pollinators and pollination

What is pollination?

Pollination is the transfer of pollen from the anthers (♂) to the stigma (♀) of a flower, enabling fertilisation and the production of seeds. Around 78% of all flowering plants are pollinated by animals, mostly insects.

Cocoa, almond, watermelon, vanilla, and Brazil nut are some crops across the world that rely on pollinators.

Closer to home, raspberries, strawberries and apples are amongst our popular fruits which require insect pollination.

What are pollinators?

Honey bees, bumblebees, solitary bees and hoverflies are our main pollinators.

Honey bees are the most frequent visitors to crops worldwide, but in many cases they are not the most efficient pollinators.

Like honey bees, bumblebees live in social colonies, usually in holes in the ground. In Britain we have 240 or so species of bee, of which roughly 25 are bumblebees.

Solitary bees nest on their own, as the name suggests. Each female builds and provisions her nest with food. Solitary bees include mining bees, which nest in the ground, as well as mason bees and leafcutter bees, which nest in holes in dead wood, banks and walls. Around 80% of the world's bees are solitary bees.

Hoverflies are often seen hovering or feeding on flowers. The adults feed mainly on nectar and pollen, while the larvae eat a wide range of foods.

Pollinators matter

Insects such as bees and hoverflies are a familiar sight in our gardens, parks and countryside, and they play an important role in our food and farming industries, as well as contributing to our enjoyment of the outdoors, our health and well-being.

Faced with pressures that include habitat loss, changes in land use, diseases, pesticides and climate change, our pollinators need your help.

Scotland's National Nature Reserves

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