

Our Living Planet

What are pollinators?

Pollinators are a very important set of animals that help many plants complete their reproductive cycle. Many insects, birds, and bats eat nectar from plants. Whilst they are eating, they can get pollen grains stuck on their bodies. When they move to another plant for more nectar, the pollen drops off them, leading to pollination of that plant. This transfer of pollen between plants allows them to exchange genetic material, an important first step in a process which eventually produces seeds and new plants.



Any animal that helps move pollen in this way is known as a pollinator.

Why are pollinators important?

Around 90% of flowering plants and one third of crops humans eat rely on animals for pollination. That means that one in every third bites of food we take has pollinators to thank for it ending up on your plate.

By helping these plants, pollinators also support ecosystems to stay healthy. This in turn helps keep the air clean, stabilises soils and provides food and shelter to a whole host of wildlife.

How can we help pollinators?

Numbers of many pollinator species such as bees are sadly in decline due to factors such as habitat loss, pollution, disease, and pesticide use.

It is therefore really important to protect these species and help them by providing them with the things they need such as suitable habitat and food.

One way we can do this is by growing plants that pollinators like to feed on. Some of the best plants for the job are species that make up native wildflower meadows. You can do your bit to help, as many of these flowers can be grown from seed at home.



Make your own origami paper plant pot

These plant pots are easy to make from old newspaper which means they're biodegradable so won't add to unnecessary plastic waste.



Step 1: Take a large sheet of newspaper and rip it in half. Turn the newspaper so it is landscape.



Step 2: Fold it in half, left to right.



Step 3: Fold it in half again, bottom to top, into a quarter size.



Step 4: Fold it in half again, left to right.



Step 5: Now fold the bottom right corner up to the middle along the spine.



Step 6: Flip it over onto the other side and repeat the same fold as Step 5.



Step 7: Open the wings up to make a smooth shape like this. Do this on both sides.



Step 8: Fold the wings into the crease in the centre.



Step 9: Fold them in again.



Step 10: Flip it over and repeat Steps 8 and 9. It should look like this when you are done.



Step 11: Fold the flaps down and crease them well.



Step 12: Now you can open up your pot! Make sure to square the bottom so it can sit well.

Your pot is now ready to fill with soil and plant seeds. If you don't have any wildflower seeds why not try planting seeds from some of the food you can find at home. You can get seeds from peppers, tomatoes, watermelon and lots of other fruits and veg.

