

# A pollinator portfolio

## Creating a buzz through the John Muir Award

Summer 2017

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 pollinators welcome in their wild places.

It is estimated that 84% of EU crops and 80% of wildflowers rely on insect pollination.

The service that pollinators perform is integral to the security of our food systems and the variety of wildlife and plantlife. Many plants rely on insects to pollinate their flowers and complete their reproductive cycle – most plants can't set seed without being pollinated.

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 is 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.

### **Buzz in the borders, Shropshire**

Students from Churchstoke Primary School, Shropshire worked towards their John Muir 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 project encouraged them to make a difference by building habitats and planting species that attract pollinators.

### **The Coach House Trust, Glasgow**

The Coach House Trust led an inspiring John Muir Award project, working with vulnerable adults 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 wildflowers, bee keeping and hive development, observing honeybees and monitoring their food supply – all contributing to creating a wonderful environment for urban pollination.

Whilst enhancing the area, the Coach House volunteers have been developing their own practical and transferable skills to help 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 hands-on and thought-provoking experiences. From creating vertical green walls and night blooming flower beds to lobbying, changing school maintenance regimes and 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.

These activities provide multiple ways to use 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 project is to protect pollinating species across the UK.

### Polli:Nation – Richard Bonnington 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

### 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 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 4599 John Muir Award participants planted over 18,000 square metres of wildflower areas, and 8700 participants helped create habitats for wildlife including bees, butterflies and other pollinating species.



Through numerous projects such as Polli:Nation and the OPAL Bee Survey, and individual actions, many groups taking part in the John Muir Award are part of collective positive action for pollinators across the UK.

For more ideas, take a look at our Wildlife Gardening resource guide.

### Useful Resources

[Polli:Nation](#)

[Bumblebee Conservation Trust](#)

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

[The Solitary Bee Project](#)

[OPAL – Polli:Nation survey](#)

[RHS Planting for Bees](#)

[RSPB – Build a Bee Hotel](#)

Find out more about the John Muir Award at [johnmuirtrust.org/award](http://johnmuirtrust.org/award)