

The *Green Infrastructure Action Plan for Pollinators in South-east Wales* is a Welsh Government Nature Fund project which aims to reverse the decline in pollinators. The project covers the local authorities of Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire and Torfaen.



*Managing School Grounds for Pollinators* - An introduction for head teachers is part of a series of guidance booklets produced to accompany the *Action Plan*. Other titles available in the series are:

- Managing Green Space for Pollinators* - An introduction for managers
- Managing Residential Areas for Pollinators* - An introduction for estates managers
- Managing Highway Verges for Pollinators* - An introduction for highway managers

More information is available at:

- <http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/>
- <http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/>
- <http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/>
- <http://www.torfaen.gov.uk/>



# MANAGING SCHOOL GROUNDS FOR POLLINATORS

*An introduction for head teachers*



Green Infrastructure Action Plan  
for Pollinators in South-east Wales



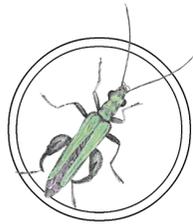
In Wales the main groups of pollinators are bees and wasps, flies (including hoverflies), butterflies and moths, and beetles. Collectively these are responsible for pollinating our crops and about 75% of flowering plants in Wales. Ultimately, human life on Earth depends on pollinators.

It is widely accepted that pollinators are declining in Wales, Britain and Europe, and have been for many years. The main causes are loss of flower-rich habitats and use of pesticides in agriculture. They may also be declining due to pests and diseases, spread of non-native species and climate change.



By adopting appropriate management practices, we can help to support pollinators in both rural and urban areas.

Managing for pollinators helps fulfil the legal and moral duties of Local Authorities for the well-being of future generations. It can provide cost-effective solutions to grounds maintenance, engagement with community groups and individuals, whilst also resulting in a visually pleasing and ecologically valuable townscape and countryside.



## How to Improve Areas for Pollinators

In general, a greater variety of habitats and plants will support a more diverse range of pollinators. The following measures will help to reverse the decline in pollinators:

- increasing diversity of flower-rich resources;
- increasing abundance of food resources; and
- extending the availability of flower-rich resources throughout the life cycle of pollinators.

Action Plans based on different Green Infrastructure (GI) types and a Management Actions Toolkit have been developed to achieve these measures.



**Poor pollinator habitat:**  
Relatively uniform area of long grass with few or no flowers:  
**PEGS score 1-2**



**Moderate pollinator habitat:** Road verge with lots of flowers of 2 main colours adjacent to playing field:  
**PEGS score 4-5**



**Good pollinator habitat:** Unimproved grassland of varied structure adjacent to broad-leaved woodland:  
**PEGS score 8-9**

## The Future for Pollinators

Pollinators do not recognise borders so working across existing local authority areas will enhance the wider pollinator resource and improve pollinator habitat connectivity and populations throughout South-east Wales. In addition, sharing machinery and expertise will mean more can be done with existing resources.

Whilst the local authorities are important in the management of their land for pollinators, wildlife trusts, community groups and other organisations will be important to help implement the actions and monitor changes in pollinator populations. Actions can also be taken on private land.

A local authority Pollinator Policy will guide the planning process and ensure that there will be adequate provision for the future. Targets will also be set by the local authority which must be considered when developing actions for specific areas.

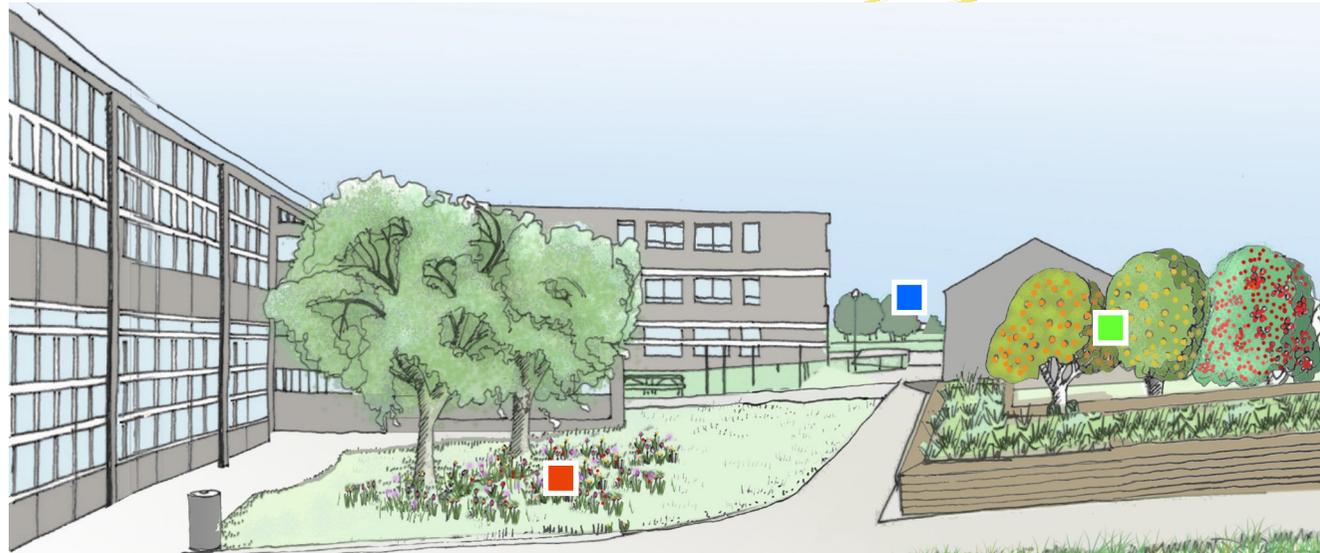


# Managing School Grounds for Pollinators

**School grounds** offer great opportunities both to provide food resources for pollinating insects and requirements for completion of their lifecycles, and to educate students about the importance of pollinators to food production and biodiversity. Improving the way school grounds are managed can also be linked to various parts of the curriculum.

■ **Long Grass with Bulbs** - a range of spring flowering bulbs provide food resources early in the year and should be left uncut until later in the summer.

■ Clipped and formal hedging may be appropriate at entrances and along boundaries – in other areas cutting later, less frequently and not all at once can provide better food resources.

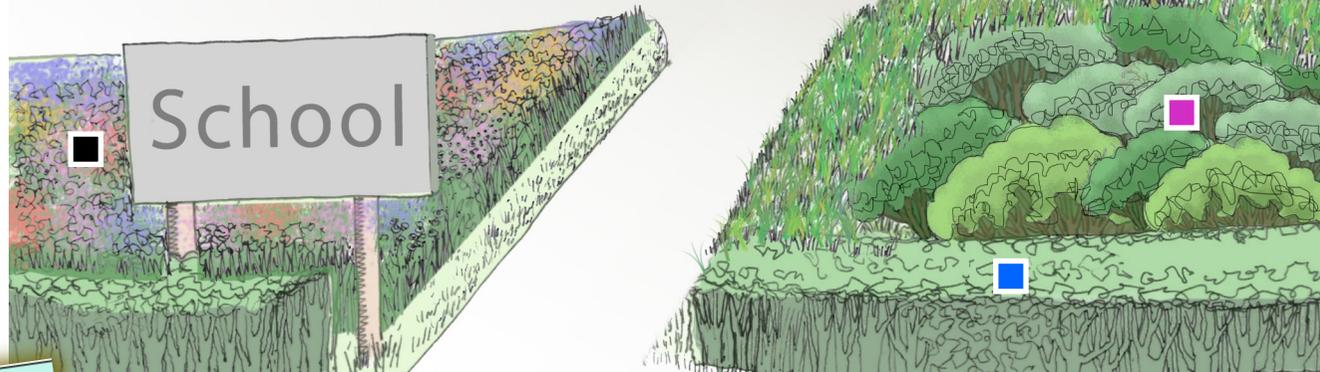


■ **Shrub Planting** - more traditional formal planting beds can still be very important with the correct choice of plants, especially if they can be allowed to flower and are maintained sensitively and without chemicals.

■ **Food Growing Area** - growing vegetables and planting fruit trees and bushes provides pollen and nectar for pollinators and reinforces their important role in supplying our food, as well as healthy snacks.

## Management Actions Toolkit

The GI Action Plan provides details of the different management actions (and codes) suggested for any site, as shown in the 'Management Actions Toolkit'.



■ **Wildflowers** - pure flower mixes provide a good source of nectar and pollen, for long periods and can be visually attractive – while more expensive than some treatments these are well suited to small, high profile areas.

CODE	ACTION	AIMS	BENEFITS TO POLLINATORS			
			BENEFITS	LIKELIHOOD OF SUCCESS	COST	TOTAL (3-9)
G5	Remove cuttings from site and dispose of centrally or at an appropriate place on site.	Produce species rich grassland for pollinators with more flowers	✓✓	++	££	6

For each site a variety of actions should be implemented with consideration of adjacent sites and management with the aim of achieving year-round resources for pollinators.

The actions include grass cutting, hedgerow treatment, etc.

**Before** deciding what to do with any space, the **GIS database** can be used to understand the site's characteristics and constraints (e.g. designations). The value of what may already be there should also be assessed using **PEGS** - see the next page...



# Pollinator Evaluation Grading System (PEGS)

When planning green infrastructure projects for pollinators, it is important to assess the value of the existing resource before making changes, so that poor resources can be targeted for improvement and good resources are not accidentally removed.

Pollinators have a wide range of requirements and assessing the value of a habitat is complex. PEGS is a simple form that can be used to assess a site for its potential for pollinators as follows:

SCORE	VALUE FOR POLLINATORS
0-3	Poor value for pollinators, high potential for improvements
4-7	Moderate value for pollinators, room for some improvement
8-12	Good value for pollinators, maintain

SCORE	0	1	2	SCORE
<b>HABITATS</b>	Amenity grassland Bracken... (see Action Plan for full list)	Flowering crops Heathland Hedges Marsh...	Broad-leaved woodland and scrub Orchards...	
<b>ADJACENT HABITATS WITHIN 25 M</b>	Score as for habitat; select highest score	Score as for habitat; select highest score	Score as for habitat; select highest score	
<b>VEGETATION STRUCTURE</b>	Uniform in height and space	Variable in height or in patchiness (not both)	Varied in height and lots of different patches	
<b>% VEGETATION COVERED WITH FLOWERS</b>	Less than 5 %	5-20 %	More than 20 %	
<b>NO. DIFFERENT COLOURS OF FLOWERS PRESENT (E.G. BLUE, PINK, RED, YELLOW)</b>	0 or 1 colour only	2-3	4 or more	
	Absent	Small amounts	Lots	

# The Green Infrastructure Action Plan

The *Action Plan* is a collection of 'tools' to help guide a range of users to select one or more management options. It can be used for individual sites or strategically across wider areas.



The individual *Green Infrastructure Action Plans* set out the aims, desired outcomes and suitable actions with links to the relevant *Management Actions Toolkit*.

Green infrastructure type: School Grounds	
<b>Aims</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manage school in a way which provides greater benefit for pollinators                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>manage some areas of grassland for pollinators</li> <li>incorporate pollinator-friendly planting into wider design</li> <li>select pollinator-friendly trees and shrubs</li> </ul> </li> <li>Create spaces in which offer an educational resource and where users encouraged to interact with the natural environment, fostering a connection with nature.</li> </ul>
<b>Desired Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School grounds with a diversity of vegetation types used to create spaces and opportunities for play and education, and featuring a range of flower species throughout the year.</li> <li>Planting areas including species that attract and provide for a range of pollinators throughout the year</li> <li>Trees and shrubs that attract and provide for a range of pollinators throughout the year</li> <li>Areas that are attractive to the pupils, staff and visitors and offer the opportunity to interact with and learn about the natural environment</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment steps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess constraints such as need for clear sight lines, sport and recreation, historical context</li> <li>Assess value of existing biodiversity and pollinator resource of grassland, formal beds and tree plantings. The existing species diversity of grassland can be quite rich and left to grow long or may need augmenting with native species</li> </ul>