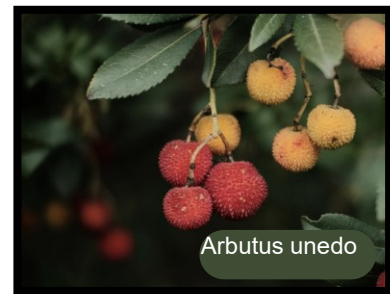


Kent's Plan Bee

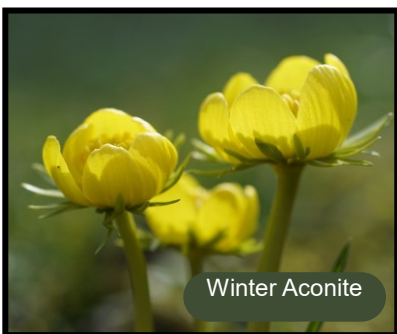
Autumn Newsletter 2024

Plants That Help Bees Through the Winter

As winter approaches, our gardens can be crucial in supporting pollinators. With fewer wildflowers blooming, providing alternative sources of nectar and pollen is essential. By incorporating specific plants into your garden, you can help ensure that winter-active bumblebee and honeybees have the resources to survive and thrive through the colder months. This will also support hairy-footed flower bee in spring!

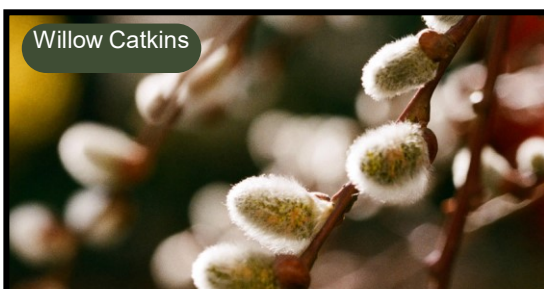
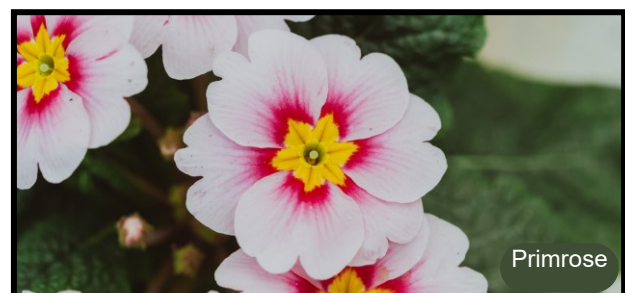


For autumn interest, **Arbutus unedo** is an evergreen shrub with small, bell-shaped, creamy-white or pink flowers. Their red, strawberry-like fruits from the previous year's flowers ripen from September to November, offering a continuous food source.



For winter blooms, **Winter Aconite** is a bright, buttercup-like flower that blooms from January to February. These bulbs are ideal for planting under deciduous trees and shrubs, providing a splash of colour and a vital food source for bees during the winter. Similarly, winter flowering Clematis climbers and **Oregon Grape** (Mahonia) are magnets for bees, and they bloom from November to March. This plant supports bees and adds vibrant yellow flowers to your garden during the dreariest months.

Erica carnea is a hardy plant that flowers from January to April, providing a continuous source of nectar during the winter months. **Lonicera fragrantissima**, produces highly fragrant, cream flowers that bloom in winter and early spring, from January to March, ensuring that bees have access to food even in the coldest months.



Willow catkins appear before the leaves in spring and flower from April to May, attracting bees with their early blooms. For early spring, consider planting **Primrose** (Primula vulgaris). This woodland flower blooms from early March to May and is perfect for planting under a tree or on a shady bank, providing early nourishment for bees emerging from hibernation.

By planting these varieties, you can create a garden that supports bees throughout the winter, helping them to survive and thrive. For more detailed information, you can read the full article at Gardeners' World [here](#).

Where Do Pollinators Go In The Winter?

Butterflies & Moths:

Some butterfly species, like the Red Admiral, are known for migrating vast distances as the seasons change. In the winter, it migrates to Europe and North Africa and returns to the UK in the spring for the female to lay eggs.

Depending on the species, most enter dormant phases, such as an egg, larva, pupa, or adult insect. It is typical for butterflies and moths to overwinter in the larval stage. You are most likely to encounter active or dormant adults, though you may spot large white pupae attached to the walls of your house.

Dormant adults include Brimstone, Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Comma, Twenty-plume Moth, Herald. (To name a few!).

Usually, Small Tortoiseshells and Peacocks overwinter inside houses, meaning they can sometimes wake up prematurely due to high indoor temperatures. If this happens, carefully catch the butterfly, leave it in a cool place to see if it calms down, and place it somewhere with shelter and outdoor accessibility.

Bumblebees:

As the colony dies at the end of summer, the queens hibernate. They build up vital fat stores through eating nectar and pollen, then hide underground in loose soil.

Solitary bees:

After feeding on the stores of pollen left by the female through the summer, larvae hibernate in their cocoons until the following spring and then emerge.

Wasps:

As winter approaches, just the new queens of social wasps survive. They find protected places to hibernate, inside houses, underground, in leaf litter or wood piles. Solitary wasps will usually overwinter as larvae or pupae.

Flies:

Hoverflies and other flies also seek shelter in leaf litter, tree bark and compost piles throughout the winter months.

Beetles:

Depending on the beetle species, some will dig down into soil, or leaf litter and overwinter. During the overwintering period, beetles stay inactive, which is also known as "diapause" condition.



For a Pollinator Friendly Garden of England



Preparing for Winter: How to Help Pollinators Thrive

Here are some practical tips to that can help create a pollinator-friendly garden during the colder months.

1. Move Bee Hotels Indoors

Bee hotels provide essential nesting sites for solitary bees. As temperatures drop, move these hotels to sheltered locations, such as garages or sheds, to protect them from harsh weather. This simple step can significantly increase the survival rate of these important pollinators.

2. Leave the Leaves

Consider leaving some in your garden instead of raking up all the fallen leaves. Leaf litter offers insulation and cover for many pollinators, including butterflies and bumblebees, which may burrow into it to stay warm. This natural mulch also enriches the soil as it decomposes.

3. Create Log Piles

Gather sticks and branches into log piles. These piles provide shelter for insects and small mammals, offering a safe haven from the cold.

4. Save the Stems

Leave plant stems untrimmed until spring. Many solitary bees and other insects use hollow stems to overwinter. By delaying your garden clean-up, you can provide essential habitats for these pollinators.

5. Avoid Disturbing Hibernating Pollinators

Understanding where these creatures hibernate helps you avoid disturbing them during their vulnerable period. Bumblebee queens often hibernate underground. Whereas solitary bees may burrow into leaf litter or hollow stems. Butterflies and moths might enter diapause in various stages of their life cycle, often in sheltered spots.

6. Leave Some Soil Bare

Leave some soil areas bare and mulch-free to provide nesting sites for ground-dwelling pollinators like bumblebees. These bare patches can be crucial for their survival.



Dead wood



Hollow Stems



Bee Burrow



Winter leaves



Bee Hotel

Photos courtesy: Rosie Bleet



Updates



Making Space for Nature in Kent and Medway

Developing the County's Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Making Space for Nature

After a busy round of mapping workshops the team are now writing the draft strategy.

The draft strategy is due to go to public consultation in mid-January, which will be the time for everyone to view the draft strategy in full. You will have one final opportunity to comment on it before it heads for publication.

Head over to the Making Space for Nature website for more information.

Things coming up in 2025

- No Mow May 2025
- Bugs Matter
- Community Pollinator Toolkit
- Public Perception Survey

No Mow May Report 2024

We have published our Kent Plan Bee No Mow May Report 2024. Click this [link](#) to read see the results and find out how we got involved.



TREE PLANTING



Join KHWP & TWBC

as we plant over 2800 trees this winter!

Planting in partnership with Kent County Council through the Kent Plan Tree project with funding from the Local Authority Treescape Fund.

Tuesday 10th December

Grosvenor & Hilbert Park

Tuesday 17th December

Grosvenor & Hilbert Park

Tuesday 7 January

Hawkenbury Rec

Tuesday 14th January

Hawkenbury Rec

Tuesday 21st January

Hawkenbury Rec

Wednesday 22nd January

Southwood Road

Tuesday 28th January

Nevill Upper Ground

Tuesday 4th February

Nevill Upper Ground

Tuesday 11th February

Nevill Upper Ground

Tuesday 25th February

Farncombe Road Open Space

Kent County Council
kent.gov.uk



Interested? Email Bex for more information!

cmp@khwp.org.uk



What would you like to see in our social media content? Let us know through our Facebook page or at planbee@kent.gov.uk

If you received this email indirectly and would like to subscribe to our mailing list, please email us on the address below with the subject line "Sign Up". If you wish to unsubscribe from this mailing list, please email us on the address below with the subject line "Unsubscribe". Do you have a Kent pollinator news story or event that you would like featured in our newsletter? Have you created a pollinator friendly community space? Got your neighbours together to create a row of pollinator friendly gardens? Or do you have an event about Kent's pollinators you would like advertised? Email it to the address below and we will be in contact about a potential space in the Newsletter. planbee@kent.gov.uk All the previous editions of the Newsletter have now been added to our webpage. You can download them as PDFs or share the website address on your social media. Find all the Newsletters on the Pollinators section of Kent County Council's website. Edited by Philippa Bromley & Annalice Line, Graduate Biodiversity Officers, Kent County Council

For a Pollinator Friendly Garden of England

