

UK govt enlists public in fight to save dwindling bees

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The five steps to help stop the decline of bees urged by the British government's environment department come ahead of a national strategy to protect pollinators to be published later this year.

Five steps can help stop the decline of bees and other pollinators that are vital for the human food supply, Britain urged in a public appeal on Friday.

Governments worldwide have been alarmed by a steep decline in the numbers of bees, which play a fundamental role in ecosystems, notably in the cultivation of much of the human diet.

The steps advised are: to plant more nectar and pollen-rich flowers, shrubs and trees; leave patches of land to grow wild; cut grass less frequently; avoid disturbing or destroying nesting or hibernating insects; and think carefully before using pesticides.

"Pollinators such as bees are vital to the environment and the economy, and I want to make sure that we do all we can to safeguard them," said environment undersecretary Rupert de Mauley.

"That's why we are encouraging everyone to take a few simple actions and play their part in helping protect our bees and butterflies."

The five steps urged by the environment department come ahead of a national strategy to protect [pollinators](#) to be published by the government later this year.

Friends of the Earth welcomed the initiative but urged the government to work to limit pesticide use, which is thought to be a key factor in the decline.

"The government must also play its part by strengthening its upcoming National Pollinator Strategy to address all the threats that bees face, especially by supporting farmers to cut pesticide use and halting the continued loss of vital habitat like meadows," executive director Andy Atkins said.

The British [government](#) has been criticised for opposing European Union restrictions on the use of several neonicotinoids on crops favoured by [bees](#). The chemicals have been linked to declines in bee and bird

populations.

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