

Nectarworks

Imagine a world without strawberries, apples, pears, plums, raspberries, tomatoes, cucumbers, carrots and onions.

Many of our everyday fruit and vegetables depend on bumblebees and other pollinators for their production.

Everyone can help to build a better and brighter future for our bees and wildflowers.



Nectarworks is an AONB Partnership project that aims to enthuse, educate and enable communities to take action for bumblebees and other pollinators by restoring and increasing flower-rich habitats across the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Nectarworks began in May 2013 and will run until March 2017.

Why bees?

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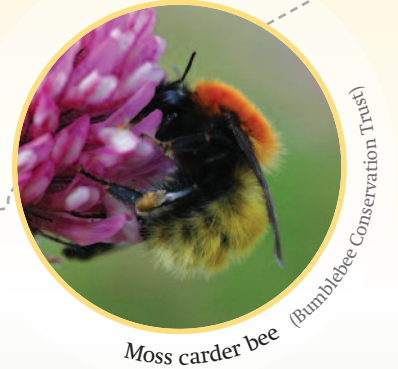
Flowers rely on bees to pollinate them and enable them to set seed. In turn, bees depend upon flowers to provide the nectar and pollen on which they feed. Wildflowers and bumblebees are of immense importance to us all as they are intimately bound to the production of our own food.

A bee's-eye view

Bumblebees and other insect pollinators need a constant supply of nectar and pollen from early spring, through the summer to early autumn. But wildflowers in our natural environment are steadily disappearing and so are the bees and other nectar-feeders.

Nectarworks aims to reverse this trend in the North Pennines by actively working with local communities to conserve, enhance and create bumblebee-friendly habitats. To a bumblebee, areas rich in wildflowers and school or community nectar gardens are the same - jam-packed full of fabulous food!

The rare moss carder bee (*Bombus muscorum*) is closely associated with the most flower-rich hay meadows in the North Pennines.



Moss carder bee (Bumblebee Conservation Trust)

There are three main strands within Nectarworks that together will help to rebuild the network of bumblebee-friendly habitats across the North Pennines.

Rich banks!

The North Pennines boasts some of the most beautiful flower-rich upland hay meadows in the United Kingdom. In times past, every hay field was a mix of colourful flowers and nodding grasses. Over the years our countryside has changed and once commonplace plants have now retreated to field edges, uncut steep banks, river banks and roadside verges. Largely ignored, we are in danger of losing these flower-rich areas as they scrub over or are damaged through lack of management.

To help look after and enhance these valuable habitats we are:

- Locating and surveying flower-rich banks in the North Pennines.
- Talking to farmers to agree and instigate appropriate management of these bumblebee-friendly places.
- Using specially-designed and manufactured machinery to harvest seed in 'green hay' from suitable sites and spreading it on nearby meadows.
- Establishing a monitoring regime to assess the impact of management.

Harvesting seed from a steep bank





Garden bumblebee

Willing partners in smallholders

Many people in the North Pennines live and work on small plots of land. Some of these smallholders look after the best remaining flower and nectar-rich hay meadows in the area. Others are really keen to restore their meadows to their former glory and make them more wildlife-friendly.

To support these enthusiastic and willing partners we are:

- Running workshops to help identify the needs of smallholders and facilitate their resolution.
- Establishing a community network especially for smallholders in the North Pennines area.
- Working with scythers to enable management of grasslands that are inaccessible to machinery and to reinvigorate this useful, ancient skill.

Gardens and communities

Even in rural areas, gardens can play an important part in the lifecycle of bumblebees. A bumblebee-friendly garden will supply pollen and nectar at times when there is less around in the surrounding countryside, such as in early spring or after the hay is cut.

People can genuinely help to support and increase bumblebee populations in their area by planting a succession of bumblebee-friendly flowers. This not only provides a plentiful source of nectar and pollen from early spring to late summer, but also creates colourful and beautiful gardens that are buzzing with life.

Over the four years of the Nectarworks project we are:

- Working with local primary schools, establishing bumblebee-friendly nectar gardens in their grounds and designing and delivering associated educational activities linked to the National Curriculum.
- Informing and inspiring local residents and community groups to take action for bumblebees in their gardens and community spaces.
- Working with care homes and their residents in the North Pennines to establish nectar gardens in their grounds.



Learning about bumblebees and flowers



The North Pennines is one of England's most special places – a peaceful, unspoilt landscape with a rich history and vibrant natural beauty. In recognition of this it is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The area is also a Global Geopark – an accolade endorsed by UNESCO.



Bee involved!

Everyone can help to build a better and brighter future for our bees and wildflowers. We're aiming to get people involved by:

- Training volunteers and involving them in flower and bumblebee surveys.
- Providing North Pennines-specific advice on bee-friendly gardening.
- Working with local beekeeping groups.
- Running a programme of informative public guided walks, talks and activities.

Want to know more or get involved?

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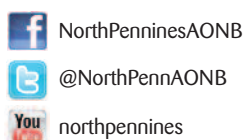


Learning to identify bumblebees



A colourful and diverse garden - a feast for the senses and the bumblebees!

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The AONB Partnership has a Green Tourism award for its corporate office

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