

Bexhill Town Council Wild Domesday Project



Plants & Pollination - Introduction

The Bexhill Wild Domesday Project began on 1st June 2023. One of the first aims is to encourage all the people of Bexhill-on-Sea to select and plant any flora that will help and encourage pollinators. Ninety-seven percent of our flower-rich meadows have been lost since 1930. We have also lost so many bees to pests and pesticides, and it is said by some that there are no more wild bees, and we depend solely on beekeepers.

You can see the problems we face on BBC iPlayer here:

[BBC Two - Bees, Butterflies and Blooms](#)

As Project Manager I am setting out below key science-based information from **Sussex Wildlife Trust** and the **Royal Horticultural Society** that will help you to choose the right plants. Please read the whole of this project page to understand the key points.

FRONT FACING GARDENS

For those of you who have front facing gardens – and any streetside plots, then the planting of pollination plants in those areas helps to make a street corridor as bees, hoverflies and other pollinating insects fly from flower to flower, plot to plot and down the street. It makes finding nectar easy for them.

WHAT TO PLANT

The WildCall Officer for Sussex Wildlife Trust, Andy Fry says:

'This sounds like an excellent project to get people involved with nature conservation and habitat creation. However, be sure to stress to the people of Bexhill that it is best to include plants that flower **in different months**, so as to support pollinators throughout the year.

It is also good to include **plants of varying heights** where possible, to create more complex habitat structure.'

Below is the **Sussex Wildlife Trust** list of the best plants to help pollinators.

Garden Flower Menu

Providing food for bees, butterflies and other insects in your garden is a fantastic way to help wildlife. Choose a selection of plants from each column so that your garden is full of nectar and pollen throughout the year.

Please try to go for **organically grown plants**. Some flowers that are labelled as 'bee friendly' may have been **grown in pesticides** that will likely ultimately harm bee populations.

Early Flowering Plants

- Apple (*Malus spp.*)
- Bell heather (*Erica cinerea*)
- Crocus (*Crocus spp.*)
- Flowering currant (*Ribes sanguineum*)
- Hellebore (*Helleborus spp.*)
- Lungwort (*Pulmonaria*)
- Pussy willow (*Salix spp.*)
- Wisteria (*Wisteria spp.*)

Mid-season Flowering Plants

- Allium (*Allium spp.*)
- Bergamot (*Monarda spp.*)
- Columbine (*Aquilegia spp.*)
- Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*)
- Geranium (*Geranium pratense* & *G. sanguinea*)
- Globe artichoke (*Cynara scolymus*)
- Globe thistle (*Echinops spp.*)
- Hollyhock (*Alcea rosea*)
- Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra* & *C. major*)
- Lavender (*Lavendula spp.*)
- Marjoram (*Origanum vulgare*)
- Snapdragon (*Antirrhinum majus*)
- Tufted vetch (*Vicia cracca*)

Late Flowering Plants

- Cosmos (*Cosmos bipinnatus*)
- Everlasting pea (*Lathyrus latifolius*)
- Ice plant (*Sedum spectabile*)
- Ivy (*Hedera helix*)
- Plume thistle (*Cirsium rivulare*)
- Sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*)
- Thyme (*Thymus spp.*)

Long Flowering Period

- Chive (*Allium schoenoprasum*)
- Comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*)
- Dead nettle (*Lamium spp.*)
- Purple tansy (*Phacelia tanacetifolia*)



- Chive (*Allium schoenoprasum*)

WILDFLOWER MEADOWS AND HEDGEROWS

If you are a landowner with extensive areas available for planting – or you have a very large garden, you may like to consider wildflower meadows and the making of hedgerows. We have lost so many thousands of miles of hedges in the past few years. See below for advice.

Which flowers are best for my meadow?

The following are some examples of good wildlife-friendly plants for your meadow. Make sure to check the pH of your soil before choosing a seed mix, as not all plants can grow in all soils.

| ALKALINE SOIL | pH below 7 | ACID SOIL | pH above 7 | NEUTRAL SOIL | pH 7 |
|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| GOOD GRASS | GOOD WILDFLOWER | GOOD GRASS | GOOD WILDFLOWER | GOOD GRASS | GOOD WILDFLOWER |
| Upright brome | Cowslip | Common bent | Mouse-ear hawkweed | Sweet vernal-grass | Common knapweed |
| Crested hair-grass | Greater knapweed | Meadow foxtail | Heath bedstraw | Crested dog's-tail | Lady's bedstraw |
| Quaking grass | Fairy flax | Smooth meadow-grass | Lesser stitchwort | Meadow fescue | Bird's-foot trefoil |
| Crested dog's tails | Ox-eye daisy | Sweet vernal-grass | Rough/lesser hawkbit | Yellow oat-grass | Native red clover |
| Yellow oat-grass | Wild thyme | Heath grass | Common sorrel | Red fescue | Ox-eye daisy |
| Smaller cat's tails | Yellow rattle | | Tormentil | Common bent | Yellow rattle |
| | Kidney vetch | | Selfheal | | Field scabious |
| | Field scabious | | Devil's-bit scabious | | Meadow buttercup. |



I want to add a hedgerow to my garden

A mixed hedgerow will provide food and shelter for birds, mammals and invertebrates. It will also provide wildlife highways so that species can move more easily through the landscape.

Things to Consider

- Include mostly native plants. Generally these provide the best habitat for the widest range of wildlife. Try to mix at least five different species throughout your hedge.
- Aim for varied foliage, fruits and flowers throughout the year.
- Include evergreen and thorny plants for winter shelter as well as protection from predators.
- Add trees if you have space. This will provide greater diversity, height and shading. Good medium-sized trees include holly, crab apple and rowan. Good larger trees include oak, ash, whitebeam and silver birch.

What type of plant?

Choose bare-rooted plants, which are inexpensive and will generally establish well.

When to plant?

November to March when growth is slowest, but **don't** plant in frozen ground.

How many plants?

One plant per metre will give a reasonable hedgerow, but five per metre will provide greater variety and more rapid cover.

You can plant in a single straight line. For a thicker hedge, plant a staggered double line. For a more natural looking hedgerow, plant in an irregular pattern rather than in long blocks of the same species.

A Good Planting Mix:

- 70% from a choice of hawthorn, blackthorn, buckthorn, privet, beech, hazel and dog rose.
- 25% from a choice of guelder rose, field maple, spindle, crab apple, holly and yew.
- 5% from a choice of climbers, such as honeysuckle, blackberry, ivy and native clematis.

How to plant my hedgerow

1. Mark the shape and length of your hedge with cane and string.
2. Dig a trench along the line at least 45 cm wide and 30 cm deep (or big enough for the roots to fit comfortably). Double the width if you're planting a double staggered row of plants.
3. Stack the displaced soil alongside the trench.
4. Remove weeds to reduce competition for water and nutrients.
5. Loosen the sides and base of the trench to help roots to grow and to improve drainage.
6. Place your plants in the trench one by one. Add plenty of peat-free organic compost as you back-fill with the spare soil around the roots.
7. Lightly firm the soil around the base of the plant until it is stable and level with the surrounding ground.
8. Keep the roots of waiting plants in a bucket of water or cover with moist soil. **Don't** leave the roots exposed because they will dry out quickly.
9. Occasionally step back to check you are still following your planting line.
10. Water each plant so that the water reaches just beyond the depth and spread of the roots. Then keep plants well-watered for at least one year until they are established. Preferably use rainwater collected in a water butt and do not overwater.
11. Finishing touches: when your hedge is established you can add plugs of woodland edge species and native wildflowers.
12. Make sure your plants come from reputable dealers and are not taken from the wild.



Royal Horticultural Society (RHS)

Andy Fry from Sussex Wildlife Trust WildCall also says:

'The Royal Horticultural Society has a large list that contains plants of all kinds ranging from annuals to trees. This list also includes non-native species, but all natives are specified as such on the list, so I would recommend **sticking to those native species** in order to best support the wider ecosystem.'

The link to the RHS document that you can access for downloads or read online is:

[Plants for Pollinators advice and downloadable lists / RHS Gardening](#)

Learning about Pollination Problems

Here is a list of books that will help you to understand the problems we face in Bexhill-on-Sea and wider afield.

Bees

Field Guide to the Bees of Great Britain and Ireland - Published by Bloomsbury. Written by Steven Falk and illustrated by Richard Lewington. This is a superb volume in hardback (ISBN: 978-1-9103-8902-7 and paperback. ISBN: 978-1-4729-6705-3

The British Beekeepers Association (BBKA) Guide to Beekeeping published by Bloomsbury and written by Ivor Davis & Roger Cullum-Kenyon. Paperback ISBN: 978-1-4729-6243-0. Electronic PDF: 978-1-4729-2091-1 and ePub: 978-1-4729-2090-4.

General Identification

Collins Complete Guide to British Insects by Michael Chinery. ISBN: 978-0-00-729899-0

Dorling Kindersley (DK) **Pocket Nature Guide to Insects and Spiders** by George C. McGavin. ISBN: 1-4053-0596-7.

Kind regards

David EP Dennis

Project Manager

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Email: manager@bexhillwild.com

Website: <https://www.bexhillwild.com/>

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100091961778322>