

# National Bees for Everyone campaign



*National 'Bees for Everyone' campaign calls on gardeners to help the humble bumblebee*

An ambitious project to help the UK's bumblebees aims to get the nation buzzing. Bumblebee numbers have declined steeply because agricultural changes have destroyed their natural habitats. The project wants the public to help reverse these declines by turning their gardens into bumblebee oases.

The Bees for Everyone campaign is funded through generous grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Scottish Natural Heritage and others, and is run by the Bumblebee Conservation Trust (BBCT). It aims to raise

public awareness of the threats bumblebees face, inspire gardeners of all ages to get planting, and will provide opportunities for people to learn more about these hard-working pollinators. Additionally, the project team will be helping rare bumblebees through active conservation work to safeguard, restore and create habitats for them.

To launch the project, the charity is running a national 'Bee kind' competition to find the UK's most bee-friendly gardens. A custom-built interactive website tool makes it easy for people to get a Bee kind score for their garden, park or window box, then makes suggestions for other plants to include. Beechgrove Garden presenter George Anderson is backing the scheme and prizes will be awarded across a range of garden sizes, from window box upwards.



Speaking at the launch of the project, Stewart Stevenson MSP, Minister for Environment and Climate Change said:

"Bumblebees are of critical importance to green growth in

Scotland. A new study published this week estimates that insect pollination of crops contributes over £50 million to Scotland's economy. It is very important that we support pollinator populations in our farms, towns and cities."

BBC Beechgrove Garden's George Anderson, a supporter of the scheme who is urging the public to get involved, said:

"The Bee kind website tool is brilliant – it makes it really easy for people to find out how good their garden is for bees and suggests simple and affordable changes to cater for the bees' needs. Anyone can become involved and it doesn't matter where they live. We can all do our bit just by planting a few colourful flowers, and the Bee kind tool will show you how."

Colin McLean, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund in Scotland, said:

"Bumblebees are a crucial part of the UK's ecosystem and our natural heritage so it's alarming to see how numbers have been declining in recent years. The innovative 'Bee kind' competition and online tool will help to protect our bumblebees, encouraging people across the country to learn more about these fascinating insects and how to make gardens and window boxes bee-friendly habitats."

The Bees for Everyone project is also working with landowners, farmers and local authorities to ensure that the UK's rarest bumblebees have the habitat they need in order to survive.



By working with both the public and large-scale landowners, BBCT's CEO Dr. Ben Darvill hopes to begin a reversal in the recent fortunes of these important insects:

"In the last 70 years two bumblebee species have become extinct and many more have declined rapidly," Ben said, "It's easy to take them for granted, but without their work as pollinators our crops would be less productive and our

wildflowers would produce fewer seeds. Important five-a-day fruit and vegetables could become more expensive and our countryside would lose its colour.”

Children from Duddingston Primary School in Edinburgh are already enthusiastic supporters of the project and attended the launch event. The 4-11 year-olds took part in a bee-friendly drawing competition and performed a specially-commissioned light-hearted poem (by award-winning poet Anneliese Emmans Dean), chanting “What do we want? LOTS MORE FLOWERS! When do we want them? NOW!”

Photos by :-

Cate Gillon

Photographer

Tel: 07894 664 288

Email: [photography@categillon.com](mailto:photography@categillon.com)

Web: [www.categillon.com](http://www.categillon.com)