

The Bees' Needs

May - July:

The Busy, Bright Heart of the Year

This is the second instalment of our year in the life of Belinda, our local bumblebee. She'll tell us what she and other pollinators are doing at this time of year, how she helps people and how the way we look after our gardens can be life or death for her.

After the fragility and riskiness of spring, my world is now noisy – with the sound of many wings. My nest is alive.

I am no longer alone—my daughters have hatched, and they take over the work of foraging while I stay close, laying eggs and keeping the colony growing. Some of those eggs will become workers; later, some will become new queens and males.

This is the season of abundance, but also of endless hard work. Every day, my daughters visit hundreds of flowers. Clover, foxglove, comfrey, bramble, herbs, and wildflowers all call to us. We follow scent trails, remember routes, and communicate through movement and sound.

Other pollinators work alongside us: honeybees, butterflies, moths, beetles, and flies, each with their own role. Together, we form a living network that keeps plants reproducing.

Humans benefit enormously from this busy time. As we pollinate crops like beans, strawberries, raspberries, oilseed rape and tomatoes, we help ensure food on plates and in shops.

Wild plants also thrive because of us, supporting birds, mammals, and entire ecosystems.

Summer landscapes exist as they do because pollinators like me keep them alive.

But summer brings dangers too. Roads, mowers, pesticides, and a lack of diverse flowers can turn a rich season into a risky one. When fields bloom briefly and then fall silent, we struggle to find enough food. Long dry spells can leave us thirsty, and sudden storms can destroy our nests.

Humans can help by letting gardens grow wilder, planting flowers that bloom at different times, and providing shallow water sources with stones for us to land on. Cutting grass less often and leaving flowering weeds helps more than you might think.

Buying food that has been grown in friendly ways also helps ensure better lives for us. Please consider seasonal and local produce from farms with flowers in field margins or hedgerows that provide us with shelter.

And look for products with environmental or wildlife-friendly labels, indicating less use of pesticides, because they are also very helpful for us.

Summer is the heart of our year. When it thrives, so do we all.

let's get buzzing
in Buriton

