

This leaflet outlines a range of relatively simple measures that are available to farmers to support pollinators by:

a. Ensuring existing good habitat is recognised

A simple survey form has been produced to help you assess current habitat provision for pollinators on your farm.



Survey booklet: Increasing wild pollinators on your farm

b. Exploring opportunities for potential improvements

These measures are supported by an online resource that gives more detailed information on the benefits of each measure together with tips on how to implement and manage them.

Visit www.glnp.org.uk

How can you help?



1 Assess the current provision of pollinator habitat on your farm - our simple survey form will help you do this.

2 Take a whole farm approach to maximising the habitat available on your holding - non-cropped areas such as yards and trackways can provide an important resource.

3 Identify where low budget measures could be best implemented to improve the habitat available.

4 Try and include these measures as everyday solutions - becoming normal practice for your farm.

5 Talk to your neighbours and encourage them to take a similar approach - low level changes implemented across a wide area will have a bigger cumulative impact on pollinator conservation.



Achieving more for nature

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Front cover photo - Red admiral in wheat field © Andrew Wilkinson

March 2018



Increasing wild pollinators on your farm: a low cost approach



Our pollinators contribute £690 million a year to the UK economy.¹



Despite the work of farmers and land managers their numbers are declining and further action is needed to prevent further losses.

Wild pollinators include bees, wasps, flies, butterflies, moths and beetles which all require three key things:

Overwintering sites

Some pollinators hibernate over winter and many prefer north-facing banks or hedgerow bases.

Food

Pollinating insects need both nectar (providing energy in the form of sugars) and pollen (which provides protein and other nutrients).

Nesting sites

Nesting sites for different pollinators vary and include things like hollow plant stems, dense vegetation, below ground or aquatic environments.

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The Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership (GLNP) has worked with farmers to develop an approach to supporting wild pollinators which is **low cost** both in terms of initial outlay but also ongoing management.

¹ Centre for Food Security (2015) Sustainable Pollination Services for UK Crops. University of Reading

Not all the measures in this leaflet will be suitable for every holding. The list has been developed to provide a range of options for different farm environments. If it is not feasible to implement each measure across the whole farm, try to identify areas of most benefit in particular those adjacent to, or linking with, existing habitats such as hedgerows, field margins or wooded areas.

POL 2
Manage hedgerows on a rotation to encourage flowering of species such as hawthorn and blackthorn where present.

POL 1
Where possible reduce cutting of tussocky grass margins to a maximum of once per year - timed in late summer/early autumn. Where scrub pressure requires more frequent cutting try to make the first cut before the end of March.

POL 8
Try to identify suitable areas of nettles which could be easily topped in mid-June, allowing a flush of new regrowth to come through.

POL 7
Try to ensure some patches of hollow stemmed weeds such as bramble and hogweed are left each year to provide shelter and nesting habitat, taking a rotational approach to cutting.

POL 3
If hedges are not a landscape feature of the area consider opportunities to include single or small groups of trees/shrubs such as thorns, willows or gorse.

POL 5
Look at components of wild bird seed strips and try to include flowering species which provide varied resources for pollinators as well as seed such as buckwheat, perennial chicory, phacelia or sunflower (if permitted within the prescriptions of agri-environment agreements).

POL 4
Gap up hedges with mixed species to extend the flowering period providing additional pollen/nectar. Species could include hawthorn, blackthorn, buckthorn, wild cherry, wild privet, guelder rose or crab apple and consider including some hedgerow trees.

POL 6
Identify areas where patches of weeds such as thistles, hogweed and deadnettles can be left to grow without causing detriment to cropped areas. For example around yard/field entrances.

POL 9
Retain mature ivy on trees and other suitable areas around the farm to provide extremely valuable pollen/nectar-rich flowers in late autumn as well as dense cover for overwintering insects.

POL 14
Where woodland areas are present, try to leave some standing/fallen deadwood to decay in situ.

POL 11
Look to reduce cutting frequency of farm trackways allowing low growing plants such as trefoils and clovers to flower while maintaining a regular regime.

POL 16
Undertake ditch management on rotation, clearing/cutting from one side each year leaving the other bank undisturbed as a refuge and only disturbing bottom sediments infrequently.

POL 15
Consider allowing slightly wider margins at the base of some south-facing hedgerows to provide nesting sites and also allow hedge base flora such as deadnettles, hedge woundwort, hogweed and dandelions to thrive.

POL 10
Consider opportunities to provide solitary bee holes at locations across the farm either by putting up bee hotels, creating your own from old pallets, leaving piles of undisturbed sand or drilling holes in existing fence posts.

POL 12
Recognise the importance of providing patches of bare ground, in south facing areas such as awkward field corners or field entrances.

POL 13
Consider whether species such as white clover can be added into grass leys and allowed to at least partially flower before cutting. Where fields are cut, consider leaving a small proportion (5-10%) uncut to provide nectar sources.

POL 23
Recognise the value of north facing hedgerow bases in providing hibernation sites and consider allowing slightly wider undisturbed margins along some of these.

POL 24
If using cover crops try to use a mix which includes flowering species that will provide pollen/nectar into late autumn.

POL 18
Maintain dry stone wall habitat, in good or poor repair, and consider buffering these with grass strips or margins.

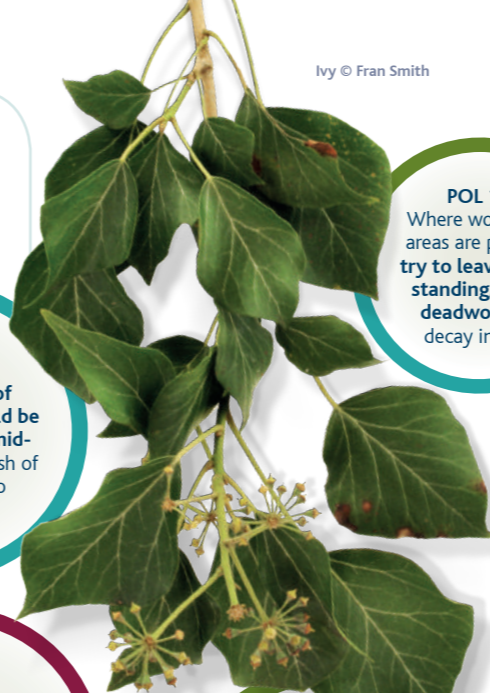
POL 17
Consider reducing/rotating cutting regimes on farm verges/amenity grass during warmer months, allowing plants such as hawkbits, yarrow, trefoils and clovers chance to flower.

POL 22
Consider adding sunflower into maize covers to provide an additional late season pollen/nectar source either through a sun-maize mix or by replacing one drill width with straight sunflower.

POL 19
Provide nectar-rich habitat on reservoir banks - this could be a seed mix if considered at planning stage.

POL 21
Turn unproductive/awkward field corners into flower-rich habitat.

POL 20
Consider whether a low-maintenance grass mix with a percentage of low growing species such as clovers or trefoils could be suitable for areas which are currently providing little benefit - in particular around buildings and yards.



Ivy © Fran Smith



Bee hotel © Matthew Roberts



Blackthorn hedge © Natural England / Allan Drewitt

