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## ACTIVITY INSPIRATION GUIDE

### POLLINATOR PERFECTION

SUBJECT: **SCIENCE**

TOPIC: **Biodiversity and nature**

Despite pollinators' crucial role in the natural world, their numbers are declining at an alarming rate. This guide shows you how you can make your school grounds more pollinator-friendly by looking at the example of [Polli:Nation](#), a National Lottery Heritage Fund project run by Learning through Landscapes across more than 250 schools in the UK. It brings together some of the things schools learned about pollinating insects through the project, and how they used this knowledge to make their schools more pollinator friendly.

#### Learning about pollinating insects

Pupils started by learning why pollinating insects are so important and which insects are pollinators in this country. Here are some facts that were shared with pupils:

- There are at least 1,500 different pollinating insect species in the UK
- There are about 270 species of bee in the UK
- About 250 of these are solitary bees (they live in their own nests and they can't sting people)
- There are 24 different species of bumblebee in the UK and you can start to identify them by their tail colour



#### Weblinks

[lfl.org.uk](http://lfl.org.uk) [youngtreechampions.org](http://youngtreechampions.org) [treecouncil.org.uk](http://treecouncil.org.uk)

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As well as bees, many other insects pollinate plants. These include:

- Butterflies
- Moths
- Hoverflies
- Other flies
- Beetles

Pollinators are vital for human survival

- 80% of all flowering plants are pollinated by insects
- 35% of the world's food production requires pollinating insects

Some of our favourite foods are pollinated by insects:

- Apples
- Plums
- Bananas
- Strawberries
- Onions
- Chocolate
- Tomatoes
- Beans
- Potatoes

However, we are losing pollinating insects because of:

- habitat loss,
- pests and diseases
- extreme weather
- competition from invasive species
- climate change
- the use of some pesticides
- planning and building



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### Practical work

The pupils' first practical task was to survey their school grounds to find out what pollinating insects lived there or came to visit. They used the Polli:Nation survey but you can also use the FIT Count which is part of the UK [National Pollinator Monitoring Scheme](#) which means the data will become part of a national record of pollinating insects.

The next stage was thinking about how they could make their grounds more pollinator friendly. To do this, pupils first investigated the food that different pollinators eat at the different stages in their life cycles and what habitats they lived in.

Each school then put together a plan to create pollinator friendly habitats on their grounds. Some schools created bug-hotels, whilst others created wildflower meadows, orchards, pots with plants that pollinators feed on, areas with lots of different crops, or enhanced ponds or damp spaces.

Over the year, pupils developed their grounds then resurveyed the sites to see if there were more pollinators visiting – and many found that there were!



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### Curriculum links

- **Science:** Learn about the life cycle and needs of pollinating insects. Discover how to create new habitats and food sources in your school grounds.
- **Maths:** Plan changes to your ground – draw scale drawings of your site and the new features you are going to add. Work out how much this will cost and the volume of soil you will need.
- **Language and literacy:** Research the needs of the different pollinating insects and report/blog about what you are doing in your school grounds.
- **Technology:** Design and make planters and pots for your flowers or fruit and vegetables to grow in or create a new bug hotel for your grounds.

### Top Tips

- Discover which insects and habitats you already have in your school grounds before you start thinking about making changes.
- There are lots of people that can help you with a pollinator project – find out if you have a local bee-keeping group, or an ecologist or gardener as a parent?
- Make sure you know how you are going to maintain your changes – otherwise they could fall into disrepair. Some things can be done by pupils but also make sure your grounds staff know what they need to do and why.
- Download the Polli:Nation maintenance guide to find out what needs doing, why and who could undertake each task: [www.ltl.org.uk/resources/pollination-maintenance-guide/](http://www.ltl.org.uk/resources/pollination-maintenance-guide/)



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ltl.org.uk youngtreechampions.org treecouncil.org.uk

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