

## Make tracks for Battle(bee)



Jim Jeffrey Pollinator Strategy Battleby



Delighted to be speaking to so many people who are clearly very much behind helping our pollinators. It is lovely that you invite me hear and I'd like to follow up by inviting you to Battleby to see some of the things we are doing in our famous old grounds.

With that in mind I'm not going to talk about gardening – because frankly you don't need that. So I thought I'd give you an open invitation to visit Battleby – where I work and see what we are doing to help pollinators. Gardeners, Councils, Schools are all doing their bit ... so only right that we also do our bit.

## Battleby Meadow and Pollinators

Created our wildflower meadow in 1994.

Today managed not just for wildflowers but also for bees and other pollinators.

The meadow constantly evolves as species ebb and flow whilst they interact with each other and seasonal conditions.



Many of you will know that our office just outside Perth is a designed landscape, and as such has evolved to reflect tastes over the years. And really it is only in the last couple of decades that we have embraced changing the nature of Battleby and only in the last couple of years that we have had a site that we would really feel does its bit for pollinators.

From amenity grassland ...



So Battleby. A former home for wealthy families in Perth and although it had a team of gardeners, it was managed in what for many was the style of the day. A kitchen garden behind a walled area and open manicured lawns and driveways to greet the visitor. Speciman trees but an awful lot of plain grassed areas

... to  
flower-rich meadow



Our task of late has been to make the grounds as biodiversity rich as possible and central to this has been the development of our Battleby wildflower meadow. Here species rich grassland offers nectar rich food for a range of pollinators.

Come visit the  
**Battleby**  
**Pollinator**  
**Trail**



A big part of the Pollinator Strategy for Scotland is raising awareness of the plight of our pollinators. And at Battleby we have therefore developed a Pollinator Trail to support our flourishing wildflower meadow. Our trail follows a circular route that explains a little about the habitats and species we have at Battleby – INFORMATION BOARDS reveal some of the stories as you go along.

## The red-tailed bumblebee



- A familiar bumblebee, widespread, expanding into northern Scotland.
- Queens and workers are velvety jet black with a deep crimson tail. Males have a yellow collar.
- With time can become sun-bleached.



**What is a bee's favorite sport?    Rug-Bee**

What you will see on our trail is a mixture of habitats and species.

There are 25 species of Bumblebee in UK, of which 22 are found in Scotland. In 2018 summer the red-tailed bumblebee was very evident.

## A useless pile of logs?



No, this is a vital bumblebee habitat.

Pollinators need more than just nectar and pollen from flowers; they need safe places to nest and hibernate.

Under tree roots and at the base of walls and hedges seem to be popular places, as long as they are dry. This pile of logs could be a perfect site for nesting or hibernation.



But regardless of what species we get our aim is to provide more than just a meadow. We want to provide shelter and hibernation sites. Hence we now think very carefully about deadwood at Battleby. These logs, our hedgerows and our woodlands are now managed in a way that helps biodiversity.

## The tidy issue



Setting aside undisturbed land can run counter to many people's vision of good gardening. If good gardening equals helping biodiversity and pollinators then we need to explain to people, particularly in shared areas, why some areas might look a little untidy. Raising awareness and explaining actions is a key part of the Pollinator Strategy.

## Hoverflies ... the gardener's friend



There are over 270 species of hoverfly in the UK -- often brightly coloured with yellow and black bodies.

Others are furry and resemble bumblebees.

The larvae of most hoverflies are predatory, and aphids are their main food. So hoverflies can be a great ally in the control of your garden pests.



**What is a bee's favourite TV channel? Bee Bee C**

When we think of pollinators the temptation is to think of honeybees, bumblebees and perhaps even solitary bees – but hoverflies, wasps, butterflies and moths have a role to play too. And the good news is that species like hoverflies are well and truly the gardeners friend.

## Look up!



While most bumblebee species nest underground, the tree bumblebee prefers - you guessed it - tree holes, but also any suitable structure including bird boxes, holes in the wall, roof spaces, vent pipes and garden sheds.

So you may eventually find it in your garden.

First recorded in Scotland in 2013.



Nature never stands still – changes in land use, climate change, evolution ... it's a constant change is here to stay scenario

Good example is the Tree Bumblebee. Keep an eye on nest boxes for blue tits.

## Premier Inn ?



Red mason bees peak when most fruit trees are in flower.

Excellent pollinators of raspberry, plum, pear and apple.

The female has two facial 'horns' below the antennae, which are used to pack down wet mud in the nest. The underside of her abdomen has a dense mass of orange hairs used to transport pollen.



**What do you call a bee that is always complaining ? A grumble-bee !**

Now the tree bumblebee might pinch the home intended for others. The solitary bee – and the red mason bee – is one that we can actually encourage with a purpose built PREMIER INN. This one even has a viewing chamber. Although social in that they nest next to each other, these excellent pollinators are actually pretty self sufficient.



## Helping pollinators



- Nectar rich flowers
- Year round provision – from dandelions through to flowering ivy
- Habitats that help shelter and hibernation needs
- Bee hotels, sympathetic planting, no pesticides



In addition to the bees, and the hoverflies, we of course have wasps, butterflies and moths. Regardless of which you want to help these basic rules will go a long way to providing a chance to thrive.

## What's next ?

People,  
places ...  
pollinators



One area in which I also work is Green Infrastructure and we are increasingly looking to embed pollinator friendly habitats into our towns and cities. Our Green Infrastructure fund helps not only people and places, but pollinators too

## Green walls and Green roofs



And as well as making best use of the land we have, we are increasingly looking to work with construction and planning industries to influence the next generation of housing, offices and urban developments.

## From Berlin and Milan to Battleby



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**Who is the bees' favorite pop group?**

**The Bee Gees!**



**What's a bee's favorite novel?**

**The Great Gats-bee !**



That's all rather serious, isn't it ?

**Our main objectives are to:**

- Make Scotland more pollinator-friendly;
- Improve our understanding of these vital insects;
- Manage commercial use of pollinators to benefit native species;
- Raise awareness of and encourage action to help bees and other pollinating insects;
- Monitor and evaluate whether they are thriving.

**Copies of the Pollinator Strategy are available at**

**[www.nature.scot](http://www.nature.scot)**



But being serious ... what do we want to achieve to working together and using the Pollinator Strategy for Scotland ?



[www.nature.scot](http://www.nature.scot)



- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HdHLSLAb-k>

