

Bee Friendly at Troopers Hill

As the weather warms you will see many bees flying around investigating flowers and nesting sites on Troopers Hill. 77 species of bees have been recorded on Troopers Hill. The site is particularly good for bees partly because almost no pesticides have been used on the site.



However bees can easily fly a kilometre or more in search of pollen and nectar and this is where local people can help the survival of future generations of bees, without whom many plants would not be pollinated, substantially reducing our own food supplies and resources for wildlife.

Neonicotinoids, “neonics” for short, are pesticides used to control insect pests that attack plants. In

studies published in 2012 it was shown that bumblebees taking pollen and nectar from plants containing neonics have substantially lower body weights and produce far fewer queen bees who are essential for bumblebees’ survival into the next year. Results of French experiments published at the same time found that the neonics affected the ability of bees to find their way back to the hive, so they died. A study in the UK, Hungary and Germany published in 2017 also found solitary bee egg production was reduced.

If you are planning to buy seeds and plants for your garden please do ask if your supplier can guarantee they do not contain neonicotinoids. The RHS (Royal Horticultural Society) announced in November 2017, that due to a study finding traces of pesticides in plants carrying the “Perfect for Pollinators” label in UK garden centres: “we are further considering how the logo can help gardeners grow the best plants for pollinators, whilst making sure they are well informed of all facts and that risks to our pollinating insects are minimised.”

The RHS went on to write “People who want assurance that they are purchasing plants or seeds grown without the use of synthetic pesticides can use organic nurseries”.

We hope that the worker honeybee pictured, investigating gorse flowers on Troopers Hill, will continue to be able to find her way back to her hive. Please help her and many other pollinators when you choose what to plant in your garden.

Why not come to the next Friends of Troopers Hill conservation work party to see for yourself the range of pollinators that visit this beautiful place and to find out what they need? **There is a conservation work party on the 1st Saturday and 3rd Thursday of every month, starting promptly at 10am and finishing at noon. The volunteers meet by the red slide on Troopers Hill Field.**