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What are B-Lines?



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B-Lines are a network of flower-rich insect superhighways, mapped and delivered through partnerships. They are designed to reconnect our landscapes, enabling pollinators and other wildlife to move freely, supporting nature's recovery.

Everyone can, and should, get involved to help create the B-Lines network across the UK - to reconnect our fragmented landscape - for pollinators and for people.

A big problem

Bees, butterflies, hoverflies, beetles, and other pollinating insects are essential. They pollinate our crops, enabling us to produce food to eat, and they pollinate wildflowers, bringing colour and life to our countryside.

But our pollinators are in trouble. Over 97% of the UK's wildflower-rich grasslands have been lost since the 1930s. Over time, the wildflower-rich areas where pollinators can thrive have shrunk into tiny, scattered fragments, leaving pollinators unable to move through the landscape, colonise new areas or respond to threats like climate change.

A beautiful solution

B-lines is a network of 3-kilometre-wide insect pathways connecting the best remaining wildflower-rich habitats across the whole of the UK. If 10% of the B-Lines network is filled with patches of flower-rich habitat, it starts to provide the essential stepping stones that all wildlife needs to thrive, not just pollinators.

Regional projects across the UK are working to restore and create pollinator habitat with the help of local partners, with over 2,500 hectares of flower-rich habitat delivered to date.

The success of the B-Lines solution to our pollinator crisis is inspiring others to act. From local authorities to national governments, B-Lines is increasingly referenced as a solution to our pollinator crisis. Wildlife needs your help to reconnect our fragmented landscape and make space for nature's recovery.



© Leanna Dixon



UK B-Lines network. Interactive map accessible at buglife.org.uk



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Wider Benefits of B-Lines

- Wildflower-rich habitat supports some of our most threatened species.
- The soil of wildflower-rich grasslands sequesters more carbon than species-poor grassland and can help combat climate change - some even capture more carbon than woodlands!
- Flower-rich habitats help our farmers, supporting the pollinator populations that help them grow crops, providing a home to the many wasps, beetles, flies and other predators that help to control agricultural pests and improving soil health.
- Livestock grazed on wildflower-rich meadows also have a more varied diet, making healthier animals and healthier food for people.
- By encouraging flowers across our towns and countryside, B-Lines also bring colour and wildlife closer to communities, improving health and wellbeing.

How can I help?

B-Lines is a national effort to create and restore habitats for pollinators. By coordinating the efforts across the UK, the benefits for pollinators are cumulative - the more stepping stones of habitat created in close proximity to each other in B-Lines, the more sustainable local pollinator populations will be. Everyone can help by providing pollinator friendly flowers. Within rural areas we would encourage the use of locally occurring, native wildflowers wherever possible, (not all wildflower seed mixes will be suitable) but within gardens and community spaces pollinator friendly garden plants are also beneficial. Try to source these from organic growers to avoid bringing insecticides into your green space. Even the smallest of spaces with the right plants can give pollinators room to thrive.



© Clare Dinham

Here are some ways that you can help the B-Lines network

Landowners and land managers

Private smallholdings, farms and businesses can make space for pollinators on their land by creating wildflower-rich habitats and increasing the connectivity of these habitats across their land and their neighbours.

Roadsides and verges

The UK's road verge network alone covers thousands of miles and could provide corridors of wildflower-rich habitat throughout often intensively managed landscapes.

Public greenspaces

Restoring or creating wildflower-rich grasslands in parks can revitalise open spaces and turn them into valuable community and wildlife havens. Just reducing the frequency of mowing, removing cuttings, and allowing common wildflowers to grow within tall grass can create valuable new habitat for pollinators. Parks can also be enhanced by adding seed or plug plants using native, local wildflowers where possible.



© Laura Larkin

At home and in your community

Gardens cover over 430,000 hectares of the UK and are a huge untapped resource for our pollinators. Simply mowing your lawn less often will give dandelions, daisies, clovers and Selfheal the chance to flower. Gardens of any size can help with wildflower areas, bee friendly garden plants, fruit trees, hedges, spring bulbs, containers, hanging baskets or wildlife ponds. Local community spaces can also be great places for wildflower patches, with people sharing their skills, experience and enthusiasm.

Find out if you are on a B-Line and help your local pollinators. Why not add your contributions to our interactive B-Lines map:
www.buglife.org.uk/our-work/b-lines

Front cover photos: Common Carder Bumblebee (*Bombus pascuorum*) © Kim Taylor, Six-spot Burnet Moth (*Zygaena filipendulae*) © Liam Olds

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