



Caru Gwenyn
Bee Friendly



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Case Studies

Gerddi Bro Ddyfi Gardens

Using gardening and related activities, the Gerddi Bro Ddyfi Gardens (www.gerddibroddyfigardens.co.uk) provides a therapeutic community space for all people in the Bro Ddyfi area, and especially those at risk of social exclusion.



They aim to work with nature to increase biodiversity and practise organic gardening. In 2017, they were awarded Bee Friendly status and, year on year, they have built on their achievements to deliver positive outcomes for pollinators.

The garden has an established wildflower meadow.

They recognise that early sources of pollen and nectar are important, especially in spring when insect colonies are establishing and developing larvae.

In 2017, within their existing community wildflower meadow, they decided to increase the provision of early wildflowers for bees and planted cowslips and ragged robin.

The meadow area is cut back late in the summer season to allow plants to flower and set seed.



Throughout the garden, there are wild areas with insect friendly plants such as viper's bugloss, ox eye daisy, meadowsweet, nettles, lesser hogweed and plantains.

Areas of long grass are cut in rotation every other year, while shorter grass areas have been planted with low-growing pollinator-friendly flowers like selfheal, clover and fox and cubs.

Hedgerows provide food, shelter, overwintering sites and corridors for pollinators to move around in.

The garden has a number of hedges.

The gardeners planted buckthorn, guelder rose, willow and holly hedging specifically for pollinators and wildlife. They planted an edible native hedge, which includes blackthorn, elder, dog rose and hazel.



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The bases of the hedges have been planted with pollinator-friendly flowers such as honesty, hedge garlic, wild carrot and red campion.

As part of their 10th anniversary, the gardens planted a new community orchard with many new fruit bushes and trees, which will provide valuable nectar and pollen. Pollinators enhance crop yield, so having good pollinator numbers in the garden will help produce a bumper crop.

The gardens have a productive area for growing organic vegetables and herbs. Edible flowers such as calendula, nasturtium and borage are grown as companion plants, which attract beneficial insects.

These help with natural pest control, since no chemicals are used in the gardens.

Green manures are grown to naturally improve fertility. Some of these, such as *Phacelia* and clover are allowed to flower for their beneficial nectar.

Some vegetables are allowed to go to seed, which provides additional wildlife-friendly flowers and seeds for collection.

When they wanted to draw attention to the medicinal properties of herbs, they developed a mini apothecary garden.

When creating this garden, they selected herbs that are also specific for pollinators.

Plants included:

sage, rosemary, *Echinacea*, lemon balm, valerian, thyme, bee balm, camomile, violets, fennel, evening primrose, cat mint, goldenrod, feverfew, St John's wort and vervain.



They created a new wildlife shelter in the apothecary garden but valued what they already had, and retained a sedum roof from a previous shelter.

The new wildlife shelter was created with help from local children. It is used as an educational tool and for bug hunts.

One of the striking features of the garden is the nectar border, which contains flowers, grasses and shrubs that provide nectar over a long season, as well as height, structure and shelter.

Unlike in the meadow, this area is not cut back in summer but is left throughout the winter.



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Plants can therefore provide a mid to late season food source. Seed heads and stems provide shelter for insects and food for wildlife.

In addition to being good for pollinators, some of the plants they have chosen also look architecturally beautiful especially in the winter.

These include:

teasel, ornamental thistle, cardoon, hemp agrimony, *Echinops ritro*, Joe pye weed, rose bay willowherb, sedum, *Echinacea*, tansy, Jacob's ladder, *Verbena bonariensis*, purple loosestrife, alliums, michaelmas daisy, *Verbascum*, oregano, *Stipa tenuissima*, knapweed and umbellifers such as fennel, milk parsley and parsnip.



The gardeners are intentionally trying to create a nature-friendly space which is also aesthetically attractive.

Contrasting 'wilder' areas with well-defined paths and edges ensures the area does not appear neglected but is purposely managed to provide informal natural beauty.

They want to show visitors how gardening differently for the benefit of pollinators and other wildlife can be beautiful and that people can adopt this approach rather than following traditional, 'tidy' gardening methods.

The ethos of the gardens is community participation, learning through gardening and being active outdoors.

Awareness of pollinators is enshrined in what they do and is observed and explained to those who visit the gardens.

The gardeners have run a number of events, which have included a pollinator festival, moth night and meadow days.

They have carried out a wide range of activities including bug id, guide walks, wreath making, botanical drawing, food foraging and making balms from medicinal herbs.

They have also had talks on how to create and maintain a wildflower meadow and on the decline of pollinators and other insects.

Events and activities are highlighted on social media and reported in the local press.