

KENT'S PLAN BEE



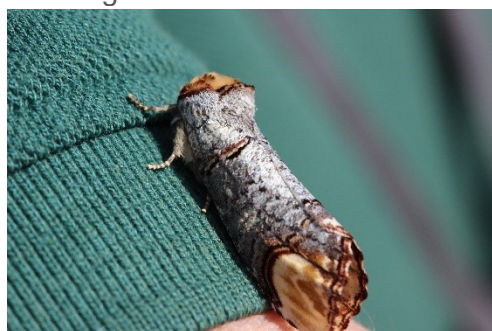
October 2022 Summary Newsletter

Moths Matter – the new moth campaign from Butterfly Conservation

From 17 October to 6 November, Butterfly Conservation are highlighting the importance and beauty of moths on their social media and website (link in Emperor moth photo). The campaign, called Moths Matter, is dedicated to educating the public on the crucial role that moths play in the ecosystem. Butterfly Conservation have made lots of resources and information available on moths. From a downloadable guide to ways to start mothing in your own garden, there is lots to find out about moths! We've even put together a list of interesting moth facts below, to give you a feel about how amazing moths are!



Image from Butterfly Conservation. Emperor Moth (*Saturnia pavonia*) taken by Iain H Leach. [Click the photo for webpage.](#)



The amazing camouflage of Buff-tip moths make them look like a broken silver birch twig



Many moths, such as this Six-spot Burnet, fly during the day

Did you know?

- There are over 2500 species of moth in the UK!
- Many moths are pollinators, and vital for pollinating lots of our crops and nocturnal flowers that butterflies and bees don't see.
- They are crucial parts of the food chain, with both adults and larvae providing food for bats, birds, and mammals.
- Not all moths fly at night, many can be seen during the day.
- They are useful indicators of environment health, when the moth numbers go down it usually indicates that there is a problem affecting the environment.
- There are only two species of moth caterpillar that eat clothes and material, the rest eat plant matter.
- They are masters of disguise, with many moths adapted to hide in leaf litter, bark, and lichens. There are even moths that camouflage themselves as bird droppings!
- The other more colourful moths advertise their distastefulness through their bright warning colours.
- Some use the bright colours on their hindwings (hidden under their forewings) to confuse and stun predators, allowing them to get away. Some, like the Eyed Hawkmoth, have eye spots on their hindwings which they flash when provoked to deter predators.

Autumn and Winter Moths

On our Facebook page, we have been highlighting some of the moth families and the difference between them, as well as showing some moths you may have seen during October. Did you find any Merveille du Jour, Frosted Orange, or Lunar Underwings this autumn?

As we move into winter, there are still a few moths to be seen, such as the December Moth, Winter Moth, and Early Thorn. Some butterflies, like Peacocks and Small Tortoiseshell overwinter as adults in dark, cool places but can be seen on warmer days throughout the winter. You can help all of these and other winter pollinators by having wintering flowers in your garden. Check out the Butterfly Conservation's blog post on winter moths for more information. [Click on the December moth photo to go to the blog.](#)



Image from Butterfly Conservation. December Moth (*Poecilocampa populi*) taken by Iain H Leach. [Click the photo for the Winter Moth blog.](#)

Pollinators feed all creatures great and small

This month, with the help of our Wild About Garden's volunteers, we are investigating the important role that pollinators play in the food chain.

Plants and pollinators

Most plants and animals, including human beings, could not survive without pollinators. Many plants and crops rely on bees, wasps, flies, beetles, butterflies, and moths to pollinate them so that they can fruit and set seed. More than twenty-five bee and hoverfly species visit apple blossom in Kent's orchards.



Apples, Sweet Chestnut, and Runner Beans all need pollinators

How plants contribute to the food web

- Flowers feed pollinating insects, voles, dormice, and shrews.
- Leaves and sap feed insects and their larvae, invertebrates, and herbivores such as rabbits and deer.
- Roots and decaying plants feed insect larvae and invertebrates.
- Seeds, berries and fruit feed rodents, birds, mammals, and people.
- An abundance of pollinators leads to good plant reproduction, providing diverse and rich food sources for small creatures such as insects and small mammals that are prey for carnivorous animals.



Nectar and pollen feed pollinators



Leaves and roots feed larvae



Seeds feed birds



Fruits feed insects, birds, mammals and humans

Predators rely on plant-eating prey

- Pollinating insects and their larvae feed dragonflies, damselflies, spiders, bats, lizards, mice, voles, hedgehogs, and foxes.
- Birds such as swallows, house martins, blue tits, robins, and wrens eat pollinating insects and their larvae.
- Small mammals feed weasels, stoats, foxes, badgers, and predatory birds such as barn owls.



Pollinators feed other invertebrates, such as spiders



Pollinators feed other insects, such as dragonflies



Pollinator adults and larvae feed birds and their chicks



Small mammals that eat pollinators feed owls



How can gardeners help?

To create a pollinator-friendly garden that will support the whole food web, gardeners can provide:

- [Flowers all year](#)
- [Shelter for pollinators](#) and [other wildlife](#)
- [Water for all wildlife](#)
- [A safe environment \(no pesticides\)](#)



Further information:

[Gardening for a Wilder Kent](#) [RSPB: Web of life](#) [Agricology: Pollination of UK apples: Who is doing all the work?](#)
[Researchgate: Confirmation that chestnuts are insect-pollinated](#) [Buglife](#) [Mammal Society: Species Hub](#)

Thank you to our wonderful Wild About Gardens volunteer Penny Brook for writing this month's article.
Photo credits: P Brook

Pollinators to see in Winter

November sees many pollinators already hunkering down for the winter. There are a few exceptions where hangers-on from the summer may be seen, such as Common Carder Bees, Red Admirals, and Common and German Wasps. A few new species of moth can be seen, including Dark Chestnut, November Moth, December Moth, Mottled Umber, and Feathered Thorn.

The majority of pollinators you will likely spot are those that overwinter as adults. On milder days, you could see:

Bees: Buff-tailed Bumblebees

Moths: Herald, Winter moth, and Common Plume

Butterflies: Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell, and Comma

Flies: Marmalade hoverfly, Common drone flies, and Greenbottles

Wildflowers have also mostly stopped blooming, but a few hardy species carry on over the winter. Those to spot over winter include Gorse, Common Chickweed, Groundsel, Red Dead-nettle, Shepherd's purse, and White Dead-nettle. The Gorse and Dead-nettle flowers are important nectar sources if pollinators do venture out on warmer days.

Spotted any of these or any other pollinators and wildflowers? Post them on our [Facebook page](#), tag us in your photos @KentsPlanBee or [email us](mailto:planbee@kent.gov.uk) your photos.

POLLINATORS TO SEE IN WINTER



Buff-tailed bumblebee
Bombus terrestris



Peacock
Aglais io



Comma
Polygonia c-album



The Herald
Scoliopteryx libatrix



Marmalade Hoverfly
Episyrphus balteatus

Others to See
Small Tortoiseshell - *Aglais urticae*
Winter Moth - *Operophtera brumata*
Common Plume - *Emmeline monodactyla*
Common Drone Fly - *Eristalis tenax*

Spotted any of these? Why not share them on our Facebook page @KentsPlanBee



Events in November

Tree Week

[Tree Week](#) happens on the last week of November, going into December (26 Nov - 4 Dec). It is the UK's largest annual tree celebration, run by the Tree Council. This week marks the start of winter tree planting season. We'll be posting lots of activities and information on our Facebook page throughout November in the run up to and on Tree Week itself.

Teach yourself Pollinator Identification

The cold, dark months of winter are often a little pollinator light, with many pollinators overwintering before emerging next spring. But that doesn't mean there is nothing to do. Why not cosy up in your house and learn some pollinator identification techniques so you are ready to go next spring? We have compiled a list of videos below that will give you a few tips on identifying some of our more common pollinators:

- Buglife – [Introduction to Pollinators](#)
- Bumblebee Conservation Trust – [The "Big 8" Bumblebees](#)
- Eco Sapient – [Leafcutter Bees](#)
- The Wildlife Trust – [How to identify Butterflies](#)
- SEWBRc – [Introduction to Macro Moths](#)

Wild About Gardens

The next online Wild About Gardens event taking place on [12 November is about building and maintaining a pond](#). You can book onto this and other events through the [Kent Wildlife Trust website](#).



Wild About Gardens

AUTUMN ZOOM ONLINE WORKSHOPS

Thursday 20 October 7.30-9pm : Helping Hedgehogs in gardens

Saturday 12 November 3-5pm : Building & Maintaining a wildlife pond

£5 per person
Booking advisable

Scan to find out more and to book your open garden ticket

Or book here:
01622 662012
kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/wilder-gardens

Thanks to our kind sponsors

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Keep up to date with the latest news via our [Kent's Plan Bee Facebook page](#)

If you received this email indirectly and would like to subscribe to our mailing list, please email us on the address below with the subject line "Sign Up". If you wish to unsubscribe from this mailing list, please email us on the address below with the subject line "Unsubscribe".

Do you have a Kent pollinator news story or event that you would like featured in our newsletter? Have you created a pollinator friendly community space? Got your neighbours together to create a row of pollinator friendly gardens? Or do you have an event about Kent's pollinators you would like advertised? Email it to the address below and we will be in contact about a potential space in the Newsletter.

planbee@kent.gov.uk

All the previous editions of the Newsletter have now been added to our webpage. You can download them as PDFs or share the website address on your social media. Find all the Newsletters on the [Pollinators section of Kent County Council's website](#).

Edited by Hannah Simmons, Graduate Biodiversity Officer, Kent County Council.

For a Pollinator Friendly Garden of England

