

Pollinator Identification Guide

Pollinators come in all shapes and sizes. Some buzz, some are hairy, some fly, and some crawl around on the flowers. Use this guide to identify the pollinators interacting with flower heads during your pollinator timed count.

POLLINATORS THAT BUZZ: IS IT A BEE, WASP OR FLY?

Are its eyes on the side of its head and wide apart or are they big and take up most of the head?



Wide apart



Close together

Are its antenna straight, or do they have an elbow?



Straight



Elbow

Is it hairy?

Yes

No



- Hairy, but less hairy than bumblebees
- Elongated shape
- Colours more muted than bumblebees

IT'S A SOLITARY BEE!



- Some wasps are very dark or very small
- Narrow waste
- Legs are narrow all the way along

IT'S A WASP!



- Tail will be either white, red or ginger
- Very hairy!

IT'S A BUMBLEBEE!



- Wide and flattened hind leg often with pollen in it
- Colour varies from bright orange striped to nearly all black

IT'S A HONEYBEE!



- Slightly shiny or reflective, though some are hairy
- No long tongue (proboscis) sticking out

IT'S A HOVERFLY!



- ~20% of British fly species are pollinators, they could be round, hairy or thin
- If the fly is not a hoverfly, it goes into this category

OTHER FLIES

OTHER POLLINATORS

BUTTERFLIES

Both butterflies and moths drink nectar from flowers using a long tongue called a proboscis. You can tell moths and butterflies apart by how they close their wings. Butterflies close their wings so that they sit vertically whilst moth's wings lie flat against their bodies.



Red admiral
(*Vanessa atalanta*)



Comma
(*Polygonia c-album*)



Buff ermine
(*Spilosoma lutea*)

BETTERLES

Almost 25% of native UK beetles are pollinators. You can identify beetles by the straight line down the middle of the insect which joins their wing cases.

Wasp beetle
(*Clytus arietis*)



Two-spot ladybird
(*Adalia bipunctata*)

SMALL INSECTS (<3MM)

Some insects that pollinate flowers are very small and can be very abundant, such as pollen beetles so make sure to have a good look inside the flowers and estimate how many small insects you see.

Aphid (Aphodoidea)

