

A Pollinator Portfolio

Creating a buzz through the John Muir Award



One out of every three mouthfuls of our food depends on pollination taking place. The service that pollinators perform is integral to the security of our food systems and the variety of wildlife and plant life. Many plants rely on insects to pollinate their flowers and complete their reproductive cycle – most plants can't set seed without being pollinated. And it's estimated that 84% of EU crops (valued at £12.6 billion) and 80% of wildflowers rely on insect pollination.

Wild pollinators include bumblebees and other bees, butterflies and moths, and various insects such as flies, beetles and wasps. Historically pollinators haven't been at the top of conservation priorities. However it's apparent that if current trends continue, we won't have enough wild pollinators required to produce the crops we need for our growing population and for biodiversity to prosper.

The John Muir Award offers a fantastic way to frame activity that contributes to the conservation of pollinators - from wildlife gardening to beekeeping. Here are just some examples of how groups around the UK have been making local pollinators welcome in their wild places.

A portfolio of John Muir Award pollinator activity

Buzz in the Borders, Shropshire

Students from Churchstoke Primary School, Shropshire worked towards their John Muir Discovery Award as part of the Buzz in the Borders project, supported by the [Stiperstones and Cordon Hill Country Landscape Partnership Scheme](#). Students immersed themselves in their wild places through personal experiences, discovering the biodiversity local to them. The Buzz in the Borders project encouraged them to make a difference by building habitats and planting species that attract pollinator species. Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, [watch a film](#) from Buzz in the Borders.



The Coach House Trust, Glasgow

The Coach House Trust has led an inspiring John Muir Award project, working with vulnerable adults in Glasgow to encourage individual confidence and further integrate them within their communities. A focus on pollinators prompted the group to get hands-on with a wide range of practical activities. Creating green corridors, planting roofs and walls with wild flowers, bee keeping and hive



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development, observing honeybees and monitoring their food supply - all contributed to creating a wonderful environment for urban pollination. And whilst enhancing the area, the Coach House volunteers have been developing their own practical and transferable skills to help towards employability.

Polli:Nation – A Heritage Lottery Funded Project

This UK-wide initiative supports pupils from 260 schools to turn their school grounds and other local walk-to spaces into pollinator friendly habitats. It's a cross-curricular secondary and primary school project giving pupils direct hands-on and thought-provoking experiences - from creating vertical green walls and night-blooming flower beds to lobbying, and from changing school maintenance regimes to debating pesticide use.



Pupils learn about the role pollinating insects play in their ecosystem and contextualise this in the choices and actions they take. Exploring how school grounds can form local green corridors and 'stepping stones' for species to move safely between, the project is increasing the sightings and numbers of pollinators throughout the UK.

Such activities provide multiple ways to make use of the John Muir Award, and offer great examples of Citizen Science in action. By educating and empowering the next generation of knowledgeable and enthused young activists, the ambition of this programme is to protect pollinating insect species in the UK.



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Polli:Nation – Richard Bonington Primary School, Nottinghamshire

As part of the national Polli:Nation initiative, Year 5 and 6 pupils have made a long-term commitment to increase wildlife habitats in school grounds, making it more attractive to pollinator-friendly species. Pupils made a variety of bird feeders (for ground feeders as well as birds with a preference for trees), used pruning tools in the fruit orchard, and planted bird- and pollinator-friendly trees such as rowan and cherry. As well as sharing information through the school newsletter, the offer of Polli:Nation information sessions had a fantastic uptake of support from parents and grandparents.

“Representatives from each class became members of the HIVE group, bringing together new ideas from across the school. It’s been great to see them taking responsibility for the sustainable future of pollinators within our grounds and forest school sites”.

Class Teacher Jill Gaunt



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Polli:Nation – Larkhall Academy, South Lanarkshire

Set in urban South Lanarkshire, the school lacked productive space for pollinators within their grounds. The John Muir Award was introduced with an OPAL Polli:Nation focus ([OPAL – Open Air Laboratories](#)) by the Learning Support Department. The aim was not only to encourage the prevalence of pollinators, but to improve student’s literacy skills at the same time.

Pupils helped to plan and organise their own Award, and thoroughly enjoyed writing about how they created a wildflower meadow, made a green corridor across the tarmac playground, planted hedgerows and set out traditional and vertical planters. Effective outdoor learning in action, the project has helped to develop pupils’ confidence and extended their learning environment way beyond the classroom.

“My favourite part of our pollinator project was exploring the bluebell woods. It was so beautiful, relaxing and peaceful”. John Muir Award Participant

Action for pollinators

Our 2015 [Conserve Audit](#) showed that 4,599 John Muir Award participants planted over 18,000m² of wild flower areas, and 8,700 participants helped create habitats for wildlife including bees, butterflies and other pollinating species.

Through numerous projects and individual actions – such as [Polli:Nation](#) and the [OPAL Bee survey](#), planting pollinator friendly species or creating habitats - many groups taking part in the John Muir Award are part of collective positive action for pollinators across the UK.



Useful Resources:

[Wildlife Gardening Resource Guide](#)

Pollinator Surveys

[The John Muir Pollinator Way](#)

[Bumblebee Conservation Trust](#)

[Friends of the Earth Great British Bee count](#)

[The solitary Bee Project](#)

[OPAL Polli:Nation Survey](#)

Planting for bees

[Royal Horticultural Society](#)

[The British Beekeepers Association](#)

[Bee Watch](#)

Film: [Biodiversity begins with a B](#)

Habitat creation

[RSPB Build a Bee B&B](#)



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The John Muir Award is supported in England by the Heritage Lottery Fund, and in Scotland by Scottish Natural Heritage.



[1] Polli:Nation <http://www.polli-nation.co.uk/>