



# SuperValu Tidy Towns

*Caring for our environment*

## Nature & Biodiversity in your locality



Supporting the Sustainable  
Development Goals

# Handbook

Brought to you by the Department of Rural & Community Development



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

**SuperValu**



**The SuperValu TidyTowns competition commenced in 1958 and has since become Ireland's best-known sustainable and environmental initiative. The competition is administered by the Department of Rural and Community Development and has been proudly sponsored by SuperValu since 1991.**

The competition is independently adjudicated under eight categories, these are;

<b>Community- Your Planning &amp; Involvement</b>	<b>Streetscape &amp; Public Places</b>
<b>Green Spaces &amp; Landscaping</b>	<b>Nature &amp; Biodiversity in your Locality</b>
<b>Sustainability - Doing more with less</b>	<b>Tidiness &amp; Litter Control</b>
<b>Residential Streets &amp; Housing Areas</b>	<b>Approach Roads, Streets &amp; Lanes</b>

In September 2015, 193 UN Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development “Transforming our World”. The centrepiece of this Agenda are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which reflect economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Throughout the entry form, you will see where many of these goals are aligned to the different TidyTowns categories. Please identify, if applicable, under each category where your projects or initiatives aim to address one or more of the sustainable goals.

You will see that the “Nature and Biodiversity in your locality” category aligns to goals 6, 13, 14, 15 & 17.



This Handbook, which has been prepared with input from the national panel of TidyTowns adjudicators, is divided into sections, each category is covered individually, however, the entrant is advised not to read each section in isolation from the others. Landscaping has an important role to play in the adjudication of Streetscapes and Public Places, Residential Streets and Housing Areas and Approach Roads, Streets and Lanes, Tidiness and Litter control, likewise will be looked at in a number of categories. We would encourage you therefore to refer to all categories regardless of the project or initiative being undertaken.

Please refer to the General Information section also which contains valuable information for all TidyTowns groups.

In this section, we look at “Nature & Biodiversity in your locality” please refer to the scoring sheet to see the marks for this category. The entry form contains the following text to assist the entrant in completing this section of their entry form;

Show your understanding and awareness of nature and biodiversity in your locality. This may include protected areas and/or areas important for conservation e.g. waterways, field boundaries, coastal features etc. Show an appreciation of how your local species and habitats should be best managed and protected. Evidence of cooperation with expert groups and relevant authorities, especially in carrying out work in sensitive areas is desirable.



# NATURE & BIODIVERSITY IN YOUR LOCALITY

Nature: the phenomena of the physical world collectively, including plants, animals, the landscape, and other features and products of the earth.

Biodiversity: The diversity of life forms i.e. species of mammals, birds, plants etc., but also the variety of habitat types i.e. the diversity of places where nature thrives in your area and the different ways that living and non-living things interact.

Ecology: the branch of the biological sciences that studies plants and animals in their natural habitats and the web of life and ecosystems that join us all.

## About this Category

This category is all about how you understand, protect and enhance nature and biodiversity in your local area. The Adjudicator is looking for evidence that you have a clear understanding of the natural components of your locality and that your work takes these into account at a very fundamental level. Crucially, you should demonstrate that you appreciate the most ecologically valuable areas in your locality and that your work will never have a negative impact on these. You should tell us how you have sought good advice on dealing with these areas and how you have put this into practice. Ideally, your TidyTown Group should be carrying out well-informed and researched projects that will help to enhance and protect nature and biodiversity in your locality either through projects on your own or through

your working with local businesses and community groups. How you share your knowledge and awareness of your community's natural resources is also a key aspect of this category.

### What your Adjudicator considers

1. Knowing and Understanding Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality
2. Habitats and Species in your Locality
3. Actions for Nature and Biodiversity
4. Awareness

**Note:** TidyTown groups and volunteers are reminded that their safety and welfare must always take priority. In order to ensure the safety of volunteers, TidyTown groups are encouraged to seek the advice of An Garda Síochána prior to undertaking projects on roads, roadsides and road verges.



## 1. KNOWING AND UNDERSTANDING NATURE AND BIODIVERSITY IN YOUR LOCALITY

Key to this category is knowing what habitats exist in your area and where they are. **A Habitat Survey** is a very important step that should be taken as soon as possible. An ecologist will be able to advise you on how this should be carried out. If you have never taken this step before, you are advised to ask an experienced Tidy Towns Group in your area how they went about completing this survey. Another useful contact is your County's Heritage and/or Biodiversity Officer. The survey should include descriptions of the various habitat types in your area and the key species of flora and fauna occurring there. It is recommended that the Heritage Council's Guide to Habitats in Ireland (free to download – see Useful Materials, below) is used in identifying the habitats in your survey area. A crucial output of your habitat survey will be a Habitat Map.

**A Habitat Map** should indicate the location and extent of the habitats in your area. Lots of useful online mapping applications are available if you wish to create a digital map. However, a clear hand-drawn map is also absolutely acceptable. Your map should be to scale, show all of the relevant habitat areas such as rivers, streams, hedgerows etc. but most importantly it should indicate the presence of any sensitive, threatened or protected habitats and/or species.

**Areas Designated for Nature Conservation or Protection** are without exception the most important areas to know about in your locality. So, how do you know if an area is protected? Well, there has never been more information on this so easily available. The National Parks and Wildlife Service (see Who Does What? below) has an easy to use online mapping database that shows all the areas designated for nature conservation in Ireland. It is essential that you show that you are aware of any designated or protected areas in your locality and why they are important.

## TYPES OF PROTECTED AREAS

**Natural Heritage Area (NHA)** – an area of national importance for habitats or which holds species whose habitats need protection.

**Special Area of Conservation (SAC)** – a protected area of international importance for habitats and species. Part of a Europe-wide network of protected sites

**Special Protection Area (SPA)** – a protected area of international importance for certain bird species and their habitats.

**Nature Reserves** – an area protected for wildlife and is usually owned by the state.

**Wildfowl Sanctuaries** – sites where game birds may not be shot

**Biodiversity and the Law:** It is important that you are aware of the most important legislation that is in place to protect wildlife and habitats. The best-intentioned group might unknowingly breach wildlife law while undertaking a project so it is vital to know the basics. **The Wildlife Act**, first introduced in 1976 and since amended several times is the basis of our national legal protection for species and habitats. Almost all birds and mammals are protected under this act. Habitat protection (e.g. forbidding the cutting of hedgerows during the bird-nesting season) is also allowed under this act. This act also allows the state to designate protected areas (NHAs) and control hunting. **The Habitats Directive** is European legislation that requires member states to protect the most important habitats and species and allows for the creation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). **The Birds Directive** is another piece of European law that requires states to protect certain bird species and create Special Protection Areas (SPAs). We strongly recommend that you contact your local NPWS Conservation Ranger or County Council Heritage or Biodiversity Officer if you think that any of your work might involve protected areas or species.



## WHO DOES WHAT IN NATURE AND BIODIVERSITY?

**Environmental Awareness Officer** – this person is employed by the local authority to promote environmental policies and plans, including waste management, anti-litter actions, pollution prevention and protection of amenities. The EAO is a key contact for Tidy Towns.

**Conservation Ranger** – formerly known as Wildlife Rangers. These are the, ‘on the ground’ officers of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) who oversee the implementation of wildlife legislation. They can also be excellent sources of advice.

**Heritage Officer** – employed by the local authority, this person plays a key role in the promotion of awareness and knowledge of local heritage and provide advice and guidance on aspects of county heritage.

**Biodiversity Officer** – also employed by the local authority this person is in charge of implementing the county Biodiversity Action Plan and to provide advice and guidance on biodiversity matters at a local level. Note that few counties have a full-time Biodiversity Officer.

## 2. HABITATS AND SPECIES IN YOUR LOCALITY

### HABITATS IN YOUR LOCALITY

**Rivers, Streams, Lakes and Freshwater Habitats** are among the most important and probably the most sensitive of habitat types in any area. Your habitat map should indicate these clearly and you should tell us how your work helps to protect or enhance these areas. Often, these habitat types go ‘unnoticed’ in towns and villages and are not as well protected as they might be. There are excellent resources available online (see recommended websites table below) which show you where all our watercourses and waterbodies are and here you can find out who your local Community Waters Officer is (See who does what? above). The EPA also has detailed mapping of watercourses with useful features showing characteristics like directions of flows.

**Beaches, Dunes and Coastal Areas:** If you are lucky enough to have these types of areas in your locality, please be aware that there is a good chance that they are protected areas. Certainly, they will include sensitive habitat types and need special care and attention when planning any work here. Ask your local Conservation Ranger for advice before you start.

**Woodlands, Treelines and Hedgerows:** Mature trees and especially woodlands are among the most valuable habitat types for nature in any area. Long-lived and stable wooded areas provide year-round food and shelter for a surprising range of species from plants, fungi and invertebrates to birds and mammals. We would recommend that you always try to maintain mature trees and woody areas and enhance them where you can. Treelines – a feature of many approach roads – are valuable ‘commuting’ habitat for birds and bats. The network of hedgerows throughout Ireland are the lifelines of biodiversity through many areas especially in recent years with the intensification of agriculture. Mapping your local hedgerows and recording the species you find there is taking on





more importance now as they are disappearing fast with pressure from housing and agriculture. They can be terrific reservoirs of biodiversity in a locality and can provide focus for many different kinds of projects from Community 'Edible hedges' (i.e. hedges planted with fruit and nut trees) to a traditional hedge-laying skills project to bird and bat recording projects etc.

**Buildings and Stonewalls:** Every community will have examples of these habitats. Be aware that buildings may hold bat roosts or bird nests (see below) so any works on these structures should only go ahead if it is confirmed that these are not present. If you are renovating an old building, look out for open or broken windows or other ways bats or birds like swallows may have been entering the building and plan for how this access may be retained (see the Swift Conservation Ireland website, details below). Stonework can be home to a wide variety of lichens, ferns and plants. If possible, it is recommended that these be left undisturbed. There is usually no need to remove ivy from buildings. It is an important food plant and hibernating location for bugs, mammals and birds and pulling well-established ivy from brick or stonework can damage a building, so leaving it in place is advised.

**Parks and Open Spaces:** Most communities have some form of parkland and amenity grassland. While regularly mown grassy spaces are not usually very biodiverse, parks and housing estate green spaces offer plenty of space for potential biodiversity enhancement through wildflower meadow creation. Often this is simply a case of decreasing the number of mowings, removing the cuttings and waiting to see what plants come into flower. Depending on the use of the space, inviting grass paths can be mown through the area or benches put in place from where the resulting butterflies and other pollinator species can be watched.

## SPECIES IN YOUR LOCALITY:

**Bats & TidyTowns:** All bat species, (we have 9) are protected by law in Ireland. The places they sleep and rest in (roosts) are also protected if they are occupied by bats. If your work involves the demolition, restoration or enhancement of a building (even old sheds) you are strongly advised to contact your local Conservation Ranger for advice before you start so that you minimise the chance of harming any bats. Bat Conservation Ireland have an excellent website that we recommend you visit (see website table below). They have written a free handbook of guidelines especially for TidyTowns groups available in pdf form ([https://www.batconservationireland.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/BCIrelandGuidelines\\_TidyTowns.pdf](https://www.batconservationireland.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/BCIrelandGuidelines_TidyTowns.pdf)). The installation of bat roosting boxes is an excellent initiative for TidyTowns groups to undertake. We would advise you again to get good advice on how to go about this. It is not difficult but you must know how!

**Minding Birds in your Locality:** For many people, birds are representative of all that is good about nature. Indeed, the boundless variety of birdlife makes these species and their lifestyles a constant source of fascination. Please be aware that all Irish birds are protected by law to some extent. Perhaps the best work that TidyTowns groups can do for birds is protecting their habitats. Woodland, treelines, hedgerows and other 'woody' vegetation is where many bird species shelter, feed and breed. Be conscious of this in planning the clearance of any area and be mindful of the nesting season. This is particularly applicable in the case of ivy, which is a native plant that a huge number of species depend upon for food (both pollen and fruit) in autumn and winter. Its evergreen leaves also provide shelter and hibernation sites for many species of insects, birds and sometimes-even bats. Creating habitat for birds is another invaluable role that TidyTowns groups fulfil. This can be planting of new wooded areas or hedgerows but might also include 'low-mow' regimes (see Parks & Open Spaces above) so that there are more aerial insects for the hunting birds.



**Creating nesting places** is an excellent addition to just about any location. If you are making or putting up bird nesting boxes make sure that you are using appropriate materials and following good guidance. Birdwatch Ireland have great information on their website. The RSPB (see website table below) also have detailed advice on making and installing nesting boxes. Remember though, bird nesting boxes have to be maintained annually and this is something that the Adjudicator will be looking for evidence of. Many of our bird species have suffered severe declines in numbers and we'd like to see TidyTowns groups helping out species like swifts and swallows with well-informed actions. The incorporation of 'Swift bricks' into buildings being built or renovated is a really valuable initiative. The erection of Swift boxes and Swift callers is another project that many TidyTowns communities can work on and is of vital importance as this fascinating species is in decline across Ireland. See the website table below for more information.

**Feeding Birds** is a really enjoyable and worthwhile activity for all sorts of groups. If you want to put up birdfeeders, we would recommend that you plan where you will put them, who will be looking after them and who will keep them filled. If you do put up feeders, please be aware that you should be keeping these filled throughout the year. This may be difficult for schools or Community Centres that might have long winter and summer holidays, so plan this well ahead. Birdwatch Ireland has an excellent FAQ on feeding birds on its website.

### 3. ACTIONS FOR NATURE AND BIODIVERSITY

This section looks at some of the active projects that your group might undertake to protect or enhance nature and biodiversity. There are far too many possible initiatives to describe here, but some are described below:

**A Local Biodiversity Action Plan** – This is a plan that is devised specifically for your area that will help your community understand, protect and enhance nature and biodiversity. While no two TidyTowns centres are the same, even the most built-up of areas will have areas of biodiversity and opportunities to make these better. A Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) should be drawn up after your habitat survey is complete and perhaps with some nature-based projects already under your belt. The LBAP sets out a series of actions that may be undertaken at a local level to protect enhance and add to your community's biodiversity. The plan should be drawn up by an ecologist and in conjunction with your local authority. Ireland's first National Biodiversity Plan called for all local authorities to support the creation of such plans at local levels so they will be happy to assist your group with this initiative. The LBAP will have a timeframe of several years and will give your group a thorough grounding in what projects you should be undertaking.

**Surveys** – gathering information is always a good idea and a well-planned survey is a very valuable initiative. Specific surveys for threatened species such as Swifts are highly recommended. However, surveys of wildflowers and other plants are also very worthwhile. Different conservation groups and academic centres are looking for volunteers to all sorts of surveys from counting butterflies and other insects to bat detector surveys at night. There is lots of information on these 'citizen science' projects on the website of the EPA ([www.epa.ie](http://www.epa.ie)) and on [www.biodiversityireland.ie](http://www.biodiversityireland.ie). This latter website run by the National Biodiversity Data Centre also encourages TidyTowns groups to record your actions for biodiversity, which will be mapped, and you can see the actions for biodiversity taking place all over Ireland.



**Tree planting** – *The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago and the second best time to plant one is now.* ...So says an old proverb that underscores the importance of trees to us all. Indeed, all Tidy Towns groups are recommended to add to their existing stock of trees by organising tree-planting initiatives with as many residents as possible involved. Do get as much advice on this as you can before you embark. A tree can live hundreds of years so this is truly a long-term project that needs planning. Consult with the local authority on suitable sites. Landowners are very often well-disposed to Tidy Towns groups planting trees on or near their land, but always ask. Many farmers are by now expert in tree planting so look to them for advice too. When choosing your site remember that your trees may become very large, so make sure that there is room. Look up before you plant! When choosing which species of tree to plant, first look around to see what grows well in your locality; these will generally be well suited. We always recommend planting native trees, as they will be best for wildlife e.g. the Irish oak is habitat in itself with more than 200 other species associated with a mature tree! However, there are non-native species (e.g. Lime, Amelanchier and Bay) that are also of great benefit for wildlife. The Irish charity Trees on the Land provides free native tree whips to community groups as part of their initiative to increase the cover of native trees in Ireland. See the website table below for more information.

**Actions for Pollinators** – In recent years, it has become clear that many of our insect pollinating species are in crisis. Tidy Towns groups have been

at the forefront of efforts to assist our pollinators. Given the importance of pollinating insects to biodiversity, it is expected all groups will undertake projects with these species in mind. The good news is that there is now a wealth of information out there on how to go about such projects. The ‘bible’ of this field is the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, which contains a wealth of information on the subject, including project ideas. You are strongly advised to visit [www.pollinators.ie](http://www.pollinators.ie) which has guidelines, downloadable resources, news and details on training. Many pollinator-friendly actions will also add to the beauty of your locality from wildflower meadows to fruit trees. Most local authorities have signed up to the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan so you will likely find a good response when you ask for assistance and advice in this area.

**Habitat Creation** – creating habitats can be very simple (e.g. making a log-pile or compost heap) or more complex, like creating a pond from scratch. However, they are always fascinating projects from which your group could learn much. Artificial nesting sites like Sand martin banks need some expertise but readily doable projects like hedgerow planting, bee and butterfly banks are easy and inexpensive. Be aware that some of your other projects will have biodiversity benefits ‘built-in.’ For example, stone walls are great for some pollinating insects, allotments and community gardens can be pollinator-friendly too and your landscaping can be made up with edible components for birds.





**Habitat Management** – taking a look at how existing habitat areas might be better managed for wildlife is always recommended. Again, this can be very simple, like changing a mowing regime from every fortnight to twice a year for a tall wildflower meadow or every six weeks for a short wildflower meadow. Removing non-native or overly-vigorous plants from an area can increase biodiversity almost immediately e.g. Cherry laurel in hedges and woodland. Reducing the extent of some woody species can allow better ground flora to develop. Always get expert advice if a big clearance project is planned.

**Invasive Species** – Invasive species are non-native species that are persistent and can cause economic or ecological harm. Most of the problematic species that fall into this category are plants and Japanese Knotweed is perhaps the most notorious of these. However, there are many invasive species that may be encountered by Tidy Towns groups as they go about their work. Helpfully, there is excellent information on these species on the website [www.invasivespeciesireland.com](http://www.invasivespeciesireland.com). However, it is strongly recommended that you seek expert advice if you even suspect that you may have an invasive species in your area. The most problematic of the species are subject to legal controls so it is most important that you are well-informed. If an invasive species is noted during adjudication, the Adjudicator will hope to see evidence in your entry form of your awareness of its existence and how you propose to ensure it is properly managed.

**Planting Schemes that are Pretty (and) Good for Wildlife** – you are strongly recommended to consider wild species when you are planning your planting schemes but sometimes more formal planting schemes are needed particularly in the urban situations. Perennial plants tend to be better for pollinators and are often more cost-effective as they last for 10-12 years. A mix of herbaceous perennials and structural shrubs can provide colour for a good 10 months of the year if the right group of plants is chosen. The 'Pollinator Planting Code' free to download at [www.pollinators.ie/](http://www.pollinators.ie/) resource contains very helpful lists of perennials, trees and bulbs, when they are in flower and the best situation to plant them in i.e. sunny, shaded etc. For this type of decorative planting, the plants need not be native to be of good biodiversity value. Many non-native species not only look great but offer sustenance for pollinating insects. These include Rudbeckia, Astrantias, Penstemons, Hellebores, Sedums, Salvias and Lavenders. Woody shrubs like Cotoneaster and Pyracantha have fruit and flowers that help wildlife. When selecting trees, always consider natives but be aware that non-natives like Limes, Viburnum Catalpa and all the fruit trees such as Apples, Pears, Plums and Cherries are all good for pollinating insects as well as hungry birds and mammals.





## 4. AWARENESS

Tidy Towns groups have a unique position when it comes to biodiversity awareness. They are very often the driving force in a community's understanding and appreciation of wild places and spaces. We would encourage every group to do their best in spreading the word on any nature or biodiversity project they are undertaking, even if it is only telling the community where the best places for wildlife are in the locality.

**Schools** – if there is a school in your community, we would really like to see how you work together with the pupils and teachers for the betterment of local biodiversity. The Green School movement means that almost all schools are environmentally aware and want to have links 'outside the school gate', so you will be pushing an open door. School gardens are terrific places for wildlife projects and pupils and students are keen on helping with wildlife surveys. Make sure to talk to the Transition Year co-ordinator to see if any 2nd-level students can help you with your work. Also make sure your local schools are fully aware of all the helpful resources available for teachers and pupils at [www.pollinators.ie/resources](http://www.pollinators.ie/resources). Here they will find the schools version of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan as well as lots of project ideas that the schools could perhaps work with the local Tidy Towns group on.

**Signs** – many groups are keen to put up signs with information on biodiversity and wildlife. We would always caution that you take your time doing this and give it lots of thought. It is essential that good quality, accurate information be displayed, so do get expert advice on content. We would also recommend that the information displayed is relevant to the particular area and not generic. Make sure that you will not be creating or adding to signage 'clutter' and spoiling a perfectly nice place. Please ensure that you will be able to maintain your sign to keep it clean and in good repair. Signs can aid a group in their efforts to enhance biodiversity locally e.g. when you change the mowing regime a 'Managed for Wildlife' sign can inform and assure locals that the longer grass in the verge is an informed biodiversity project. Please note that the use of such signs should not be abused and erected in an area that is unkempt and uncared for!

**Leaflets** – As with signage, plan any leaflets and other publications well ahead. Hard-copy maps are still often sought-after by visitors so a map that shows where they can go to see your best areas might be a great idea. Do make sure that it is accurate and proofread before printing. Hiring a designer to put it together is highly recommended.

**Website** – With the capability of storing masses of information online, it is recommended that you add your nature and biodiversity information to your website. You can display your survey results here, as well as photographs of your biodiversity hotspots and links to similar projects or organisations.

**Social Media** – We recommend that groups consider using the power of online media platforms to help to spread the word. These are fast and efficient tools for telling your community and the wider world about your important wildlife areas and what you are doing to help them. Use your social media channels to put up photos of your local wildlife – especially as the results of your biodiversity projects come to fruition. Also use your social media channels to help spread the word on good, informed websites e.g. all the different helpful resources available at [www.pollinators.ie](http://www.pollinators.ie) – you could put the focus on a different resource each month of the year.

**Events** – Public events are a great way to raise awareness and increase involvement in your community. These events could include a simple wildlife 'walk and talk' or you could host practical conservation days where the public are invited to help you with tree-planting, hedge laying or a river clean-up. Some of your biodiversity projects could lend themselves to community events e.g. your Community Orchard or Edible Hedge project could result in a community harvest day in autumn. We recommend that you ask advice from your Heritage Officer or Environmental Awareness Officer when planning these. Consider asking conservation organisations like Birdwatch Ireland, Bat Conservation Ireland, the Irish Peatland Conservation Council or the Irish Wildlife Trust, these may provide free expertise.

# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON BIODIVERSITY

- [www.tidytowns.ie](http://www.tidytowns.ie)

Department of Rural and Community Development – Guidelines, Entry forms, adjudication reports, special competitions, news & FAQs

- [www.biodiversity.ie](http://www.biodiversity.ie)

National Biodiversity Data Centre – Records of wild species of all sorts, sites protected for wildlife, searchable mapping database for species, biodiversity news, events, training and workshop updates.

- [www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie)

National Parks and Wildlife Service – Has mapping of all the protected and other designated sites in the Irish Republic. Detailed information on what makes these sites important.

- [www.epa.ie](http://www.epa.ie)

Environmental Protection Agency – Up to date information on our environment, including river and other waterbodies, waste and air. Excellent mapping database for our natural environment.

- [www.birdwatchireland.ie](http://www.birdwatchireland.ie)

Birdwatch Ireland – Excellent website for information on all of Ireland's bird species.

- [www.swiftconservation.ie](http://www.swiftconservation.ie)

Swift Conservation Ireland – Swift Conservation Ireland is a volunteer led initiative. This website is a platform for providing advice and information about conservation actions for the Swifts across Ireland.

- [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds – The website of the leading British charity for the protection of birds, it has lots of helpful guidance for making bird boxes.

- [www.iwt.ie](http://www.iwt.ie)

Irish Wildlife Trust – Wildlife information, news, blogs, educational material.

- [www.batconservationireland.org](http://www.batconservationireland.org)

Bat Conservation Ireland – Really useful website with information on all of Ireland's bats. Advice for householders and community groups. Information on events.

- [www.pollinators.ie](http://www.pollinators.ie)

National Biodiversity Data Centre – Possibly world's best website for information on pollinators. The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan is available here as well as a host of good guidance material. The blog section is recommended for TidyTown groups.

- [www.rhs.org.uk](http://www.rhs.org.uk)

The Royal Horticultural Society – Very useful gardening advice website with lots of advice on pollinator-friendly garden plants for more formal planting schemes, flowerbeds and containers.

- [www.wildflowersofireland.net](http://www.wildflowersofireland.net)

Wildflowers of Ireland – A beautiful and detailed online database of many of Ireland's wildflowers. Easily searched with lots of information.

- [www.invasivespeciesireland.com](http://www.invasivespeciesireland.com)

Invasive Species Ireland – The all-Ireland database for invasive species. Excellent species information and guidelines. Alerts for potential invasive species threats, information on legislation.

- [www.ipcc.ie](http://www.ipcc.ie)

The Irish Peatland Conservation Council – Helpful website of Ireland's leading charity for the conservation of our bogs and fens.

- [www.treecouncil.ie](http://www.treecouncil.ie)

Tree Council of Ireland – A helpful website from the NGO with lots of advice about trees

- [www.treesontheland.ie](http://www.treesontheland.ie)

Trees on the Land – An Irish charity dedicated to planting native Irish trees all over Ireland. They donate free young trees (whips) that have all been sourced and sown in Ireland to private individuals and community groups.

- [www.watersandcommunities.ie](http://www.watersandcommunities.ie)

The Local Authority Waters Programme – Support for local communities who wish to get involved in the care of their local waters and engage with river basin planning

- [www.catchments.ie](http://www.catchments.ie)

Environmental Protection Agency – A website from the EPA that shares science and stories about Ireland's water catchments, and people's connections to their water.

- [www.communityfoundation.ie](http://www.communityfoundation.ie)

The Community Foundation for Ireland – A philanthropic foundation that is committed to supporting community groups. They have recently set up an Environment and Nature fund and are funding Biodiversity Action Plans for local community groups.



## NOTES