

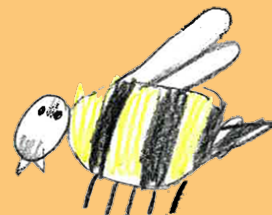
Top Tips For Pollinators





Top Tips For Pollinators

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Buglife Chief Executive
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Artwork by the pupils of Sandfields Primary School and Ysgol Rhosafan and Tom Maloney

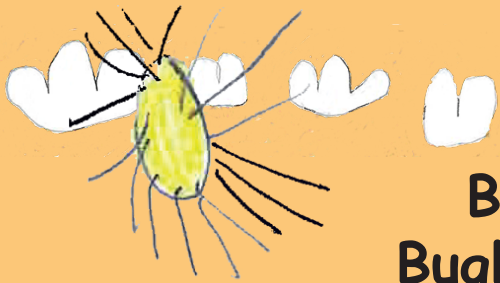
Edited by Emily Shaw, Buglife Cymru

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Foreword

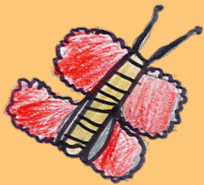
By Matt Shardlow
Buglife Chief Executive



Too often people ignore important things if they are small!
That is sadly the case with bees, beetles, flies, moths and other insects.

These little animals are essential for a healthy planet, they pollinate flowers so that they can produce seeds and fruit, which means there are then flowers in the countryside, food on our plates and birds in our skies.

This wonderful little guide will help you to make safe spaces for insects to thrive and if they thrive, then so will we.



Spread the word!



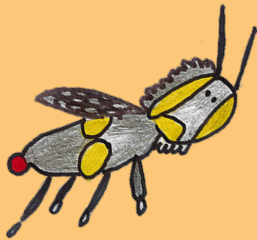
Buglife Cymru

Buglife is the only charity in Europe that aims to conserve all invertebrates - from worms and woodlice to beetles and butterflies. Help us to save the small things that run the planet!

B-Lines

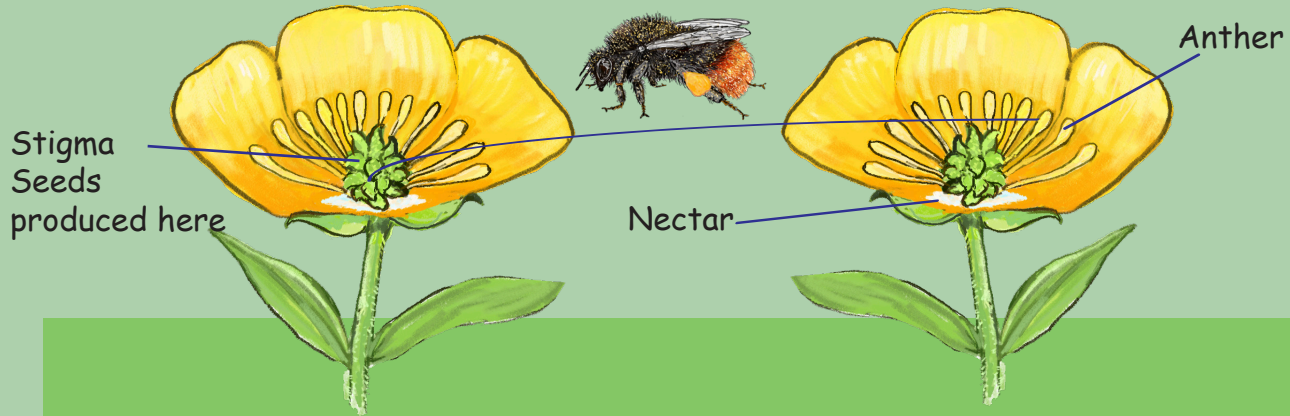
B-Lines are pathways that link patches of habitat. This helps our native pollinators such as bumblebees, butterflies and moths to move across our towns and countryside to access food and pollinate our crops.

www.buglife.org.uk



What does a Pollinator do?

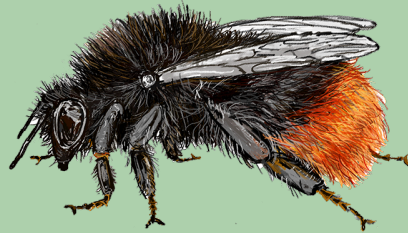
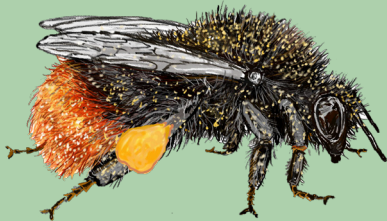
Pollination is about how flowering plants reproduce. Pollen needs to transfer from the flower's male part called the anther, to the flower's female part called the stigma.



Most plants need pollinating insects to do this job. Flowers provide pollinators with sweet sugary nectar and nutritious pollen for fuel and protein, and in return, pollinators move pollen from one flower to another of the same species so that the plant is able to produce seeds and reproduce.

Take a good look at the Red-tailed Bumblebee.

Bumblebees are excellent pollinators. Their dense hairy bodies enable them to gather and transport pollen.



Bumblebees can buzz pollinate which means they can vibrate their bodies to dislodge pollen from the anthers in a flower.

The bee then combs the nutritious pollen grains from her hairy body into little baskets on her hind legs, called pollen baskets or 'corbiculae' to take back to the nest to feed young larvae



Some grains are missed and transfer to the stigma at the next flower she visits. It's a perfect partnership between insects and plants.



The Wonderful World of Pollinators

There are different types of pollinators and there is such variety in shape, size and colour, but their numbers are often in decline! These are just a few that can be found in the Neath Port Talbot area.

The Shrill Carder Bee (*Bombus sylvarum*) gets its name from the high-pitched buzz it makes during flight. Its distinctive colour (olive-green bands on its thorax with a black band running through between the base of the wings, and a reddish tail) marks it out from any other bumblebees.



One of the UK's rarest bumblebees!

The Long-horned Bee (*Eucera longicornis*) is one of the UK's largest solitary bees. Males are extremely distinctive due to their long antennae.



Red Mason Bee (*Osmia bicornis*)
Body covered in bristly orange hairs, with a large black head. Males have white hairs on the face and especially long antennae. Builds nest cells with mud walls and plugs the nest hole with mud when finished. Red Mason Bees are the bees you are likely to see in a bee hotel.

The Small Blue Butterfly (*Cupido minimus*) is one of the smallest butterflies in the UK. This butterfly has quite a fussy diet! When it is a caterpillar it only eats a plant called Kidney Vetch (*Anthyllis vulneraria*). The female butterfly will lay her eggs on Kidney Vetch flowers and the caterpillars eat the seeds. This butterfly is mostly found along the Port Talbot coast.

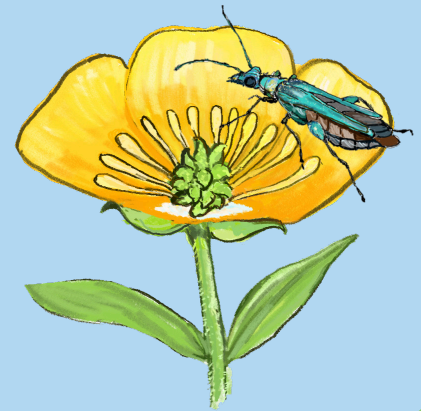


Six-spot Burnet (*Zygaena filipendulae*) A vivid day time flying moth that can be found in flower rich grassland areas. It flies with a slow buzzing flight in sunny weather.

Thick-legged Flower Beetle (*Oedemera nobilis*).

A fine weather beetle that is a pollinator of many open-structured flowers. These include, Cow Parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), Ox-eye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*) and Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*).

These beetles are most frequently spotted in bright sunlight on flower heads on warm to hot days.



Take A Moment To Imagine

Take a moment to imagine what our lives would look like if large sections of our travel networks such as train tracks and roads were missing or obstructed. We would become more and more boxed-in, isolated and unable to explore our landscape.

This is what our wildlife is facing! Over the years much of their habitat has been broken up as we have built more offices, homes and roads. The way we manage farm land can also have an impact.

This has left populations of pollinators and other wildlife stranded and unable to move in response to environmental change, such as climate change.

Movement across the landscape is crucial for wildlife to be able to find food, a mate, shelter and areas for nesting and overwintering.



The Shrill Carder Bee can now only be found in Neath Port Talbot and just a few other areas in Wales and the UK.



Did You Know?

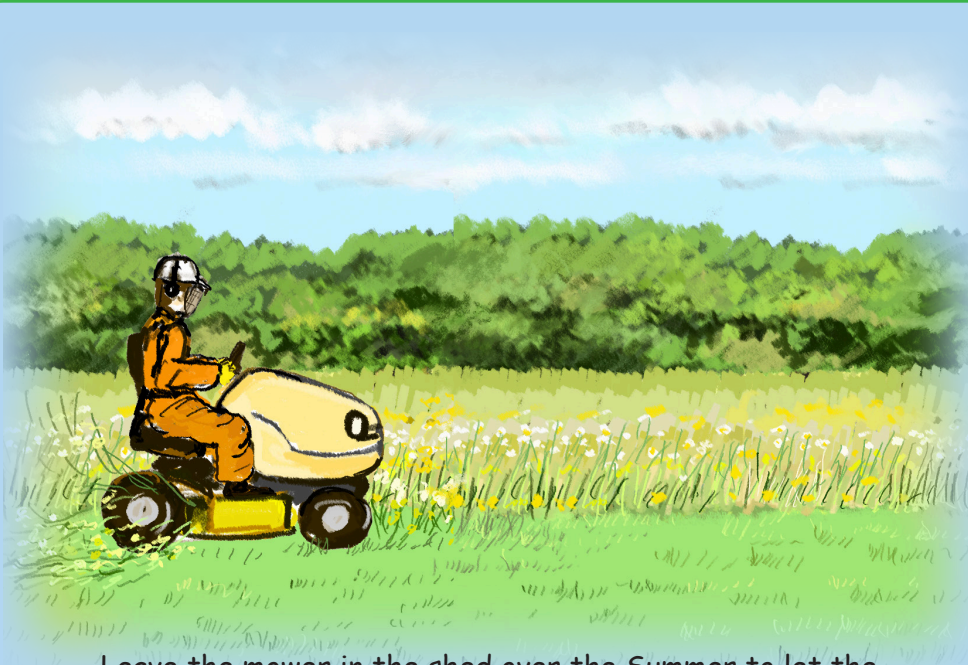
Everyone knows that insects are important in pollinating plants, but did you know just how much we rely on them?

Some plants can use wind or water to transfer pollen from one plant to another, the vast majority of them however rely on insects to do this for them - and they do it all for free!

A third of what we eat is on our plates thanks to insects!



Top Tips For Pollinators #1



Leave the mower in the shed over the Summer to let the natural wildflowers grow!



"Go Easy On The Mowing!"

Nature isn't neat! Human obsession with tidiness is removing habitat for pollinators and wildlife. Frequently mown grasslands means that flowers do not grow and pollinators have no food.

Cut And Collect

Wildflowers like soils that are low in nutrients so that they don't get outcompeted by fast growing plants such as docks and grasses.

One way to reduce the nutrient levels in the soil is through 'Cut and Collect'.

'Cut and Collect' involves cutting the grass and removing it so it doesn't rot down back into the meadow.

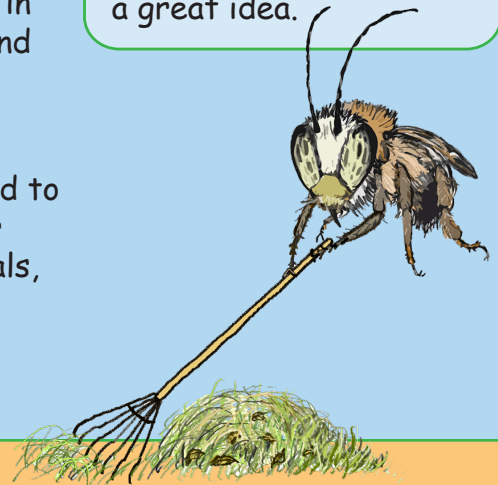
This is best done twice a year, early in Spring and again in Autumn. Wildflowers can then grow over the Summer and provide food for the pollinators.



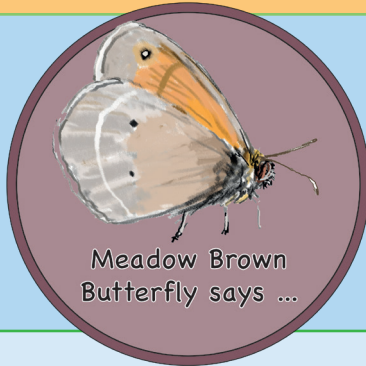
The grass cuttings can be used to create habitat piles for other wildlife including small mammals, reptiles and amphibians!



If you need to cut the grass 'Cut and Collect' is a great idea.



Top Tips For Pollinators #2



"Sow a meadow using local native wild flower seed".

First, let your grass area grow to see what wildflowers you have. If needed, enhance with Yellow Rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*) seed. This is also known as the meadow makers seed due to its ability to slow the growth of fast-growing grasses.



Listen out for the rattle of the seeds in their brown pods in the Summer.



Make a Mini Meadow - Creating wildflower habitat in an urban space is great for pollinating insects and can create a colourful summer buzz in your garden.

Top Tips For Pollinators #3



"Stop spraying,
that's my lunch!"

Chemicals, such as herbicides, kill flowering plants and affect the learning and memory of bees making it harder for them to find flowers.



Weeds are Wildflowers!



Common Vetch
(*Vicia sativa*)



Common Dandelion
(*Taraxacum officinale*)



Meadow Buttercup
(*Ranunculus acris*)

Wildflowers are often seen as 'weeds', but they are an important source of food for insect pollinators and they are very beautiful.



Top Tips For Pollinators #4



Red-tailed Bumblebee
says ...

"Plant a herb garden.
Bees love herbs..."



... and it's a great opportunity to
get creative in the garden!"

Planting herbs helps Pollinators!



Marjoram
(*Origanum majorana*)



Rosemary
(*Salvia rosmarinus*)



Fennel
(*Foeniculum vulgare*)

Flowering herbs such as Marjoram, Rosemary and Fennel provide a double benefit: lots of nectar for pollinators and fresh seasoning for you!

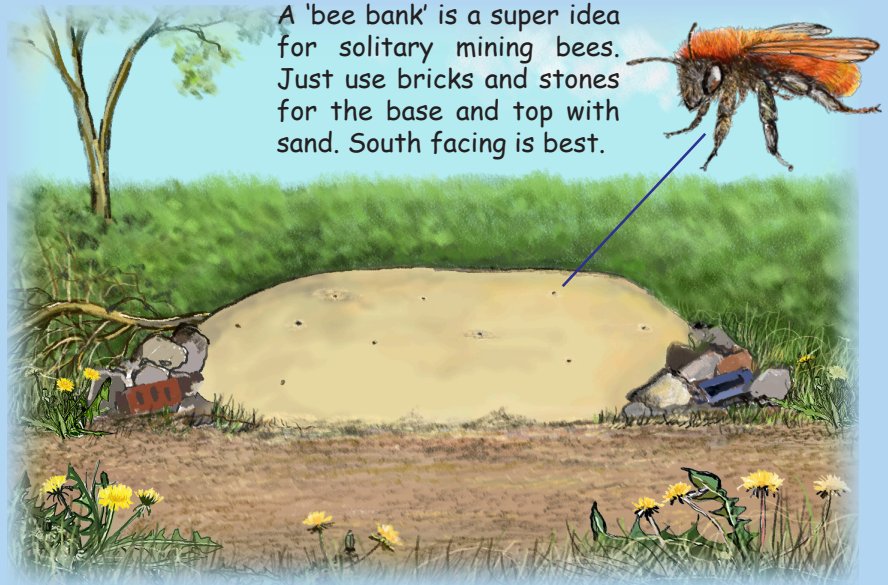
Top Tips For Pollinators #5

Helping out our Pollinator friends doesn't have to stop with the things you plant. Pollinators have fantastic, diverse nesting habitats. Some species nest above ground and use a variety of materials, such as mud, tree resin or chewed leaves to seal their nests. The majority of solitary bees nest in the ground. Isn't that amazing!



"Create a nesting habitat for Pollinators."

Understanding how insects live and their habitat is very important for numbers to increase and you can help! For more information go to:



A 'bee bank' is a super idea for solitary mining bees. Just use bricks and stones for the base and top with sand. South facing is best.



Red Mason Bees
will nest in the
drilled holes here.

Bug hotels are constructions that offer shelter for pollinators and other invertebrates, either to overwinter, breed or spend their daily lives. There are no hard and fast rules! They can be made to any size or shape and from a variety of materials to cater for different insects.

Top Tips For Pollinators #6 to #10



Top Tip #6

Plant native pollinator-friendly flowers!



Top Tip #7

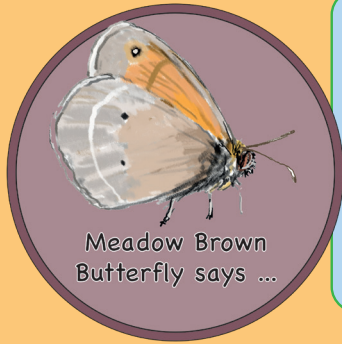
Plant pollinator-friendly trees and native hedgerows.
Benefits all wildlife!



Top Tip #8

Provide a 'Hoverfly Lagoon'. Recycle a tub, add water, leaves and some twigs. Flies are pollinators too!





Top Tip #9

"Think twice about getting a hive of honeybees."

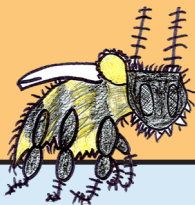
Most honeybees are 'domesticated' pollinators. If we have too many honeybee hives in the landscape, they can compete for food with our struggling wild pollinators.



Top Tip #10

"Spread the word!"

Many people want to help pollinators, but it can be hard to know where to start. Tell your friends and family about these top 10 ways to help pollinators and create your own B-Line! Change happens when word spreads, eventually we will have a network of habitats where pollinators can survive and thrive.



Don't Be A Silly Giant!



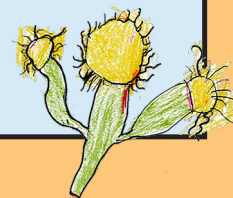
Two Films inspired by Oscar Wilde's short book 'The Selfish Giant' created as part of the Neath Port Talbot B-Lines Project by the pupils of Ysgol Rhosafan and Sandfields Primary School.



B-Lines & The 'Silly Giants'



See Sandfields Primary School film here:





Don't Be A Silly Giant!



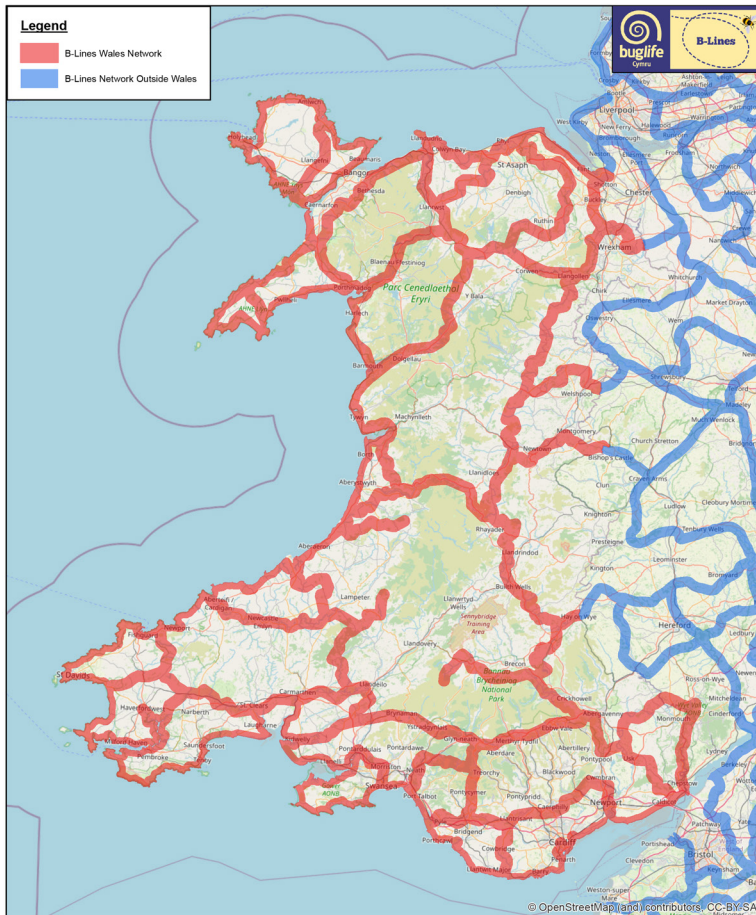
B-Lines a'r cewri sydd â phwerau arbennig!
B-Lines and the giants with special powers!



"Maintaining and creating habitats for the pollinating insects that do so much for us is a clear priority for the future. These young people are that future. Each and every one of them showed a commitment and understanding of the Eco issues that are involved far beyond their years. The films were created during the period of the pandemic and were largely undertaken through online workshops with some outside learning sessions at Aberavon Beach. The creativity and joy in learning of all the pupils was just fantastic!" Tom Maloney, Artist working with the B-Lines Project

See the Ysgol Rhosafan film here:





B-Lines Map - Link

Are you on a B-Line?

Help Buglife to create B-Lines. Add your pollinator project to our B-Lines map by clicking on the site QR code below and following the on-screen instructions.





Bee Orchids (*Ophrys apifera*) at Neath Port Talbot

The Neath Port Talbot (NPT) B-lines project, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, aims to address the decline in our pollinating insects by creating a network of B-Lines linking wildflower-rich habitats across Neath Port Talbot, from Jersey Marine to Port Talbot and from Baglan to Neath.

A big thank you to the Heritage Lottery Fund and all our B-Lines project partners, schools, communities and volunteers who have helped us to create a lasting legacy for pollinators in Neath Port Talbot.

