

BEE BUG FRIENDLY

Ecosystems
need Insects

Insects play a fundamental role in our food growing and wider ecosystems:

- Pollinating fruit, vegetables and flowers;
- Decomposing waste products;
- Controlling pests;
- Distributing nutrients and seeds.

Temperature fluctuations and extreme rainfall due to climate change in combination with other stresses such as habitat loss put many insect species at risk.

Pesticides/herbicides use fossil fuels in production and transport. They also affect micro-organisms, damaging soil ecosystems and reducing their ability to capture carbon.

We must do what we can to support insects by providing habitat and avoiding using pesticides. In a healthy, diverse garden ecosystem, predators will keep populations of pests under control.

Companion Planting

Plants can be used either to repel pest species, or attract insect predators

- Marigolds deter nematodes, cabbage flies, aphids, asparagus beetle, cabbage maggot
- Borago attracts bees and predatory insects, and repels many others
- Garlic repels rabbits, aphids and ants
- Dill - attracts hoverflies, wasps, bees, repels aphids and spider mites, grow with carrots
- Basil will attract butterflies and repel mosquitoes and flies, grow with tomatoes
- Nasturtiums attract many predators and traps aphids and whitefly
- Mint repels slugs and ants
- Yarrow attracts many predators and boosts essential oil production of herbs
- Sunflowers are used by ants to herd aphids - away from neighbouring plants

Habitat

Sometimes relaxing and being less tidy can really make a difference.

- Let grass grow longer around the edges or down the bottom of the garden all year to provide overwintering habitat. Allow weeds such as dandelions and buttercups to proliferate in these 'rough' areas as they provide valuable nectar and pollen.
- Ivy growth on a wall or a native hedge offers habitat plus nectar from flowers over a long period.
- Allowing corners with nettles and brambles where you have the space provides key habitat for over 40 species, including many butterflies.
- Maintain a diversity of habitats: short turf, bare ground, logs and ponds are all used by different species for nesting.
- Plant or allow wildflowers to grow which provide pollen and breeding places and avoid using pesticides on flowering plants.
- Bee hotels can be made from bundled reed stems, bamboo canes, upturned flower pots, logs with holes in them and other natural materials in a sheltered sunny spot, supported at least 1m off the ground.
- A bee bank for miner bees can be made by compacting a 30cm deep layer of sand or low nutrient subsoil over a pile of soil or stone. Keep most of it free of vegetation to encourage burrowing. Plant wildflowers in the area to provide a buffet.



If we go down... we're taking you with us!

Find out if you live in a B Line and can help link up pollinators on the Buglife website below

Useful resources:

<https://www.buglife.org.uk/our-work/b-lines/b-lines-guidance/gardening/>

<https://bna-naturalists.org/id-guides/>