seeking out flowers that have a strong scent.



Wasps

Wasps

Most of the UK's 7,000 wasps are solitary, tiny and cause no upset to humans.

Only nine species are the familiar picnic invaders, living in social nests with queen, workers and drones. Wasps are the gardener's friend, hunting caterpillars and green fly to feed their larvae.

Adult wasps accidentally transport pollen from flower to flower when visiting to feed on nectar.



Beetles

Beetles

About 4,000 beetle species are found in the UK, with one quarter

thought to be involved in pollination.

There is fossil evidence that beetles were the first pollinating insects on the planet.

Many beetles eat pollen, while others visit flowers to eat the petals or ambush prey, moving pollen that sticks to their bodies.



Flies

Flies

Flies are one of the largest insect groups in the UK, numbering about 7,000 species.

Their immense value as pollinators stems from their abundance and diversity, with hoverflies being the most recognisable pollinator in the group.

Many hoverflies mimic bees and wasps with their markings to gain protection from predation. Count the wings – bees four, flies two.

How you can help

Support our work

Your business can make a difference and help pollinators spread and thrive in Ayrshire. Opportunities range from a donation to corporate workdays, get in touch to find out more.

Become a partner

More spaces need to be planted and managed to establish pollinator corridors. To achieve this, join our partnership. Let's work together to support our pollinators.



Become a volunteer

We have a range of volunteering opportunities throughout the year that you can get involved in, for example, planting trees, laying hedges, creating wildflower meadows, scything and monitoring sites. Learn new skills, meet like-minded people and do something positive for wildlife.



Visit www.scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk or scan the QR code for more information about the Ayrshire Nectar Network.
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