

New survey seeks to understand how good UK gardens are for pollinators

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Credit: University of Bristol

The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) and the University of Bristol are asking gardeners to take part in a new study to identify the most commonly planted pollinator-friendly plants and assess how good UK gardens are for pollinators.

The UK's 27 million gardeners, from window sill and urban gardeners to

more traditional horticulturists, are being asked to complete an online [survey](#) that will help the charity better understand how widely gardeners plant for pollinators.

The [survey](#), which runs from July until September, can be found online.

RHS scientists believe the study, the first of its kind in the UK, will help fill a significant gap in the knowledge that exists about the distribution of garden [plants](#) which provide nectar and pollen for pollinators.

Although the RHS has already created a list of plants that are good at attracting and sustaining pollinators - Perfect for Pollinators, the charity is keen to tap into the knowledge and experience of gardeners to enhance the list.

As part of the survey the RHS will be asking gardeners to nominate pollinator-friendly plants not currently listed.

The ultimate aim is to create a 'champions league' of the most pollinator-friendly garden plants.

Dr Katherine Baldock, from the School of Biological Sciences at the University of Bristol, said: "We know from our research that urban areas can be good for bees and other pollinators, and gardens play an important role in providing food sources. The results of this survey are crucial in helping us understand which plants gardeners across the UK grow so that we can prioritise these for future research."

The survey data will be analysed by scientists at the RHS and the University of Bristol over the autumn with the results expected to be available to gardeners by the end of the year.

RHS Plant Health scientist Dr Stephanie Bird, who is leading the

research, said: "It's well known that gardens play an important role in attracting and sustaining pollinators, but to fully understand whether this potential is being realised we need to know which plants are being grown and where, and that's why we're appealing to gardeners, with even the smallest available planting space, to complete the survey.

"Uniquely this research will allow us to take a peek beyond the garden fence to get a better understanding of which of the tens of thousands of plants currently in cultivation are being grown, and what impact the plant choices gardeners make are having on [pollinators](#)."

More information: K. C. R. Baldock et al. Where is the UK's pollinator biodiversity? The importance of urban areas for flower-visiting insects, *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* (2015). [DOI: 10.1098/rspb.2014.2849](https://doi.org/10.1098/rspb.2014.2849)

Provided by University of Bristol

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