BIODIVERSITY

SUSTAINABLE CLUB PROGRAMME

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

The Sustainable Club Programme is an initiative of the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment (DCEE).

WE'RE TAKING CLIMATE ACTION

HOW TO USE
The Biodiversity Research Hub

Biodiversity

This Biodiversity Resources Hub provides a range of simple actions from which a club can choose to enhance biodiversity and encourage pollinator activity on club grounds.

There are a range of actions in the toolkit, such as reduced mowing of non-playing grass, hedgerow management, the greening of your club walkway, and the planting of native trees and pollinator-friendly shrubs and flowers.

The Hub includes actions suitable for clubs of all sizes and for clubs from both rural and urban areas.

The Sustainable Club Biodiversity Resource Hub contains the following guidance sheets and resources:

ASSESS	Biodiversity Audit Template
IDENTIFY	Top Tips for Biodiversity
	Creating a biodiversity walking trail
	Managing off-pitch grass for pollinators
	Managing existing native hedgerows for biodiversity
	Planting biodiversity-friendly trees, shrubs and flowers
	Reducing use of herbicides
	Providing nesting places for wild bees
	Pollinator-friendly Management of Sports Clubs
	Planting in your club colours
	Neighbours in Nature
ACT	A Biodiversity Action Plan

ASSESS: BIODIVERSITY AUDIT

Biodiversity

The Green Club Biodiversity Audit is designed to help your Green Team to identify biodiversity assets that you already have in your club grounds, areas in your grounds that your club could enhance for biodiversity, and opportunities for action to improve biodiversity awareness and engagement.

Are there native trees growing on your club grounds?	☐ YES	☐ NO
Are there native hedgerows in or around your club grounds?	☐ YES	☐ NO
Are there existing area of natural wildflower growth in your club grounds?	☐ YES	☐ NO
Are there flower beds or planters in your club grounds that are planted with pollinator-friendly species?	☐ YES	☐ NO
Are there any ponds or wetlands on club grounds?	☐ YES	☐ NO
Have you done a survey of biodiversity and wildlife in your club?	☐ YES	☐ NO
Are you aware of any priority species in your area that could benefit from biodiversity actions in your club?	☐ YES	☐ NO
Do you have any signage communicating information on the trees, plants and wildlife in your club?	☐ YES	☐ NO
If you have a club walkway, is this managed for biodiversity?	☐ YES	☐ NO
Are there south- or east- facing banks or slopes in your club grounds that could be exposed to encourage pollinator nesting?	☐ YES	☐ NO
Are there areas of unused grass – e.g., beside goals, in corners, along fence lines – in your club grounds?	☐ YES	☐ NO
Are there areas in your club that could be planted with native trees or shrubs?	☐ YES	☐ NO
Are there areas of non-native, biodiversity-poor hedging in your club grounds?	☐ YES	☐ NO
Are there any biodiversity signs or information boards in your club grounds?	☐ YES	☐ NO

IDENTIFY:
Top Tips for Biodiversity in your Club

Biodiversity

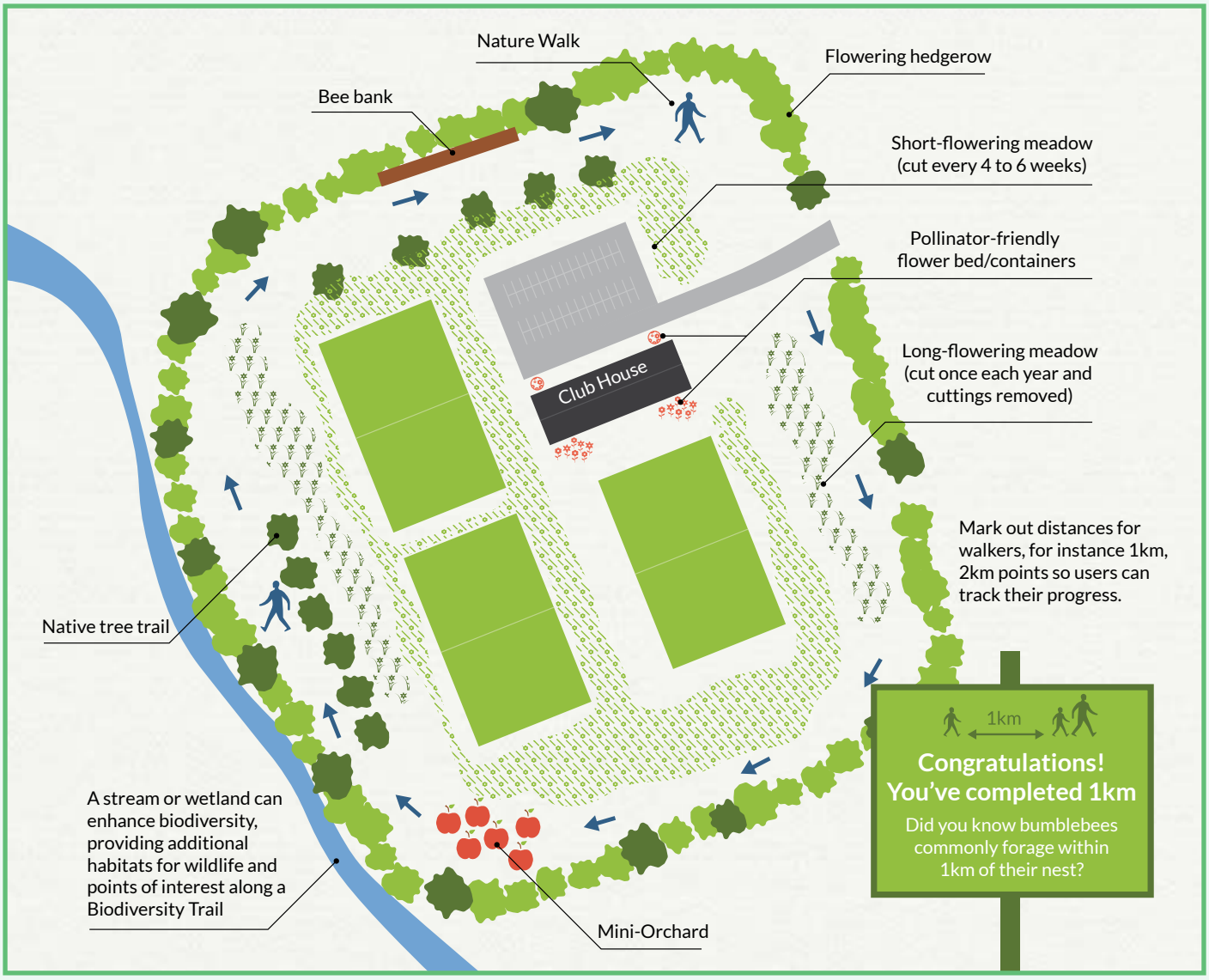
1. **Carry out a simple baseline audit:** Use the simple audit or biodiversity survey available in this document to help you identify existing biodiversity in your club as well as opportunities for action.
2. **Use the Green Club resources available in this document**
3. **Keep up to date with local funding opportunities:** Clubs can sign up for their local Public Partnership Network (PPN) newsletter (https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/b59ee9-community-network-groups).
4. **Link in with younger club members:** Engage in biodiversity and community projects through, e.g., Green Schools or Eco Schools etc.
5. **Partner locally:** Contact organisations in your local community that might be interested in partnering on biodiversity projects or on shared biodiversity funding applications e.g., local Men's Sheds group, Tidy Towns, local schools.
6. **Communicate with club and community members:** Install signage to highlight the biodiversit and wildlife in your club grounds or organise talks or biodiversity events in the club. Consider including communications as a cost in grant applications or getting local sponsorship for biodiversity signage. Consider designing all signs as bilingual.
7. **Create a mini-pond or micro wetland:** Ponds and wetlands can be really important biodiversity hotspots and can be used to reduce the impact of rainwater runoff on local waterways.
8. **Record your actions:** Showcase your club projects and help the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan track new pollinator-friendly habitats created by clubs by recording your actions at https://pollinators.biodiversityireland.ie/
9. **Review your progress:** Bring your Green Team together annually to review your actions and, where possible, measure gains in biodiversity. Key questions could include: Have you increased the area managed for biodiversity? Have the number of species recorded or observed on-site increased? Has awareness of biodiversity in the club improved?

IDENTIFY:
Create a Biodiversity Walking Trail

Biodiversity

Many sports clubs have space around the perimeter of the site where people in the community come to walk or jog. These walking routes could be incorporated into a biodiversity trail along interesting existing habitats, such as hedgerow, as well as supplementing the trail with wildflower meadows; planting of native trees, a mini-woodland or orchard.

- Native trees can be planted along the route to create a 'Native Tree trail' and each tree could be identified using small signs.
- Create bee banks or erect bee hotels at points around the trail. Bird or bat boxes could also be placed on trees.
- Parts of the walking route can follow paths through meadows, created by reduced mowing.
- Foraging sites for blackberries (Bramble), elderberries (Elder trees) among others, could be marked on your biodiversity trail map.



IDENTIFY:
Manage Off-Pitch Grass for Pollinators

Biodiversity

On areas outside of playing pitches, changing the frequency of mowing allows common wildflowers such as Clovers, Knapweed and Bird's-foot-trefoil to naturally grow amongst the longer grass. This is the most cost-effective way to provide food for pollinators and other insects. This is not a reduction in management effort, but a reallocation to provide additional benefits.

Create Short-Flowering '4 to 6-Week Meadows'

- Identify areas of grass where you can reduce mowing to cut on a 4 to 6-weekly rotation.
- If possible, don't mow until mid-April to allow Dandelions to flower.
- Grass cuttings should always be removed after mowing to reduce soil fertility and promote wildflower growth.
- This regime keeps grass at a manageable level, while increasing the growth of wildflowers as a food source for pollinators.
- Such areas could be beside pitches, paths or edging an annual meadow.
- Signage can be used to identify these areas as being managed for biodiversity. Consider using bilingual signage from https://pollinators.ie/resources/
- If necessary, cutting can be increased or decreased depending on the use of the area but if at all possible grass should not be cut from the beginning of March until mid-April (Dandelion peak) or from the end of May until mid-July (Clover peak).
- A path could also be cut through short-flowering meadows for jogging/ walking or as part of a nature trail for club members and the community.

Manage Some Areas as Natural Long-Flowering Meadows

Identify areas of grass that could be left uncut until September – one cut and lift per year.

- Larger land areas around edges of site, such as behind goals, may be suitable for these long-flowering wildflower meadows. Meadows managed in this way will allow wildflowers to bloom throughout the pollinator season and provide undisturbed areas for nesting.
- The annual cut in September should always be removed to reduce soil fertility over time, as wildflowers grow best in less fertile soils. Local farmers may be willing to cut and bale grass to use as fodder for livestock.
- Under this management, over a number of years, the meadow will naturally become more flower-rich with local species that are adapted to the site's conditions – all without spending money on wildflower seed. (Note: if necessary on your site, you can also mow in March to remove heavy winter growth).
- Consulting with club members and keeping them informed of plans can allay fears that changed mowing regimes are due to lack of management. Signage can also be used to identify areas as deliberate. See https://pollinators.ie/resources/ for signage templates and consider using bilingual signage throughout your club.

See https://pollinators.ie/sports-clubs for more tips, advice and examples of managing off-pitch grass in your club for pollinators

IDENTIFY:
Maintain Native Flowering Hedgerows

Biodiversity

Manage native hedgerows around the club so that they flower each year.

Native hedgerows line the perimeter of many sport clubs and are important corridors for pollinators and other wildlife and help maintain linkages within the landscape. Flowering hedgerows that contain Willow, Whitethorn, Blackthorn and Hazel provide vital food in spring when bees emerge from hibernation. Bramble is a good source of food in summer, and Ivy in autumn. Bumblebees often nest in long grass at the base of hedgerow.

For more tips and advice on managing native hedgerows around the club so that they flower each year, see https://pollinators.ie/sports-clubs/

Hedgerow Management to Encourage Flowering

- Where possible, cut hedgerows on a minimum 3-year cycle. Cutting annually stops the hedgerow flowering and fruiting.
- Where hedgerows must be cut for road safety, allow the inside to flower.
- Let some hedgerows grow wild, side-trimming only.
- Where possible, cut in rotation rather than all at once – this will ensure some areas of hedgerow will always flower (Blackthorn flowers in March, while Whitethorn will appear white in May).
- Hedges managed for pollinators should ideally be cut between November and January.
- If they must be cut outside of this, cut sections in rotation, so some areas remain undisturbed. Let some Bramble and Ivy grow in hedgerows, as key food sources in summer and autumn.
- Having a 1.5-2m grass border at the base (that is not cut or sprayed) will provide nesting habitat for bumblebees, as well as allowing wildflowers to grow and provide additional food.

Hedgerow Management for Healthy Waters

- If your club grounds are adjacent to a water course (even a drain) maintaining a hedgerow has co-benefits for water quality by providing a buffer that reduces overland run-off of pesticides (in the case of sports clubs, most often herbicides), sediment and fertilisers.
- This buffering effect is further enhanced by leaving 1.5 to 2m of vegetation uncut at the base of the hedge.
- Hedgerows also provide welcome shade for fish and insect life and help to control water temperatures in hot weather. Hedgerows can also provide some woody debris that allows smaller fish to hide from predators.
- If there happens to be a river adjacent to the grounds, natural hedges and bordering scrub and vegetation help to stabilise the riverbank and reduce bank erosion, which can result in damage to instream habitat.

See https://pollinators.ie/sports-clubs for more tips, advice and examples of managing your club's nature flowering hedgerows for biodiversity.

IDENTIFY:

Plant Biodiversity-Friendly Trees, Shrubs and Flowers

Biodiversity

For more tips and advice on planting for biodiversity, including recommendations of native trees and pollinator-friendly plants and shrubs, see https://pollinators.ie/sports-clubs

Plant Biodiversity-Friendly Trees Around the Club

- Planting additional pollinator-friendly trees provides a vital source of food, particularly in spring, and are low maintenance once planted.
- Willow is a very important food source in early spring when bumblebee queens emerge from hibernation. Having Grey/Goat Willow, or other native species like Blackthorn, Whitethorn, Rowan, Crab Apple or Wild Cherry as individual mature trees around the grounds will provide important food for pollinators.
- Trees can be planted as a biodiversity-friendly mini-woodland or linear strip of native trees along a biodiversity walking trail.
- See https://pollinators.ie/sports-clubs/ for simple and practical planting ideas and advice.

Make Flower Beds and Containers Pollinator Friendly

- Perennial flower beds placed at the club entrance or around club buildings will grow back year after year and provide a vital pollinator food source. Incorporating some pollinator-friendly plants in window boxes, hanging baskets or other containers can be very colourful and brighten up any community building.
- Contact your local Tidy Towns, Men's shed or other community groups about collaboration opportunities.
- For more extensive pollinator-friendly plant lists – for trees, shrubs, perennials and bulbs – please see the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan Planting Code at https://pollinators.ie/resources (under 'Flyers & Pollinator-friendly Plant Lists').

Plant a New Native Hedgerow

- On new sites or where you are considering replacing fencing, or an old non-native hedge, it is worth considering planting a new native hedgerow.
- The ideal native hedgerow is made up of 75% Whitethorn and 25% of at least four other species, for instance: Blackthorn, Hazel, native Willows, Wild Cherry, White beam, Spindle, Rowan, Wild Roses, or Elder provide important food for pollinators.
- To be pollinator-friendly, a native hedgerow must be managed so that as much as possible is allowed to flower each year.

  See https://pollinators.ie/sports-clubs/ for guidance and for further suggestions.

See https://pollinators.ie/sports-clubs for more tips, advice and examples on planting biodiversity-friendly trees, shrubs and flowers in your club.

IDENTIFY:
Reduce Use of Herbicides

Biodiversity

Insecticides can harm pollinators directly, killing them outright or affecting their behaviour and ability to complete their life cycle. Fungicides and herbicides harm pollinators indirectly: herbicides can greatly reduce the wildflowers pollinators depend on for food, while fungicides can increase the toxicity of some insecticides.

Any herbicide usage in your club should adhere to the relevant policies in place in Ireland. Taking small steps to reduce the use of herbicides can help pollinators.

Consider strimming instead of spraying around fencing, goals and lights. Do not spray the base of trees or hedgerows.

- Consider mowing or strimming as an alternative to using pesticides.
- Avoid spraying non-mowed areas where wild lowers are growing or could grow.
- Where weed control is necessary, pull or use selective spot treatment where possible.
- Avoid spraying pollinator nesting sites such as soil banks or stone walls.

Where sports clubs are near rivers or streams, it is worth reconsidering pesticide use.

- A single drop of pesticide can breach the drinking water limit in a small stream for 30km.
- Avoid spraying chemicals close to drains and watercourses.

IDENTIFY:
Reduce Use of Herbicides

Biodiversity

Always follow pesticide instructions and follow the pollinator-friendly pesticide code:

- ✓ Check the label and select pesticides that are less harmful to pollinators.
- ✓ Always read, understand, and follow the product label instructions fully.
- ✓ Treat only the target area .
- ✓ Spot-treat rather than use blanket sprays.
- ✓ Follow the buffer zone instructions on the product label.
- ✓ Leave areas of pollinator-friendly habitat free from all pesticides. These include areas of clover or wildflowers, the base of hedgerows, and any natural areas.
- ✓ Store and dispose of pesticides and their containers properly
- ✓ Minimize spray drift to non-target areas by:
  - Using equipment that reduces drift.
  - Checking the weather forecast before application and being mindful of changing conditions.
  - Ensuring you spray when the wind is blowing away from pollinator-friendly habitat.

- ✗ Do not apply pesticides to bees or other pollinating insects.
- ✗ Do not spray flower-rich areas (including weeds) when flowers are in bloom and providing food for bees. Plants we might consider weeds (e.g., Dandelions, Vetches, Clovers, Dead-Nettles, Knapweed) are important food sources, as they provide high quality pollen and nectar for bees.
- ✗ Do not apply pesticides to areas that have been identified as important nesting areas for pollinators.
- ✗ Do not apply pesticides to standing water.
- ✗ Do not spray if rain or strong wind is forecast in the next 48 hours.
- ✗ Do not fill a sprayer directly from a water course or carry out mixing, loading or other handling operations beside a water course.

IDENTIFY:
Provide Nesting Places for Wild Bees

Biodiversity

Creating good nesting habitat for wild bees is simple and inexpensive. For more tips and advice on providing nesting places for wild bees, see https://pollinators.ie/sports-clubs/

Provide Safe Nesting Sites for Bumblebees

Bumblebees nest in long or tussocky grass.

- Leave long grass along the base of hedgerows uncut from March until October
- Bumblebee colonies die off in October/November (while mated queens go into hibernation for winter), so it is okay to cut or manage these areas in late autumn/winter.
- Leave at least a 1.5-2m grass border at the base of hedgerows (that is not sprayed). This longer grass will provide nesting habitat for bumblebees, as well as allowing wildflowers to grow to provide additional food.

Provide Safe Nesting Sites for Cavity-Nesting Solitary bees

Our 15 species of cavity-nesting solitary bees make their nests in existing cavities in south-facing wood, stone walls, masonry or commercially available bee nest boxes.

There are certainly challenges in going herbicide-free that clubs should be aware of - it is more time and labour-intensive than using harmful herbicides and there is a cost involved for the club in purchasing the vinegar and salt supplies each year. However, we are sticking with the herbicide-free approach in Mullingar Shamrock. The solution works and the benefits for our natural environment are more than worth the effort.

What were the challenges?

Our 62 species of mining solitary bees nest by making tiny burrows in bare earth (soil, sand, clay and peat). They will nest in flat well-drained areas, but generally prefer south/east-facing sheltered banks.

Where there is south or east-facing exposed bare earth, allow these areas to remain, and remove vegetation that appears in future.

What were the challenges?

A patch of nettles could be allowed to grow in safe corners of sports grounds to provide a habitat for breeding butterflies. The common nettle is the food plant for caterpillars of the Small Tortoiseshell, Red Admiral, Comma and Peacock Butterfly

What were the challenges?

Maintaining and planting pollinator-friendly native plants and trees close to nesting sites can be of great benefit to wild bees. The image belows shows the foraging distance of some of Ireland's wild bees.

See https://pollinators.ie/sports-clubs/ for more tips, advice and examples.

IDENTIFY:
Grow Your Club or County Colours

Biodiversity

Plant a pollinator-friendly bed in your club colours. A bed of Rudbeckia, a pollinator-friendly perennial, could be a good option for Young Munster RFC, or a Killkenny club, for example.

Examples of pollinator-friendly perennials:

BLUE

- Catmint (Nepeta species)
- Bellflowers (Campanula species)
- Comfrey (Symphytum 'Hidcote Blue')
- Globe Thistle (Echinops species)
- Viper's Bugloss (Echium vulgare)

WHITE

- Perennial Candytuft (Iberis sempervirens)
- Perennial Phlox (Phlox paniculate)
- Common Star of Bethlehem (Ornithogalum umbellatum)
- Baneberry (Actaea japonica)
- Sweet Alyssum (Lobularia maritima)

GREEN

- Spurge (Euporbia species)
- Green hellebore (Helleborus viridis)
- Common asparagus (Asparagus officinalis)
- Fennel (Foeniculum vulgare)
- Stipa 'Ponytails' (Stipa tenuissima): grass to provide structure

PURPLE

- Lavender (Lavandula species)
- Wallflower 'Bowles's Mauve' (Erysimum 'Bowles's Mauve')
- Lamb's Ear (Stachys byzantine)
- Lungwort (Pulmonaria species)
- Michaelmas daisy (Aster 'Little Carlow')

YELLOW

- Yellow Wallflower (Erysium 'Bredon')
- Goldenrod (Solidago species)
- Coneflower (Rudbeckia species)
- Tickseed (Coreopsis species)
- Mullein (Verbascum species)

RED

- Oriental Poppy (Papaver orientale)
- Helen's Flower (Helenium species)
- Dahlias ('Bishop of Llandaff')
- Coneflower (Echinacea purpurea)
- Gladiolus Variety (Gladiolus species)

IDENTIFY:
Neighbours in Nature

Biodiversity

Below are some tips for club Green Teams who want to focus their biodiversity actions around the theme of 'Neighbours in Nature'.

Learning about your Neighbours in Nature

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT YOUR LOCAL WILDLIFE

- Conduct a baseline survey to identify priority species and habitats present on your club ground.
- Approach volunteers from local nature conservation groups to help or collaborate with other community groups or Tidy Towns organisations.
- Involve staff and members in biodiversity surveys. There are many mobile apps available that will help you identify plants, insects and wildlife.
- If your Green Team is developing a detailed club or community biodiversity action plan and you need additional support, contact your local authority.
- Consult the Green Club *Useful Wildlife Identification* infosheet below.

CONNECT PEOPLE, PLACE AND NATURE

- Consult your local history group or use the placenames list at the end of this document to identify whether the name of any townlands or areas around your club and community are linked to particular elements of the natural world or local heritage.
- Consider whether any of your biodiversity actions could celebrate these centuries-old links between people, places and nature.

ADOPT A GREEN CLUB BIODIVERSITY SPECIES MASCOT

- Are there any native bird, plant, insect or wildlife species in your area that your Green Team wants to champion, celebrate or protect? Consider focusing your biodiversity actions and communications around this species.

Useful Wildlife Identification Links

Bumblebees, solitary bees and hoverflies

https://pollinators.ie/record-pollinators/id-guides/

Wildflowers

www.wildflowersofireland.net

Birds

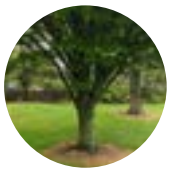
https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/identify-a-bird/
https://birdwatchireland.ie/irelands-birds-birdwatch-ireland/list-of-irelands-birds/

Butterflies

https://learn.biodiversityireland.ie/courses/irelandsbutterflies https://butterfly-conservation.org/butterflies/identify-a-butterfly

Moths

https://butterfly-conservation.org/moths/identify-a-moth
https://www.mothsireland.com/



Trees

https://www.treecouncil.ie/native-irish-trees https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/british-trees/a-z-of-british-trees/

Insects

https://www.buglife.org.uk/bugs/bug-identification-tips/

Invasive Species

https://invasives.ie/resources/identification-guides/
http://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/

Connecting People, Places & Nature

Gaeilge	Béarla
abhainn	river
achadh	field
aiteann	furze, gorse
áth	ford
bá	bay
bán	white; lea-ground, grassy
béal	opening, approach, mouth
beith	birch
buaile	cattle-fold, summer-pasture
buí	yellow
bun	(river-)mouth, bottom(-land)
caol	a narrow; marshy stream
cluain	meadow, pasture
cnoc	hill
cnocán	hillock
coill	wood
coillín	little wood
coimín	common land; little hollow, glen
coll	hazel
com	hollow, coomb
comar	confluence; meeting-place
cora	weir, stone-fence, ford
corr	round or pointed hill, hollow
crann	tree
craobh	tree, branch
cruach	stack, peak
cuan	bay, harbour, recess
cuas	hollow; cove, creek
cuileann	holly
currach	marsh
dair	oak
dearg	red, red one
doire	(oak-)wood, grove, thicket
doirín	little oak-wood
dubh	black
eanach	marsh
eiscir	ridge
faiche	green (ainmfhocal/noun)
feadán	watercourse, stream
fearann	land
fiach	raven
fiodh	wood
fionn	white
gabhar	goat
gamhain	calf
gaoth	wind
gaoth	inlet, estuary
garraí	garden, court
garrán	grove
geal	bright, white
glas	green, grey
glas	stream
gleann	glen
gléib	glebe
gob	point, headland
goirtín	little field

Gaeilge	Béarla
gort	field
gráig	hamlet; cattle-steading
gráinseach	grange, monastic farm
gréach	rough pasture-land
imleach	marginal-land, border-land
inis	island; river meadow
iolar	eagle
iúr	yew-tree
lao	calf
leaca	hillside
leamhán	elm-tree
léana	water-meadow
learga	hillside
leitir	hillside
liath	grey, grey place, grey horse
lios	ring-fort, enclosure
loch	lake; inlet
log	hollow
luachair	rushes, rushy place
machaire,maigh	plain
meall	knoll
mín	smooth or mountain pasture
móin	bogland
muine	thicket
Mullach,	hilltop
mullán	hillock; green field
oileán	Island
páirc	field
poll	hole, pool, (tidal-)stream
port	port, bank, fort
riabhach	streaked, grey
rinn	point, headland
ros	wood; promontory
rua	red; red place
saill	willow-(tree)
scairt	thicket
sceach	hawthorn, thorn-bush
seisceann	swamp, bog
sionnach	fox
sliabh	mountain, moor
srath	holm, river-meadow, valley-bottom
tamhnach	arable place, field
taobh	(hill-)side
tír	land, territory
tobar	well
tóchar	causeway
tóin	bottom(-land)
tor	tall rock, steep rocky height; bush, clump
trá	strand, beach
tuairín	little paddock, little (cultivated) field, little pasture
tuar	paddock, (cultivated) field, pasture
tulach	hillock
uinse	ash-tree
uisce	water

Connecting People, Places & Nature

Gaeilge	Béarla

Gaeilge	Béarla

GUIDANCE: Planting Guide For Biodiversity Friendly Trees

Biodiversity

Planting new trees is not a difficult job, but one to get right, to ensure the trees have the best start in life. The most important considerations are: root health, depth of the hole you dig, soil conditions and aftercare.

What you will need:

- **A clean spade (ensure it's clean to avoid invasive species and pathogens)**
- **Tree sapling**
- **Gardening gloves**
- **Watering can**
- **If you're planting on stony soil you will need compost or mulch (such as bark chips or straw bales.)**

Tree Care Pre-Planting

- The **bare-root** saplings (saplings where there is no soil on the roots) are dispatched in plastic bags.
- When your trees arrive, don't open up the bag until you are ready to plant.
- Make sure they are tied tightly (to keep in the moisture).
- Keep trees upright once you receive them.
- If you are not ready for immediate planting, store the trees in a dark cool area, sheltered from frost and wind. Tree should be planted withing two weeks of receiving them.
- If the roots look like they're drying out, give them water to keep them moist (no more than a litre or two at a time.

Top Tip!

Every local community has horticulturists and tree planting experts. It is good to bring them in to support you where possible.

All good local garden centres and nurseries have experienced, knowledgeable staff members that will be able to guide you directly.

Step 1 - Choose your spot

- Trees thrive in healthy soil where they will have a lot of light.
- Ensure there are no electricity or telephone wire overhead or drains or electric cables below your planting areas.
- If your planting area is overgrown, cut the grass short and weed it.
- Avoid planting under existing trees, as shade and lack of water will seriously restrict growth.
- Allow plenty of distance from existing hedges.
- Avoid planting in weed-infested soil, compacted ground filled with buried rubble or very poor-draining area.

Step 2 - Tree & Ground Preparation

- Plant your trees as soon as possible after you receive them.
- Stand the tree upright in water to ensure its roots are damp. Make sure to give the roots good watering 30-60 minutes before planting.
- Remove any wrapping from the trees when you're ready to plant.
- Dig a planting hole that is no deeper than the roots, but is ideally at least three times the diameter of the root system.
- Break the soil up with a fork before planting.

SPACING OF TREES

- The trees can be planted between 1 to 5 metres apart, depending on your space and plan. A c.2m spacing is usual.

Step 3 - Planting

- Plant with the top of the rootball at soil level.
- Backfill around the rootball with the excavated soil, very gently shaking the tree a little to help the soil settle around the roots.
- Then gently use your foot to firm all around the rootball and ensure there is good contact between the roots and the soil and that the roots aren't sitting in an airpocket.
- Lightly fork the around the planting.

Additional Resources

https://www.treecouncil.ie/

https://pollinators.ie/planting-native-trees-for-pollinators/

https://easytreesie.com/

Aftercare

WATERING Generally, trees will adapt to natural conditions so shouldn't need much watering. However, in the first year, ensure trees are watered during dry spells.

WEEDING & MULCHING Keeping an area immediately around the trees clear of weeds and grass for the first 2-3 years will reduce competition for moisture and nutrients. You can also suppress weeds with natural mulch, such as bark chips or straw bales.

MOWING & STRIMMING Make sure everyone involved in maintenance of the space knows where your trees have been planted to avoid mowing or accidental damage. Consider signage if necessary

PROTECTION Protect from deer, mice or rabbit damage where necessary by using tree spirals, chicken wire guards or similar.

PRUNING & THINNING If pruning and thinning is necessary in later years or for early management & shaping, consult local horticulturists and tree planting experts or https://www.teagasc.ie/media/website/crops/forestry/advice/Teagasc_silvicultural_guidelines _Broadleaves.pdf

ACT:
Biodiversity Action Plan

Club Name:

Date:

No.	Action Details	Person(s) Responsible	Targeted Completion Date
Manage			
Create			
Communicate			

Review	
Review Date:	
Has the club increased the area of habitat set aside for wildlife?	
Have the number of species recorded or observed on-site increased since our last survey?	
Has awareness of biodiversity in the club improved?	

Completed by:

ACT:
Biodiversity Action Plan *SAMPLE*

Biodiversity

Club Name:

Date:

No.	Action Details	Person(s) Responsible	Targeted Completion Date
Manage			
1	Reduce mowing on the grass behind the railway goals to once every six weeks	TMcD	Start immediately
Create			
2	Plant native trees along the perimeter fencing	TMcD, JS, CNíL, PK	Oct 2024
Communicate			
3	Seek funding for and install bilingual biodiversity information signage along the club walkway	CNíL, PK	May 2024
4	Hold a family nature walk evening for the summer solstice	JS	June 2025

Review	
Review Date:	
Has the club increased the area of habitat set aside for wildlife?	Yes. New wildflower areas and native trees planted.
Have the number of species recorded or observed on-site increased since our last survey?	Don't know. Haven't organised a follow up Green Team survey yet.
Has awareness of biodiversity in the club improved?	Yes. Big numbers at the family nature walk and the new signage has improved visibility and knowledge of plants, birds and insects in the club.

Completed by: