# BUMBLEBEE CONSERVATION TRUST

## Advice for Gardens

*Southern cuckoo bumblebee on scabious, Nikki Gammans*

Prepared by: Clare Alley and Dr Nikki Gammans, BBCT

The Short-haired Bumblebee Reintroduction Project

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**Background**

Plants provide protein-rich pollen and sugar-rich nectar which bumblebees use exclusively for their source of nutrition. Whilst feeding on nectar and collecting pollen they help pollination by transferring pollen from one flower to another. Certain flowers have evolved so they can only be pollinated by bumblebees, for example, long tubular flowers can only be pollinated by long-tongued bumblebees.

Bees are responsible for a large part of pollination. We have three types of bees in the UK: honeybee (one species), solitary bees (around 250 species) and bumblebees (24 species). Different species pollinate different plants so it is important to conserve all of our bees and other insect pollinators. Many of our bumblebees have suffered serious long-term declines, largely due to the loss of 97% of wildflower rich habitat; resulting in a huge loss of suitable forage and nesting habitat.

Gardens are really important habitats for bumblebees as they can provide vital links between wild spaces. The key to a bumblebee friendly garden is having a wide variety of plants which flower at different times, to provide a steady supply of nectar and pollen throughout the bumblebee lifecycle (March-October). In addition, different species have different tongue lengths and so will visit different flowers, so a wide variety of plants is vital.

**Sourcing Seeds and Plants**

When buying seeds and plug plants it is really important to ensure that they are of native provenance and sourced locally and responsibly. Local seeds and plants are also more likely to germinate and survive, as they are what should naturally occur in that habitat.

For seeds we recommend:

- Emorsgate Seeds (www.wildseed.co.uk)
- NatureScape (www.naturescape.co.uk)
- Agrifactor (https://www.heathfield.net/businesses/farms-and-farm-services/agrifactors/13)

For plants:

- Local garden centres – look for the bee friendly label
- Plants for ponds (https://plantsforponds.co.uk/)
- NatureScape (www.naturescape.co.uk)

**Annual Wildflower Beds – Cornfield Annuals**

Amount of seed needed: 2g of seed per $m^2$

Seeds – cornfield annual seed mix which will have corn poppy (*Papaver rhoeas*), cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*), corn marigold (*Chrysanthemum segetum*), corn cockle (*Agrostemma githago*), corn chamomile (*Anthemis arvenis*)

Places to buy seed – Emorsgate Seeds wildseed.co.uk (0.1kg of their EC1 standard cornfield mixture is £8) or naturescape.co.uk (0.1kg of their NCA1 standard cornfield annuals mix is £4.80)

***Figure 1**. Cornfield annual plot (species shown: corn chamomile, corn marigold, cornflower, corn cockle)*

**How to Prepare an Annual Wildflower Bed**

- Cut any existing grass short and rake off and remove the cuttings
- Dig or hoe the area to expose the soil surface – aim for a fine tilth (Figure 2) as this will increase the chances of seed success
- Sow seeds directly on to surface in the spring (Figure 3), lightly tread them in but do not cover with soil. Water well
- Seeds can be sown either spring or autumn

***Figure 2**. Newly created bare ground; fine tilth*

**Managing and Maintaining an Annual Wildflower Bed**

- Dig up any thistles, docks and nettles as they grow as they can take over the wildflowers
- Cut the area once the wildflowers have set seed (around October; Figure 3), leaving the cuttings for a few days for seeds to drop into the soil, then rake and remove
- Re-scarify (till) the ground each year, after cutting, as annuals need bare ground to germinate

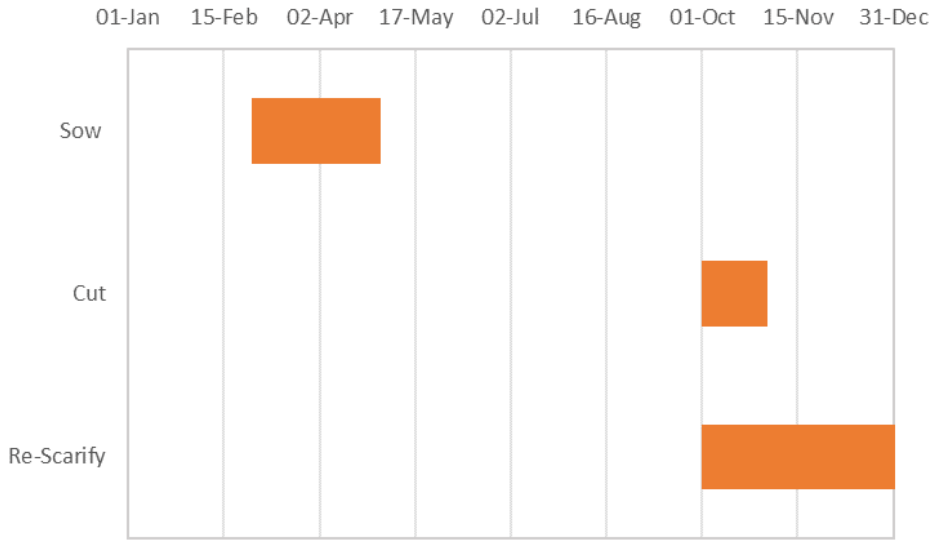


***Figure 3**. Timings for cornfield annual plots.*

**Perennial Wildflower Beds**

Amount of seed needed: 4g per $m^2$ (for EM4 Mix) or 5g per $m^2$ (for N6 Mix)

Seeds – perennial seed mix which will include species such as birdsfoot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), yellow rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*), field scabious (*Knautia arvensis*), common knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), oxeye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), wild red clover (*Trifolium pratense*), self heal (*Prunella vulgaris*), meadow buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*) and meadow cranesbill (*Geranium pratense*)

Places to buy – Emorsgate Seeds wildseed.co.uk (EM4 Meadow Mixture for Clay Soils = £6.60 for 0.1kg) and naturescape.co.uk (N6 Clay Soils Meadow Mixture = £4.35 for 0.1kg)

***Figure 4****. Perennial wildflower plot (species shown: red clover, meadow vetchling, tufted vetch)*

**How to Prepare a Perennial Wildflower Bed**

- If the area is clay soil it is recommended to prepare and sow the area between mid July-end of September (Figure 5); some species need their first leaflets before frost so avoid sowing any later than September. However, if the area is chalk then the area can be prepared and sown in either spring or autumn
- Cut any existing grass short and rake off and remove the cuttings
- Dig or hoe the area to expose the soil surface – aim for a fine tilth as this will increase the chances of seed success
- Sow the seeds and lightly tread the surface, water the area well

**Managing and Maintaining a Perennial Wildflower Bed**

- To extend flowering season you can cut a portion of the area at the end of June/mid-July, removing the cuttings. If you do this make sure to leave an area uncut to ensure continued bee forage
- Mow the whole area once it has set seed beginning-end of September (Figure 5)
- Leave the cuttings for 1-2 days to dry and drop seed, and then rake off
- Mow re-growth through to late autumn

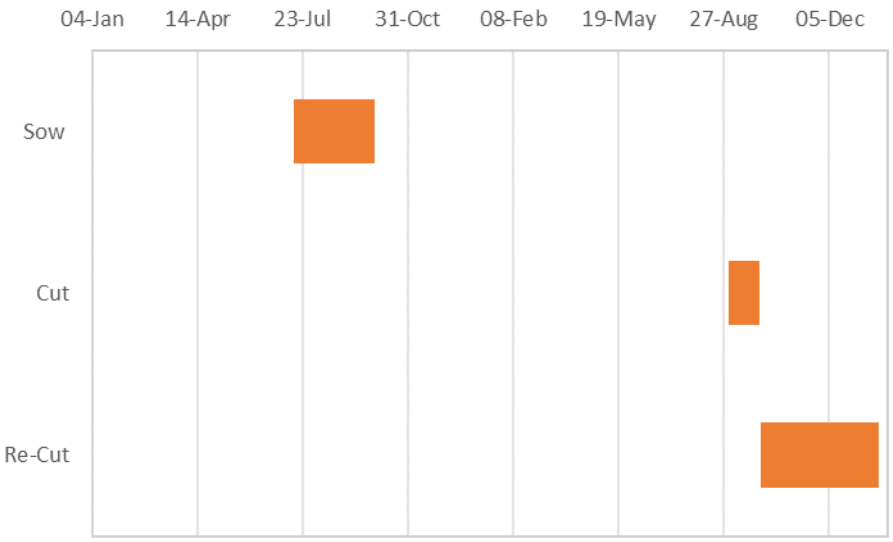


***Figure 5**. Timings for perennial wildflower plots.*

Alternatively, you could cease mowing and see what grows up from the seedbank. If the area is dominated by grasses or is nutrient rich, yellow rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*) seeds or plug plants can be introduced (Figure 6). This species parasitizes grasses, suppressing their growth and therefore, opening up space to allow wildflowers to grow. Yellow rattle should be sown in autumn as they need frost to break seed dormancy. We recommend sowing at a rate 3x the suggested amount as seeds can be difficult to establish. Sow seeds directly on the soil surface and do not cover. Once yellow rattle has been established it will allow natural regeneration from the seedbank. If you find there is still not enough diversity you can add in plug plants (as in the seed mix above) or sow wildflower seeds.

***Figure 6**. Yellow rattle (Rhinanthus minor) in flower (left) and seedling (right)*

**Ponds**

Places to buy plants - plantsforponds.co.uk or local garden centres

***Figure 7**. Selection of pond plants. From left to right: yellow flag iris, purple loosestrife, water forget-me-not and water mint.*

Plants to consider:

- **Yellow flag iris** (*Iris pseudacorus*) – plant May-September, flowers late spring and summer. Divide rhizomes every 3-5 years during August-October
- **Water forget-me-not** (*Myosotis scorpiodes*) – plant May-June, grow in aquatic compost in water no deeper than 10cm, flower late spring and early summer. Cut back after flowering and divide plants every few years
- **Lesser spearwort** (*Ranunculus flammula*) – plant May-September in the edge of pond, flowers in summer
- **Native water lilies** – white water lily (*Nymphaea alba*) or yellow water lily (*Nuphar lutea*) – plant April-September, flowers all summer. Cut back in October
- **Marsh marigold** (*Caltha palustris*) – marginal pond plants, grows in sun or shade, flowers March-April, occasionally having a second flowering later in the year. After flowering remove dead leaves, this may encourage second flowering and reduce leaf litter in the pond. Needs to be in a pot and placed at a depth that allows the soil to sit at or just above the water level of the pond.
- **Water mint** (*Mentha aquatica*) – grows in full sun or partial shade around edges of ponds in boggy soil. Plant March-May or September-November. Cuttings can be taken March-April

- **Purple loosestrife** (*Lythrum salicaria*) – grows in full sun around edges of ponds, streams and riverbanks in moist soil. Plant established plants in spring or sow seed in autumn.

**Shaded Beds**

***Figure 8.*** *Selection of plants which can tolerate shade. From left to right: lungwort, comfrey, primrose and snakes head fritillary.*

Plants to consider:

- **Primrose** (*Primula vulgaris*) – plant February, flowers winter and spring, divide clumps every few years
- **Cowslip** (*Primula veris*) – can grow in full sun or partial shade, plant March-October, flowers in spring. Can divide clumps during March-April
- **Lungwort** (*Pulmonaria spp*) – grows in shade, plant spring or autumn, flowers late winter and spring. Remove dead leaves after flowering. Plants can be divided in early spring or autumn
- **Red dead-nettle** (*Lamium purpureum*) – long flowering season can begin February and last until November
- **White dead-nettle** (*Lamium album*) – long flowering season spring to late autumn
- **Ground-ivy** (*Glechoma hederacea*) – can grow in sun or shade, plant in spring or autumn. Flowers March-June
- **Comfrey** (*Symphytum spp*) – can grow in sun or shade, plant in spring or autumn. Flowers May-July. Plants can be divided and replanted
- **Bulbs**:
    - **Crocus** (*Crocus spp*) – bulbs should be planted in autumn. Flowers early spring
    - **Snowdrop** (*Galanthus nivalis*) – bulbs should be planted late April-May. Flowers January-March
    - **Wild daffodil** (*Narcissus pseudonarcissus*) – bulbs should be planted in autumn. Flowers in spring
    - **Snakes head fritillary** (*Fritillaria meleagris*) – flowers March-April, plant bulbs September-October. Grows in sun or shade in free-draining soil. Let foliage die off after flowering
    - **English bluebell** (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) – bulbs should be planted in autumn or late spring. Flowers in spring. Can divide and replant clumps after flowering, but before leaves die back
- **Garlic mustard** (*Alliaria petiolata*) – flowers April-September, biennial so grows leaves in first season and flowers in its second year
- **Hellebore** (*Helleborus spp*) – plant from autumn to spring. Flowers late winter to spring. Remove damaged leaves in autumn/winter. Can divide plants in early autumn

- **Foxglove** (*Digitalis purpurea*) – sow seed July-August, plant March-April or September-October. Grows in sun or shade, flowers May-July. Allow plants to seed before cutting back flowering stem as this may encourage a second bloom

**Herbs/Sunny Beds**

***Figure 9.*** *Selection of plants which grow in sun. From left to right: English lavender, wild majoram, verbena and sunflower.*

Can grow herbs from seeds, which would need to be sown in spring and transplanted outside after hardening off and once risk of frost has passed. However, it can be quite hard to establish some of these species from seed, so it is probably easiest to source them from local garden centres or online as established plants which can be planted straight away. Can also plant from cuttings by taking a healthy shoot about 10cm long, cutting beneath a leaf joint. Trim lower leaves, place cutting in pot, and water.

Plants to consider:

- **English lavender** (*Lavandula angustifolia*) – best to plant in spring, will flower late spring and summer, prune annually
- **Thyme** – wild thyme (*Thymus polytrichus*) and garden thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*) are both excellent bee plants – plant spring or autumn, flowers late spring and summer, prune annually
- **Wild majoram** (*Origanum vulgare*) – flowers throughout summer
- **Sage** (*Salvia officinalis*) – two wild sage species, meadow sage (*Salvia pratensis*) and wild sage (*Salvia verbenaca*), plant June-July, flowers late spring and summer, cut back after flowering
- **Rosemary** (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) – plant spring or autumn, flowers spring and early summer, cut back annually
- **Catmint** (*Nepeta spp*) – common garden catmints include *Nepeta x faassenii* and *Nepeta racemosa*, plant May-June, flowers spring to late summer. Trim faded stems throughout summer to encourage more growth, after growth dies in autumn cut plant right back to the ground
- **Salvias** (*Salvia spp*) – 900 species in this genus, including sage. Plant April-May, flowers June-November. Cut back dead flowers to prolong flowering
- **Alliums** (*Allium* species) – perennial herb grown from a bulb, a wide variety of colours and species. The genus includes crops such as onions (*Allium cepa*), leeks (*Allium porrum*) and chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*), as well as many wild species including wild garlic (*Allium ursinum*) and commercial varieties such as garden allium (*Allium giganteum*). All species are great nectar plants, flowering spring and summer. Plant bulbs in autumn at a depth of 15cm

    - **Chives** (*Allium schoenoprasum*) – easy to grow from seeds – sow in pots in spring keeping them indoors until established, harden them off for a week before planting outside. Flowers early summer, cut after flowering to encourage new leaves
- **Verbena** (*Verbana bonariensis*) – sow seeds early spring, or plant established plants May-September. Flowers July-October
- **Scabious** (*Scabiosa spp*) – e.g. field scabious (*Knautia arvensis*). Sow seeds early spring or autumn, plant established plants April-September. Flowers July-August. Plants can be divided early spring
- **Teasel** (*Dipsacus fullonum*) – sow seeds early spring, plant established plants May-September. Flowers May-July. Seed heads can be left for birds. Biennial so to encourage flowering the following year sow more seeds in summer. Self-seeds rapidly
- **Sunflowers** (*Helianthus spp*) – 70 species including common sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*). Easy to grow from seed which should be sown in spring. Flowers July-September. Seed heads can be left for birds

**Shrubs and Trees**

***Figure 10.*** *Selection of shrubs/trees. From left to right: flowering currant, winter honeysuckle, mahonia and heather.*

Plants to consider:

- **Flowering currant** (*Ribes sanguineum*) – flowers spring and summer, tolerant of light shade. Plant bare root saplings in autumn, container-grown plants can be planted out any time. Best situated at back of borders. Needs annual pruning
- **Honeysuckle** (*Lonicera spp*) – plant October-April, flowering period January-October dependent on species, prune after flowering. Climbing honeysuckles do best with roots in shade and stems able to reach sunlight, grow on a sturdy frame. Deciduous winter honeysuckle (*Lonicera fragrantissima*) is a shrubby winter flowering variety
- **Dog rose** (*Rosa canina*) – grows in full sun. Flowers in summer, red berries in autumn. Prune after flowering
- **Jasmine** (*Jasminum spp*) – grows in sun or partial shade, flowers spring, summer or winter depending on species. Summer jasmines (e.g. common jasmine *Jasminum officinale*) should be planted spring or autumn, these are climbing varieties. Winter jasmine (*Jasminum nudiflorum*) should be planted autumn/winter and is a shrubby variety. Prune annually after flowering
- **Heather** (*Calluna/Erica/Daboecia*) – grows in sun or light shade, flowers spring, summer, autumn or winter depending on species. Plant early spring or autumn. Winter-spring flowering e.g. *Erica carnea* varieties, summer-autumn flowering e.g. *Calluna vulgaris* varieties

- **Mahonia** (*Mahonia spp*) – plant in autumn or spring, flowers winter to early spring, followed by purple-black berries in autumn. Prefers light shade but will tolerate full sun or full shade. Good focal point at the back of borders
- **Hawthorn** (*Crataegus monogyna*) – grows in full sun or partial shade. Flowers in spring, red berries in autumn. Lightly prune in late winter/spring by removing any damaged, congested or crossing shoots
- **Blackthorn** (*Prunus spinosa*) – grows in full sun. Flowers in spring, red berries in autumn. Lightly prune in late winter/spring by removing any damaged, congested or crossing shoots
- **Cotoneaster** (*Cotoneaster spp*) – can get different varieties depending on needs. They thrive in moist but well-drained soil in full sun or partial shade. Flowers in spring, produces berries in autumn. Plant in autumn, prune in spring

**Pots and Containers**

***Figure 11****. Selection of plants that grow in containers. From left to right: spearmint, grape hyacinth, Salvia and nasturtium.*

Pots and containers can be a great way to plant more pollinator friendly plants and make an area look brighter and more attractive. These are great to place on patio areas or anywhere near to buildings that gets good sun.

Plants to consider:

- Any of the herbs mentioned previously do great in pots i.e. lavender, thyme, sage etc.
- Catmint and salvias (mentioned previously)
- **Mint** (*Mentha spp*) – best in a pot as it competes with neighboring plants if planted in a bed. Plant in spring or autumn, flowers spring to autumn. Cut back to ground level in autumn, can divide during autumn to create new plants and avoid overcrowding one pot. Lots of varieties to choose from e.g. spearmint (*Mentha spicata*)
- **Bulbs** (again any mentioned previously, could mix some in the same pot to make pretty displays):
    - **Crocus** (*Crocus spp*) – bulbs should be planted in autumn. Flowers early spring
    - **Snowdrop** (*Galanthus nivalis*) – bulbs should be planted late April-May. Flowers January-March
    - **Wild daffodil** (*Narcissus pseudonarcissus*) – bulbs should be planted in autumn. Flowers in spring
    - **Grape hyacinth** (*Muscari spp*) – grows in sun or light shade, plant bulbs early autumn. Flowers spring. Does spread very easily so only plant in areas you don't mind this happening or can easily remove any unwanted growth

    - **Snakes head fritillary** (*Fritillaria meleagris*) – flowers March-April, plant bulbs September-October. Grows in sun or shade, needs watering regularly in pots. Let foliage die off after flowering
- **Nasturtium** (*Tropaeolum majus*) – grows in sun or light shade, sow seeds April-July, flowers July-October. Good as a spiller in containers or hanging baskets. Bees love the flowers, caterpillars will feed on the leaves and also flowers, seeds and leaves are all edible for humans too
- Fruit and veg – e.g. tomatoes, strawberries, peas, beans
- **Heather** (*Calluna/Erica/Daboecia*) – grows in sun or light shade, flowers spring, summer, autumn or winter depending on species. Plant early spring or autumn. Winter-spring flowering e.g. *Erica carnea* varieties, summer-autumn flowering e.g. *Calluna vulgaris* varieties

**Providing Bee Nesting Habitat**

As well as areas of forage bees need places to nest. The best way to encourage nesting in your garden is to leave wild areas such as at the back of borders, bases of hedges and areas of tussock grass. Carder bees nest in this long-tussock grass so leaving some areas of the lawn unmown can provide this (cut these areas once every three years). Log piles, leaf piles and compost heaps are all good nesting habitat as well as safe places for bumblebee queens to hibernate. These areas are also excellent for attracting a wide range of other insects.

For solitary bees artificial housing known as bee hotels can be put up. These should go in a sunny south or south-east facing spot at a height of about 6ft. They can be bought from shops or online or alternatively you can make your own using bamboo canes, old logs with a variety of hole sizes drilled in or cobb bricks. Canes/holes need to ideally be 15cm deep with a range of sizes from 2-10mm wide as different species need different sizes.

***Figure 12**. Example of a solitary bee hotel*

Bumblebees often nest in blue tit nest boxes, so these could also be put up. Again, a sunny south or south-east facing spot for these, and include material such as grass cuttings in the nest box as they cannot collect this themselves. However, if you would like blue tits nesting, place north facing and clean out each year.

**Managing Hedgerows**

***Figure 13**. Selection of hedgerow species. From left to right: blackthorn, dog rose, hawthorn and wild honeysuckle.*

*Importance of Hedgerows*

Hedgerows are vital for a healthy pollinator population. They provide good sources of pollen and nectar throughout the bumblebee flight period. Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and willow (*Salix spp*) are important early on when there are few other flowers, species such as hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and wild cherry (*Prunus avium*) are great during late spring, species such as bramble (*Rubus spp*) and dog rose (*Rosa canina*) provide valuable sources during summer, and ivy (*Hedera spp*) is excellent during the autumn.

Not only do hedges provide good food sources but they also provide safe places to breed and overwinter; rodent holes at the base of hedges and tussocky grasses in margins are excellent nesting places for bumblebees. Solitary bees will nest in patches of short grass or bare earth in hedge banks and in hollow stems (e.g. dead bramble) or holes in dead wood. They also provide safe places for butterflies and moths to lay their eggs as many caterpillar foodplants can be found in hedgerows. These features also provide safe places for pollinators to overwinter. Hedges also provide safe flyways which pollinators follow to keep sheltered from the weather and to avoid predators.

As well as supporting pollinators hedgerows also provide food (fruit, seeds and insects) and nesting habitat for many bird species.

*Hedgerow Management*

To allow shrubs and trees to flower, hedges should be cut on a three year rotation, with no more than a third cut in the same year. In any gaps native flowering shrubs can be planted (e.g. goat willow, grey willow, hawthorn, blackthorn, crab apple, honeysuckle). If annual cutting cannot be avoided, raise the cutting height by 10cm each year – leaving some bramble and rose outgrowths. Avoid cutting hedges during the main breeding bird season (March-August) as all birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Birds can also nest outside this season so always check for nests before cutting.

Safe breeding and overwintering places for pollinators can be provided by encouraging tussock grass margins close to the hedge (this should be cut as late in the year as possible to protect nesting

bumblebees), leaving areas of dead stems, twigs and branches, and maintaining banks (which should be mostly well-vegetated with some areas of short grass and bare ground on sunny sheltered sides).

To provide safe flyways for pollinators any large gaps in a hedgerow should be planted with native species to ensure good connections within the landscape.

**Helping and Encouraging Other Wildlife**

Bats:

- Nesting habitat – could put up bat boxes, place on trees in a sheltered, south-facing position and as high as possible (at least 5m from the ground)
- Providing food – bats feed in the evening on insects including moths, so having plants which release their scent in the evening/night will attract these insects. For example, night-scented stock (*Mattihola longipetala*) – grows in full sun or dappled shade, sow spring or summer, flowers late spring-late summer. Also, evening primrose (*Oenothera biennis*), jasmine (*Jasminum spp*) and honeysuckle (*Lonicera spp*)
- For bat boxes and detectors check out https://www.nhbs.com/

Hedgehogs:

- Hedgehog house – can either buy this or make your own using bricks/stones and filling with leaves/grass cuttings etc.
- Log piles, leaf litter – good hibernaculum and good for encouraging hedgehog favorite insects
- Always check for hedgehogs in any bonfire piles before lighting

Birds:

- Nest boxes – north facing in a safe place from predators e.g. trees. Clean once nesting has finished
- Bird feeders – provide a variety of seed mixes to attract a range of species (e.g. sunflower seeds, niger seeds, mixed seed, fat balls). Place in a safe place out of reach from predators, e.g. hang in tree or bush, or alternatively could get a feeding station or table feeder. These all need to be cleaned regularly to reduce the risk of spreading disease (clean in hot water with dish soap or disinfectant)
- Plants such as teasels, sunflowers, dandelions – allow the seed-heads to form and birds will eat these directly from the plant
- Plants which produce berries e.g. cotoneaster, hawthorn, blackthorn, rowan, honeysuckle, dog rose, bramble

**Suggested Plant Species and Flowering Times**

| Plant Species | Photo | Flowering Time | Growing Conditions | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yellow flag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*) | | June-August | Marshes, by or in freshwater | Control every few years to ensure it doesn't take over the pond |
| Lesser spearwort (*Ranunculus flammula*) | | June-October | Edges of ponds, lakes and streams, marshes and wet meadows | |
| Water forget-me-not (*Myosotis scorpiodes*) | | May-September | Marginal plant which grows in wet soil but can also grow completely submerged. Sun or shade | |
| Native waterlilies – white water lily (*Nymphaea alba*) or yellow water lily (*Nuphar lutea*) | White waterlily | June-October June-September | White water lily requires full sun. Yellow water lily can grow in full sun or partial shade | |
| Marsh marigold (*Caltha palustris*) | | March-April | Moist woodland and boggy areas and in margins of ponds | |
| Water mint (*Mentha aquatica*) | | July-October | Margins of ponds. Grows in full sun or partial shade in boggy soil | |

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| Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) | | July-October | Margins of ponds. Full sun, moist boggy soil | |
| Cornfield annual mix – corn poppy, cornflower, corn marigold, corn cockle, corn chamomile | | | Any soil type. Sunny position | Need to re-scarify soil each year after seed has set. Will then naturally regenerate |
| Perennial wildflower mix – yellow rattle, meadow buttercup, wild red clover, common knapweed, field scabious, oxeye daisy, etc. | | | Use mix for clay soils. Sunny position | Half cut end June, full cut from beginning of September. Remove arisings |
| Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) | | February-May | Woodland, hedges. Variety of soils. Sun or shade | |
| Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) | | May-June | Woodland, hedges. Variety of soils. Sun or shade | |
| Dog rose (*Rosa canina*) | | May-August | Woodland, hedgerows, grassland. Full sun | |
| Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster spp*) | | May-June<br><br>Fruits: September-November | Full sun or partial shade. Moist but well-drained soil | Many varieties to choose from. Some such as wall spray cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*) are classed as invasive under Wildlife and |

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| | E.g. *Cotoneaster amoenus* | | | Countryside Act 1981 so take care if already growing and consider alternative varieties to plant |
| Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*) | | December-May | Woodland habitat, partial shade | |
| Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*) | | June-September | Woodland habitat, partial shade | |
| English bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) | | April-June | Woodland habitat | Plant bulbs in autumn |
| Snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*) | | February-March | Partial shade | Plant bulbs late April-May |
| Wild daffodil (*Narcissus pseudonarcissus*) | | February-April | Moist woodland | Plant bulbs in autumn |
| Snakes head fritillary (*Fritillaria meleagris*) | | March-April | Sun or shade. Range of soil types | Plant bulbs in autumn |

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| Hellebore (*Helleborus spp*) | | January-April | Woodland edges. Rich, moisture-retentive soils. Full sun or shade | |
| Garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) | | April-May (Biennial – so flowers every other year) | Woodland, hedgerows. Prefers shade | |
| Wood forget-me-not (*Myosotis sylvatica*) | | April-July | Shady, damp areas. Damp woodland | |
| Ragged robin (*Lychnis flos-cuculi*) | | May-August | Damp meadows and marshy areas | |
| Bugle (*Ajuga reptans*) | | April-June | Damp woods, grassland | |
| Cowslip (Primula veris) | | April-May | Grassland, woodland, meadows, hedgerows | |
| Lungwort (*Pulmonaria spp*) | | February-April | Woodlands. Prefers shade | |

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| Red dead-nettle (*Lamium purpureum*) | | February-November | Disturbed ground, gardens, hedgerows. | |
| White dead-nettle (*Lamium album*) | | March-November | Farmland, woodland, hedgerows. Partial shade | |
| Ground-ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*) | | March-June | Grows in sun or shade | |
| Crocus (*Crocus spp*) | | February-April | Gardens. Full sun or partial shade | Plant bulbs in autumn |
| Comfrey (*Symphytum spp*) | Common comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*) | May-July | Full sun or partial shade | |
| English lavender (*Lavendula angustifolia*) | | July-September | Full sun. Well-drained soil | |

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| Thyme – wild thyme (*Thymus polytrichus*), garden thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*) | Garden thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*) | June-September | Full sun. Well-drained soil | |
| Wild majoram (*Origanum vulgare*) | | June-September | Grassland, hedge banks. Full sun or partial shade. Well-drained soil | |
| Sage – meadow sage (*Salvia pratensis*), wild sage (*Salvia verbenaca*) | Meadow sage (*Salvia pratensis*) | May-August | Full sun. Well-drained soil | |
| Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) | | March-May | Sunny position. Well-drained soil | |
| Catmint (*Nepeta spp*) | | June-October | Sunny borders. Well-drained soil | |
| Salvia (*Salvia spp*) | | June-November | Full sun. Well-drained soil | |
| Alliums (*Allium spp*) – chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*) | | May-June | Full sun or partial shade. Moist but well-drained soil | |

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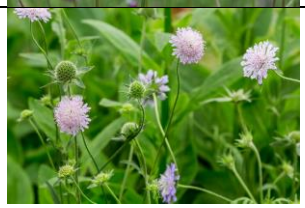
| Verbena (*Verbena bonariensis*) | | July-October | Full sun. Moist but well-drained soil | |
| Scabious (*Scabiosa spp*) |  Field scabious (*Knautia arvensis*) | July-October | Full sun or partial shade. Moist but well-drained soil | |
| Teasel (*Dispacus fullonum*) | | May-July | Full sun or partial shade. Moist but well-drained soil | Biennial, sow in summer for flowering the following year. Self-seeds rapidly |
| Sunflowers (*Helianthus annuus*) | | July-September | Full sun. Moist but well-drained soil | |
| Flowering currant (*Ribes sanguineum*) | | April | Full sun. Moist but well-drained soil | |
| Honeysuckle (*Lonicera spp*) – e.g. wild honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*), winter honeysuckle (*Lonicera fragrantissima*) | Wild honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*) | July-August<br><br>November-February | Full sun or partial shade. Moist but well-drained soil | Shrub or climber varieties – wild honeysuckle is a climbing variety and winter honeysuckle is shrubby |

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| | <br>Winter honeysuckle (*Lonicera fragrantissima*) | | | |
| Jasmine (*Jasminum spp*) – e.g. common jasmine (*Jasminum officinale*), winter jasmine (*Jasminum nudiflorum*) | <br>Common jasmine (*Jasminum officinale*)<br> <br>Winter jasmine (*Jasminum nudiflorum*) | June-August<br><br>January-March | Full sun or partial shade. Well-drained soil | |
| Heather (*Calluna/Erica/Daboecia spp*) | <br>*Calluna vulgaris* 'Tricolorfolia'<br> <br>*Erica carnea alba* 'Springwood white' | July-November<br><br>December-March | Full sun or partial shade. Moist but well-drained soil | Many varieties – summer flowering heathers tend to derive from *Calluna vulgaris*, whilst winter flowering heathers derive from *Erica carnea* |

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| Mahonia (*Mahonia spp*) | *Mahonia x media* 'Charity' | November-March | Partial shade. Moist but well-drained soil | |
| Mint (*Mentha spp*) – e.g. spearmint (*Mentha spicata*) | Spearmint (*Mentha spicata*) | July-September | Full sun or partial shade. Well-drained soil | |
| Grape hyacinth (*Muscari spp*) | | April-May | Full sun or partial shade. Moist but well-drained soil | Plant bulbs in autumn |
| Nasturtium (*Tropaeolum majus*) | | July-September | Full sun or partial shade. Well-drained soil. Needs regular watering in pots | |
| Night-scented stock (*Mattihola longipetala*) | | April-September | Full sun or partial shade. Moist but well-drained soil | Sow seeds spring or summer. Deadhead to prolong flowering |
| Common evening primrose (*Oenothera biennis*) | | June-September | Full sun or partial shade. Well-drained soil | Flowers open in the evening. Biennial. Cut back after flowering |

**Sources of Information and Further Reading**

Bumblebees an Introduction written by Dr Nikki Gammans, Dr Richard Comont, S C Morgan and Gill Perkins. Bumblebee Conservation Trust. 2018.

Field Guide to the Bees of Great Britain and Ireland written by Steven Falk and illustrated by Richard Lewington. Bloomsbury. 2015.

Managing hedges to benefit pollinators. Hedgelink UK. Campaign for the Farmed Environment.

Plants for Bees A Guide to the Plants that Benefit the Bees of the British Isles written by W.D.J. Kirk and F.N. Howes. 2012.

The Bumblebees of Kent written by Nikki Gammans and Geoff Allen. Kent Field Club. 2014.

Wildflowers of Dungeness written by Barbara Gray and Heather Silk. 2007.

Bumblebee Conservation Trust

**About BBCT and How to Contact Us**

The Bumblebee Conservation Trust (BBCT) was founded in 2006 due to serious concerns about bumblebee decline. We are working to protect our bumblebee species through raising awareness, working with landowners and policy makers, improving and creating bumblebee habitat and carrying out important monitoring work. The support of members and volunteers helps this work take place.

If you are interested in becoming a member of BBCT please see our membership page to find out how you can join: https://www.bumblebeeconservation.org/join/

If you are interested in finding out how you can get involved in monitoring work please see our surveying page: https://www.bumblebeeconservation.org/surveys/

For more information please email: enquiries@bumblebeeconservation.org