Attracting pollinators to your garden

Who are the main pollinators in UK gardens?

- Bees – a very diverse group with over 250 species in the UK, some of which are at high risk,
- Wasps – many species are pollinators and some are important predators of insect pests,
- Butterflies – up to 20 species visit our gardens and are showing long term trends of decline,
- Moths – are mostly "unseen" visitors feeding on pollen at night, but an important pollinator,
- Flies – flower visitors like the hoverfly,
- Beetles – exhibit a wide range of diets which can include pollen.

"The hum of the bee is the voice of the garden"

What do pollinators need?

- **Water**
  - A shallow bowl, filled with pebbles, allows insects to land and drink BUT the bowl should be kept **clean**;
  - A pond, of any size, also provides insects with a good water source, and breeding grounds;
- **Habitat**
  - Pollinators need shelter from the elements and predators, and for nesting - a range of plants, shrubs, and evergreens, can provide this shelter;
  - Some bees live in swarms while others live solitary lives and can build homes in fences, walls, and on some plants;
  - When pruning - sawn off branches can be left in the garden to provide insect shelter;
  - Insect hotels can be bought but the Internet provides a wealth of information about building your own;
  - Some butterflies will seek out certain plants to lay their eggs on its leaves;
  - Pollinators need warm temperatures to be active, so plants in sunny spots are essential for foraging, but they may also seek out shady areas after warming up in the sun;
- **Food**
  - Select a range of plants that flower at different times of the year to provide a continuous food supply throughout the growing season;
  - Choose plants known for their abundance of nectar and pollen – these many not necessarily be the "flashy/showy" flowers that people enjoy;
  - Small flowers can attract insects as much as large flowers;
  - Bees tend to like flat open, flowers or trumpet shaped – they also prefer blue, purple, and yellow flowers, and sweet fragrances. They see ultraviolet colours – found on the yellow flowers such as buttercups and black-eyed Susans;
  - Herbs, and flowering vegetables, can also be a good source of pollen;
  - Pond plants can also provide nectar producing flowers.

Avoid using chemical pesticides – look on the Internet for natural pesticides
Try and leave an area of your garden to be "wild"