

**IDENTIFY:****MAINTAIN NATIVE FLOWERING HEDGEROWS**

Manage native hedgerows around the club so that they flower each year.

Native hedgerows line the perimeter of many sport clubs and are important corridors for pollinators and other wildlife and help maintain linkages within the landscape. Flowering hedgerows that contain Willow, Whitethorn, Blackthorn and Hazel provide vital food in spring when bees emerge from hibernation. Bramble is a good source of food in summer, and Ivy in autumn. Bumblebees often nest in long grass at the base of hedgerow

For more tips and advice on managing native hedgerows around the club so that they flower each year, see

<https://pollinators.ie/sports-clubs/>

Hedgerow management to encourage flowering

- Where possible, cut hedgerows on a minimum 3-year cycle. Cutting annually stops the hedgerow flowering and fruiting.
- Where hedgerows must be cut for road safety, allow the inside to flower.
- Let some hedgerows grow wild, side-trimming only.
- Where possible, cut in rotation rather than all at once – this will ensure some areas of hedgerow will always flower (Blackthorn flowers in March, while Whitethorn will appear white in May).
- Hedges managed for pollinators should ideally be cut between November and January.
- If they must be cut outside of this, cut sections in rotation, so some areas remain undisturbed. Let some Bramble and Ivy grow in hedgerows, as key food sources in summer and autumn.
- Having a 1.5-2m grass border at the base (that is not cut or sprayed) will provide nesting habitat for bumblebees, as well as allowing wildflowers to grow and provide additional food.





Hedgerow management for healthy waters

- If your club grounds are adjacent to a water course (even a drain) maintaining a hedgerow has co-benefits for water quality by providing a buffer that reduces overland run-off of pesticides (in the case of sports clubs, most often herbicides), sediment and fertilisers.
- This buffering effect is further enhanced by leaving 1.5 to 2m of vegetation uncut at the base of the hedge.
- Hedgerows also provide welcome shade for fish and insect life and help to control water temperatures in hot weather. Hedgerows can also provide some woody debris that allows smaller fish to hide from predators.
- If there happens to be a river adjacent to the grounds, natural hedges and bordering scrub and vegetation help to stabilise the riverbank and reduce bank erosion, which can result in damage to instream habitat.



See <https://pollinators.ie/sports-clubs> for more tips, advice and examples of managing your club's nature flowering hedgerows for biodiversity.