B-friendly to your veg

Allotments and vegetable gardens can be great spaces for wildlife, including bees and other insects...

buglife B-Lines

Together, a number of allotments or vegetable plots can provide vital wildlife 'stepping stones' throughout our towns and cities.

Doing a few small things in your allotment will benefit pollinating insects and it could also increase the size and quality of your fruit and vegetables by improving insect pollination and providing natural pest control.



Buff tailed bumblebee *(Bombus terrestris)* ©Suzie Bairner

Encourage natural pest control

An effective alternative to using pesticides (which can harm some pollinators) is to encourage natural predators of the pests by providing them with suitable habitat (see over).

For example, ladybirds eat greenfly. You can also protect your plants by building barriers around them using materials such as netting.

Growing some key plants alongside your vegetables will both reduce the number of pest species and look very attractive.

Examples of companion planting

- Marigolds emit a strong odour that will repel greenfly and blackfly.
- Grow sage with carrots - they both have a strong scent that will repel each other's pests.
- Garlic, chives and coriander all help to repel greenfly.
- Dill - attracts insects like hoverflies whose larvae eat greenfly.

Most fruits require insect pollination including...



B-friendly to your veg

Use fewer pesticides

Using fewer chemicals on your allotment will help the environment and it could also save you money!

Only use pesticides if absolutely necessary. Avoid using pesticides on flowering plants, when you see pollinators flying around or feeding on plants, or near nests. Be considerate of your neighbours who may not wish to have pesticides drifting onto their plot.

Sow a wildflower margin

If you can, leave a margin around the edge of your plots and sow with wildflower seed (our 'B-friendly in your garden' leaflet and website provide further information).

Creating a wildflower meadow on disused allotment patches is also a great idea; it may also help control some of the weed species you may not be so keen on!



Don't be too tidy

Patches of bramble or ivy will provide important food and shelter.

Rough, uncut grass will provide valuable nesting habitat for some bumblebee species.

Leaving small patches of nettles in unused corners of the allotments will also help – they are important for more than 40 insects, particularly some butterflies.

Avoid pulling up all your 'weeds'. Some plants that many would consider weeds are beautiful wildflowers which will provide valuable nectar and pollen resources. e.g. creeping buttercup, speedwells and dandelions.

Allotment plants for pollinators

- Raspberry
- Currants
- Fennel
- Sweet peas
- Runner beans
- Artichokes
- Courgettes
- Tomatoes
- Borage
- Squash

Herbs e.g. Rosemary, Thyme, Oregano, Chives, Majoram, Mint

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