

## Surveying and recording pollinators

Recording pollinators in your local area can be a really enjoyable and rewarding activity, and a great excuse to get outside in the sunshine. Plus, you don't need to be an insect expert or have fancy equipment to do it.

To keep things really simple, just take a notebook into your garden and write down what you see. Sunny spots with pollinator-friendly flowers are the best places to look! You can simply note what type of insects you see e.g. 2 butterflies, 3 bumblebees, 1 beetle, etc. or you can write down the individual species if you know them e.g. Peacock butterfly, Buff-tailed bumblebee, etc.

Here are some simple bits of equipment you may wish to use:



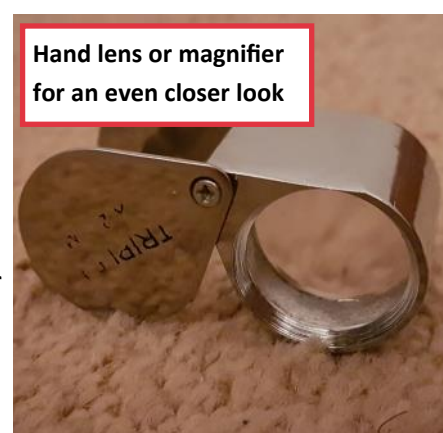
Camera for taking photos of insects

© Suzanne Burgess



Pots for catching insects for a closer look

© Joanna Lindsay



Hand lens or magnifier for an even closer look

© Craig Nisbet



Butterfly net for catching pollinators in flight

© TCV Scotland



Sweep net for sampling vegetation

© Suzanne Burgess



Moth trap for recording night-flying moths

© Craig Nisbet

## Submitting records

Your records will only be useful if you send them in to a database, where they can be looked at along with all the other records. Wildlife records provide very valuable information about our biodiversity, including what lives where and how populations are changing over time. Remember to record the date your pollinators were found, the name of the location, a grid reference or postcode and the name of the person recording them.

You can upload your records to iRecord at [www.brc.ac.uk/irecord](http://www.brc.ac.uk/irecord) or via the iRecord app, or you can send them to your local environmental records centre (find your local records centre here: [www.alerc.org.uk](http://www.alerc.org.uk)).



## Flower-Insect Timed Count surveys

If you'd like to follow an official survey method, try carrying out a Flower-Insect Timed (FIT) count survey through the UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme (PoMS). It simply involves watching a patch of flowers for 10 minutes and recording the insects that visit the flowers.



### WHEN to do a FIT Count

- Any time between April—September
- Ideally in warm, sunny, calm weather (at least 15°C if cloudy, at least 13°C if sunny)
- Repeating the count regularly in the same location is useful

### WHAT you need to do a FIT Count

- A large patch of a flower species which is attractive to pollinators (e.g. dandelions, clovers, knapweeds)
- A 50 x 50cm quadrat—easily made with string, gaffer tape or wooden canes
- A stop watch or alarm to time your survey
- A FIT count recording form and guidance sheets—downloadable from PoMS website:

[www.ceh.ac.uk/our-science/projects/pollinator-monitoring](http://www.ceh.ac.uk/our-science/projects/pollinator-monitoring)

[How to carry out the FIT count](#)

[Recording form to use during the count](#)

[Guide to the flowers you can use for the count](#)

[Guide to recognising the insect groups you need to count](#)

### HOW to do a FIT Count

- Note the time, weather, location and your chosen flower species
- Place the quadrat over your flower patch and take a photo
- Start the 10 minute timer and record a tally of the insects which land on flowers inside your patch

NOTE: you do not need to record individual species, just the types of insect you see: bumblebees, solitary bees, honeybees, wasps, hoverflies, flies, beetles, butterflies and moths.

- Finally, fill in the recording form and upload your results to the FIT count iRecord form online:

[FIT count iRecord form](#)

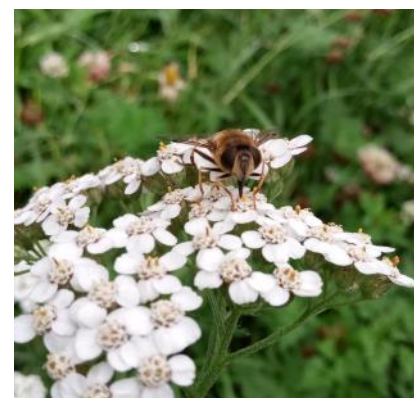
For more guidance and information on how to do your own FIT counts, recognise the types of insect and recording your records watch the following two videos:

[PoMS: Flower-Insect Timed Count \(FIT count\) - YouTube](#)

[PoMS: Getting familiar with the Flower-Insect Timed Count \(FIT Count\) insect groups - YouTube](#)



© Natalie Stevenson



© Joanna Lindsay



© Craig Nisbet



© Craig Nisbet

## Links to useful resources

**Buglife:** [www.buglife.org.uk/bugs/featured-bugs/pollinators](http://www.buglife.org.uk/bugs/featured-bugs/pollinators)

**Bumblebee Conservation Trust:** [bumblebeeconservation.org](http://bumblebeeconservation.org)

**Butterfly Conservation:** [butterfly-conservation.org](http://butterfly-conservation.org)

**UK butterflies:** [www.ukbutterflies.co.uk](http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk)

**UK moths:** [www.ukmoths.org.uk](http://www.ukmoths.org.uk)

**Dipterists Forum:** [www.dipterists.org.uk](http://www.dipterists.org.uk)

including the [Hoverfly recording scheme](#)

**Bees, wasps and ants recording scheme (BWARS):** [www.bwars.com](http://www.bwars.com)

and their species gallery: [www.bwars.com/species\\_gallery](http://www.bwars.com/species_gallery)

**UK beetle recording:** [www.coleoptera.org.uk](http://www.coleoptera.org.uk)

**Field Studies Council** for training courses, FSC guides and other useful resources:

[www.field-studies-council.org](http://www.field-studies-council.org)

**National Biodiversity Network Atlas** for distribution maps of different species: [nbnatlas.org](http://nbnatlas.org)

**iSpot** for help with identification: [www.ispotnature.org](http://www.ispotnature.org)

**iNaturalist** for help with identification: [www.inaturalist.org](http://www.inaturalist.org)

**iRecord** to upload wildlife records: [www.brc.ac.uk/irecord](http://www.brc.ac.uk/irecord)

**Steven Falk's Flickr collection:** [www.flickr.com/photos/63075200@N07/collections](http://www.flickr.com/photos/63075200@N07/collections)

### Selected field guides and books:

Bumblebee Conservation Trust- **Bumblebees: An Introduction**

by Dr Nikki Gammans, Dr Richard Comont, S C Morgan and Gill Perkins (2018)

Bloomsbury Wildlife Guides- **Field Guide to the Bees of Great Britain and Ireland**

by Steven Falk and Richard Lewington (2016)

Bloomsbury Wildlife Guides- **Pocket Guide to the Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland** (second edition)

by Richard Lewington (2015)

Bloomsbury Wildlife Guides- **Field Guide to the Moths of Great Britain and Ireland** (third edition)

by Paul Waring, Martin Townsend and Richard Lewington (2017)

Bloomsbury Wildlife Guides- **Field Guide to the Micro-moths of Great Britain and Ireland**

by Phil Sterling, Mark Parsons and Richard Lewington (2012)

Bloomsbury Wildlife Guides- **Field Guide to the Caterpillars of Great Britain and Ireland**

by Barry Henwood, Phil Sterling and Richard Lewington (2020)

Bloomsbury Wildlife- **British Moths: A Photographic Guide to the Moths of Britain and Ireland**

(second edition) by Chris Manley (2015)

WILDGuides- **Britain's Hoverflies: A Field Guide** by Stuart Ball and Roger Morris (2015)

Pelagic Publishing- **Pollinators and Pollination: Nature and Society** by Jeff Ollerton (2021)