

WHY BEE FRIENDLY MONMOUTHSHIRE?

The **Bee Friendly Monmouthshire** group was formed in the autumn of 2013 from the need to do something to help implement the Welsh Government's **Action Plan for Pollinators** at county level. This Action Plan was drawn up to address the dramatic decline in the numbers of honey bees, bumblebees, solitary bees and other pollinating insects such as butterflies, moths and hoverflies.

Factors contributing to this decline

- Habitat destruction – loss of hedgerows, woodland and wild areas, and the relentless spread of built-up areas into the countryside.
- Loss of natural food sources such as orchards, hedgerow plants and wildflower meadows, 97% of which have been lost in the past 50 years.
- Choosing to grow hybrid, double flowers that please the eye but provide no nectar or pollen for insects – many annual bedding plants, for example.
- The introduction of intensive farming methods which have transformed the landscape.
- The increased use of insecticides which harm beneficial insects and pests alike.
- The widespread use of herbicides to clear weeds and undergrowth, destroying important habitats for wildlife.
- An increase in diseases and parasites that affect bees.
- Disruption in the seasons and weather patterns caused by climate change.

The value of pollinating insects

- These insects perform a vital service to the environment - **POLLINATION** - which ensures the reproduction of flowering plants and produces seeds and fruits that we and other animals eat.
- The insects are vital to the food chain; they feed on the nectar and pollen produced by flowers, and birds and small mammals feed on them. The drop in insect numbers has had a severe knock-on effect on populations of wild birds and small mammals.
- Pollinators maintain the ecological balance of nature
- They help to pollinate food crops. One third of the food we eat (nearly all our fruit and vegetables in fact) is pollinated by insects. Without pollinating insects our diets would be very limited and lacking in important nutrients.
- Pollination by insects also improves crop yield and makes a huge contribution to our economy. The insects are worth their weight in gold!

Action plan for Bee Friendly Monmouthshire

- Raise public awareness about the plight of the pollinators and their importance.
- Work with schools to educate children about pollinating insects.
- Encourage organic pollinator-friendly gardening.
- Support pollinator-friendly planting projects in the community.
- Work with other organisations to promote the restoration of flower-rich habitats.