

Biodiversity for businesses: actions to take on your doorstep

In the face of a rapid decline in biodiversity, here are **10 ways businesses** can have a positive effect on biodiversity, by improving the natural environment around them.

1

Provide food for our pollinators

and give native flora a chance to flourish. Extend the **No Mow May** approach to much later in the year, and cut grass after the flowers have seeded. Natural seeding and disposing of cuttings in the compost rather than leaving them on the ground can help bring areas back to natural levels of fertility, especially where they had previously been artificially fertilised or chemically weeded.

2

Create a water feature.

Remember to check whether the plants you're introducing are native to the area, and if possible, collect a scoop of mud from a local water source to seed your new wildlife haven with snails and other invertebrates. **Don't forget access and exit steps for thirsty creatures too.**

3

Think about providing a variety of habitats by **planting native trees and or growing a hedge.** Check with your local authority that the plants you are introducing **aren't invasive non-native species** (INNS in the UK), or invasive alien species (IAS in Ireland).

4

With a 40% decline in insect species,

formal areas for pollinators can be a great idea. Don't forget to check what's in your 'bee-friendly' seeds, as packs may contain non-native species. **Heavy seeding can change the distribution or genetics of local plants,** so if in doubt, try to gather and plant local seeds.

5

Look at installing bat and bird boxes

to mimic natural breeding sites in built up areas, especially swift boxes, house martin cups and tree sparrow boxes, which are designed to support struggling species. Bird boxes should be around 2m off the ground, and face north-east to south-east, away from winds and direct sunlight. **Seek expert advice on bat boxes,** as the material, spread and space around are all vital for bats to roost, breed and hibernate.

6

Think about seasonal planting

that will provide habitats and flowers for longer times in the year. As well as promoting visiting wildlife, **you'll increase the aesthetic value of your sites** and the mental wellbeing of your workforce and site visitors.

7

If possible, stop using, or at least **decrease the use of herbicides** in favour of trimming, pulling out or cutting back weeds. But remember as well that a weed to you could be a home to a friendly butterfly's caterpillar. Taking this approach rather than blanket spraying with herbicides and pesticides will **help to increase biodiversity and protect** local water courses.

8

Creating habitats doesn't have to be costly:

compost heaps and piles of sticks or stones make great bug hotels that don't need to be maintained. Leave a gap in fences to allow access to hedgehogs, frogs and toads. Planting a **native, mixed hedge** can provide food and shelter for birds, mammals and insects, as well as flight routes for bats.

9

If you are in Ireland, **sign up for the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan** and get on the biodiversity map. With catastrophic declines in pollinator numbers, and third of bee species facing extinction in Ireland, you can **join business supporters in mapping your HQ** and shouting about your pollinator-friendly actions. You can also find 'managed for wildlife' signs to display in the grassland you are managing for pollinators.

10

Before tackling INNS and IAS, **check with the experts.** You can prevent the spread of seeds by air or water and avoid injury to yourself. **Giant Hogweed can cause burns and irritation** that can recur for months or even years, so take advice if you suspect its presence.

How APEM are supporting businesses

APEM are a global environmental consultancy providing independent advice and guidance to support government and environmental regulatory guidelines.

Our integrated expert approach covers all areas of the natural environment, enhanced with innovative remote sensing technology and world-class laboratory services to provide advice reinforced by data excellence.

We support clients with an extensive range of services, including:

- Aerial surveys to identify invasive and non-native plants
- Delivering biodiversity net gain (BNG)
- Expert advice on the identification, monitoring, risk assessment, control and management of invasive non-native species in marine, terrestrial and freshwater environments
- Pathway risk assessments & management of invasive non-native species (INNS)
- Environmental education and training
- Environmental Impact Assessments and Appropriate Assessments

Click [here](#) to find out how APEM can support your ecological needs.

1. No Mow May - <https://www.plantlife.org.uk/discover-wild-plants-nature/no-mow-may>
 3. INNS in the UK - <https://www.noninvasivespecies.org/home/index.cfm> and IAS in Ireland - <https://biodiversityireland.ie/>
 4. 40% decline in insect species - <https://www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/news/2019/february/the-world-s-insect-populations-are-plummeting-everywhere-we-look.html>
 9. All-Ireland Pollinator Plan - <https://pollinators.ie/businesses/>
 10. Giant Hogweed - <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2019/06/giant-hogweed-facts/>
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