



Tuath
Housing

Biodiversity Booklet for Residents



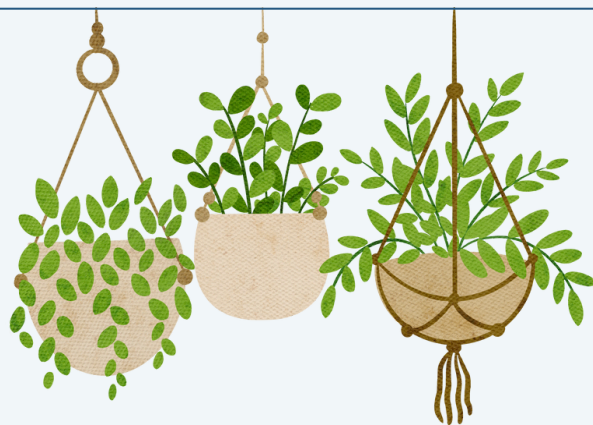
HOW TO WELCOME WILDLIFE INTO YOUR AREA



WHAT IS BIODIVERSITY?

Biodiversity is a word that refers to all living things, in other words '*biological diversity*'. Biodiversity can be described as the variety of all life on earth. The greater the biodiversity that we have the greater the stability of our ecosystems. As urbanisation continues to grow the natural environment has been reduced leaving little space for biodiversity. However private gardens collectively make up some of the largest green spaces in most cities, giving homeowners a great opportunity to conserve local biodiversity.

**BY INVITING BIRDS, BUTTERFLIES,
BEES AND WILDFLOWERS INTO YOUR
OWN GARDEN YOU ARE HAVING A
POSITIVE AFFECT ON THE PLANET
AND YOUR WELLBEING**



Biodiversity has a positive affect on humans as well - people feel better when they are surrounded by nature, wellbeing increases directly with an increase in biodiversity.

The aim of this booklet is to introduce some of the ways you can help biodiversity in your own garden - no matter how big or small the space. There are lots of ways in which you can open up your garden to nature. Even if you don't have a garden you can still create a pollinator friendly pot or window box.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN DRIVERS OF BIODIVERSITY LOSS?

INVASIVE SPECIES

Invasive species are animals, plants and microorganisms that have entered and established themselves in the environment outside their natural habitat. They have devastating impacts on native plant and animal life causing the decline or even extinction of native species, negatively affecting ecosystems. It is very important to plant native species for this reason.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Unsurprisingly climate change is one of the biggest challenges and causes of biodiversity loss, the climate is changing faster than species can move or adapt. Since 1980, greenhouse gas emissions have doubled, raising average global temperatures by at least 0.7 degrees.

HABITAT LOSS

The biggest driver of biodiversity loss is how people use the land and sea. This includes the conversion of land covers such as forests, wetlands, and other natural habitats for agricultural and urban uses.

POLLUTION

Pollution is a major driver of biodiversity loss and ecosystem change. Plants and insect populations are dwindling as a result of the continuous use of insecticides and pesticides. Reducing air and water pollution and safely managing chemicals and waste is crucial to addressing the biodiversity crisis.

HOW CAN I IMPROVE BIODIVERSITY IN MY GARDEN OR BALCONY?

To help wildlife thrive throughout the year you can create spaces where they can live, feed and breed. Here are some actions you can take to improve the biodiversity in your garden or balcony;

ACTION 1

Identify what you already have - you might be surprised by what's providing food and shelter in your outdoor space already. Look for native, naturally growing wildflowers, make it a priority to protect these naturally occurring areas.

ACTION 2

Mow less in grassy areas: most of us are prone to keeping our lawns neat and tidy, but this is not helpful for pollinators. Naturally occurring wildflowers that our pollinators need, species such as clovers, dandelions, trefoil will appear when you mow less. You don't have to let your whole lawn grow wild - even leaving a patch wild can make a difference. If you want to commit to a long-flowering meadow, cut once a year. If you do mow, remove grass clippings so wildflowers can grow.

ACTION 3

If you don't have access to a garden don't worry! Plant pots and window boxes are a great alternative and are perfect if you have limited space. Herbs are a great choice for these, they can be planted all year round and mainly flower in the summer. Strawberries and tomatoes work well too.



HOW CAN I IMPROVE BIODIVERSITY IN MY GARDEN OR BALCONY?

ACTION 4

Value dead or dying plant material - logs, old plant stems and dried grass are all safe havens for insects to hibernate or take cover in poor weather, the more insects there are the more food sources for other visitors such as hedgehogs, birds and frogs.

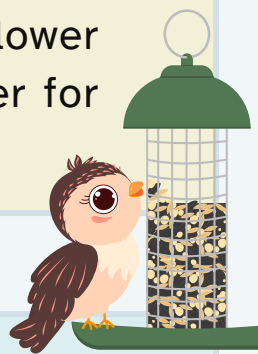
ACTION 5

Choose plants that provide food for insects - when deciding what to grow, choose nectar rich flowers that are native to Ireland and locally sourced where possible. Flowers with an 'open structure' and herbs are a great option.



ACTION 6

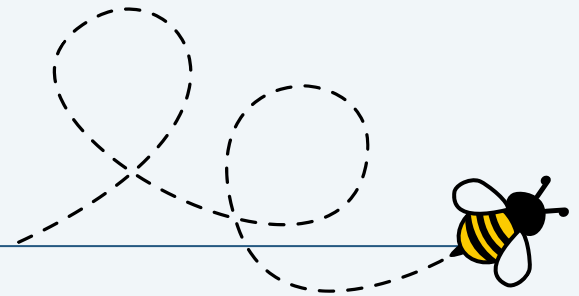
Feed the birds! Leaving out food for garden birds is a great way to invite nature into your garden. The best bird foods are sunflower seeds, peanuts and mixed seeds. Don't forget to provide water for your visitors, provide a shallow dish they can drink from.



ACTION 7

Be careful when using wildflower seed mixes as they can have negative effects on the local biodiversity. Many wildflower seed mixes contain non-native species and can introduce invasive species. Avoid using where possible.

POLLINATORS

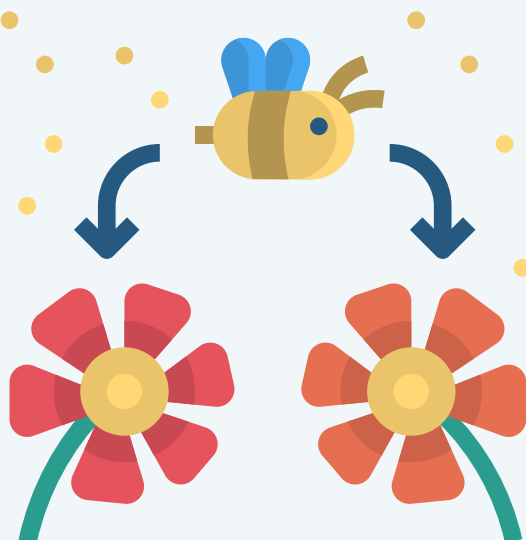


Most pollination in Ireland is carried out by bees. Unfortunately they are in trouble. We know that one third of Irish bee species are threatened with extinction. The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan is an island-wide attempt to create a landscape where they can survive and thrive. All of us have a role to play in the pollinator plan and gardens of any size can make a difference. Even if you don't have a garden you can still create a pollinator friendly pot or window box.

WHAT DOES A POLLINATOR FRIENDLY GARDEN LOOK LIKE?

- For gardens to be good for pollinators, they need to be provide food in the form of flowers, shelter for nesting and be free from chemicals.
- Pollinators need flowers that produce a lot of nectar (for energy) and pollen (for protein). Some plants are better food sources than others. Native plants are best for pollinators but in some cases non-native 'ornamental' plants can be used to supplement the food supply. If you are using non-native plants keep them to your own garden and don't spread into the wider landscape.

ACTIONS FOR POLLINATORS



- **IDENTIFY AND PROTECT EXISTING FOOD AND SHELTER FOR POLLINATORS**
- **REDUCE THE FREQUENCY OF MOWING OF GRASSY AREAS**
- **ELIMINATE PESTICIDE USE**

5 GREAT PLANTS FOR BIODIVERSITY

DANDELION

From mid-March to mid-May dandelions provide vital food for bees and insects. Later when the flowers disappear, birds eat the seed heads.



WILLOW

Willow is a wonderful tree for bees as it provides lots of pollen in its tiny flowers in early spring when there is not much else in flower.



BRAMBLE

Bramble provides vital food for pollinating insects in late summer and berries for birds and humans in autumn.



IVY

Ivy provides good cover for nesting birds and also hibernating butterflies. Ivy berries are very important to birds in late winter when food is scarce.



CLOVER

Clover provides pollen and nectar for bees.





Dublin

33 Leeson Street Lower,
Dublin 2, D02 KD68

T 01 676 1602
E info@tuathhousing.ie

37-42 James' Place East
Dublin 2, D02 XE08

T 01 676 1602
E info@tuathhousing.ie

Cork

1 Empress Place,
Summerhill North, Cork
T23 N73P

T 021 427 3508
E cork@tuathhousing.ie

Galway

4th Floor, Heritage Hall
Kirwans Lane, Galway
H91 DYK6

T 091 393 280
E galway@tuathhousing.ie

Dundalk

17 Church Street, Dundalk,
Louth, A91 H5N8

T 042 942 3400
E louth@tuathhousing.ie