



We are pleased to be involved in Operation Pollinator - an exciting new initiative to help restore the plight of the Bumblebee and other crucial pollinating insects.

Over the coming seasons we will be establishing and managing areas of pollen and nectar rich wildflower habitat that will provide essential food resources and nesting habitat for pollinators, including native bees, butterflies and other insects.

The selected native wildflowers will also provide new visual features and, we hope, will give added interest to your round of golf from the environmental diversity it will support.

The project intends to start with relatively small areas, to learn the techniques and develop a system that works effectively for us. We are being supported by Syngenta and ecology and environmental specialists from the STRI.

Why are we involved?

- Pollinating bees are an essential part of the natural ecosystem, for pollination of food crops and to maintain ecological biodiversity. Bumblebee numbers have declined over recent years, with some UK species now on the verge of extinction
- Golf courses provide outstanding potential to create essential habitat and food sources for a range of native bees and pollinating insects
- Involvement with Operation Pollinator generates new opportunities for our club and immense pride for players in our course
- Nationally, Operation Pollinator is seeking to establish 250 hectare of specific new habitat on up to 500 golf courses across the UK – creating a significant ecological resource and proving that golf and the environment can be effectively managed on the same course
- Because we can make a difference. Independent research trials have shown creation of even small areas of dedicated habitat can significantly increase the numbers of pollinating insects. With your support we can make that difference count

What is involved, and what will you see?

In the first instance we will identify areas suitable for Operation Pollinator habitat creation. We need to establish what environmental features we have, so as not to disturb already valuable areas. Our aim is to target new habitat creation to bring to life areas of low ecological value. We will also assess what techniques will be most appropriate for wildflower establishment.

In the autumn designated areas will be cut back, as we would normally do. Patches with thick Ryegrasses or Yorkshire Fog may be sprayed with a selective herbicide, Rescue, to remove those aggressive grasses and allow Fescue, Bentgrass and other fine grass species to grow back.

The Operation Pollinator area/s will then be intensively scarified to expose bare earth, to sow the selected wildflower seed. The grasses will also grow back, although we may also choose to use a growth regulator on the grasses to hold back competition and try and allow the wildflower seedlings to establish strongly before the winter.

Future management should involve an annual cut of the wildflower area in early autumn, after the bird nesting period and once seed has set and been released, with the possible need for further scarification to encourage more wildflowers. If dominant coarse grasses begin to encroach on the wildflowers, further Rescue application may be required, but will only be used in assessed situations.

STRI trials suggest that we should begin to see some wildflowers in the first spring after sowing, but as most are perennial or biennial species it will only be in the second and subsequent years that the wildflowers areas come into their own, and will go on getting better every year thereafter.

Scientific research into pollinating insect populations on Operation Pollinator habitats indicate that we should start to see significant numbers of Bumblebees and butterflies increasing over the coming years.

Future actions

We hope that you agree that Operation Pollinator is a very worthwhile project for us to be involved with and to develop in the future as part of our environmental and ecological management. The aim is that it will add an extra level of interest and pride in playing our course.

The greenkeeping team and club management would welcome any feedback and further ideas that you have to add to the value we can deliver with our environmental projects.