

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

Adopt a No Mow May policy and stop cutting your grass (or just leave a patch unmown if you need some space for recreation etc). **You'll provide food for our pollinators** and give native flora a chance to flourish.

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. 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

To encourage wildlife to visit urban areas, **set up bird feeders** with protein rich food in the spring and seeds in the winter. **Creating habitats isn't always costly:** compost heaps and piles of sticks make great bug hotels that don't need to be maintained. Leave a gap in fences to allow access to hedgehogs, frogs and toads.

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.

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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

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