



## NEWSLETTER: OCTOBER 2021

### News

Welcome to the last month of the Bumblebee Monitoring Scheme for 2021.

Don't worry if your 2021 walk has been impacted by Covid restrictions. The main thing is to try to get back to your walk as soon as you can. If that can happen, the longer term impacts should be minimal, particularly where you have a well established walk.

**Remember new volunteers can join at anytime!**

### What happened in October 2020

- 58 transects were walked last October.
- While a few people recorded over 5 *individual* bumblebees, the average number spotted was 1.5. Thirty-two walks recorded no bumblebees last October. This is very normal, especially if you leave it later in the month.
- *B. pascuorum* was still recorded on 19 of the 58 walks. Only two walks still had *Bombus lucorum* agg. present.
- *Bombus pascuorum* workers (51 individuals) were the most abundant bumblebee spotted across all walks last October. Also spotted in small numbers were: *B. lucorum* agg., *B. terrestris* queens, *B. pascuorum* queens, *B. pascuorum* males, *B. hortorum* queens, *B. lucorum* queens and *B. terrestris* males.
- Two transects lucky enough to have rarer species, still spotted occasional workers early last October: *B. sylvarum* (in the Burren) and *B. muscorum* (in Skerries).
- The total number of individual bumblebees spotted by everyone last October was 92 (plus 27 honeybees).

## Tips & advice this month

- ✓ It can be difficult to find suitable weather conditions to do your last walk of the year. Don't forget it should be above 13°C and at least 60% sunshine. If this simply isn't possible just try your best and record the conditions you did have.
- ✓ Remember, the key target for your data to be of maximum use is to walk at least 6 of the 8 months. **Please don't be tempted to stop early – it's very important to also complete your October walk.**
- ✓ It is normal to walk your route and not record any bumblebees in October. If that happens it's still very important to submit the other data (date, weather etc.). Those 'zero abundance' walks at the beginning and end of the season are equally as important as those with bumblebee data.
- ✓ *B. pascuorum* seems to be the last of the Irish bumblebees to wind up its season and go into hibernation. For many of us, it'll still be spotted when the weather is suitable in October. You might also spot a few *B. lucorum* agg. and occasionally queens still trying to fatten up for hibernation.

## Common errors last October

- The season is now drawing to a close for bumblebees, so if you're spotting something outside the very common species, double check to be sure. Species like *B. pratorum* and *B. lapidarius* are typically hibernating by now.
- Watch out for very faded individuals of *B. pascuorum*, and don't confuse with *B. muscorum*.

## Important food plants in October

These records drop substantially now. In October 2020, we received 44 casual bumblebee records that also stated what the bee was feeding on. Based on this data, bumblebees were still foraging on around 25 different plant species last October. Most important were: Ivy and Sunflower. If you're seeing something important or unusual on your walk this month, please submit a casual record and fill in the foraging box:

<https://records.biodiversityireland.ie/record/bumblebees>



### Photo of the month



This lovely photo of *Bombus terrestris* foraging on Crocus was sent to us by Paul Green. Now is a good time to think about adding Crocus bulbs to your garden for next spring: <https://pollinators.ie/bulbs-for-bees-a-gaisce-award-challenge>

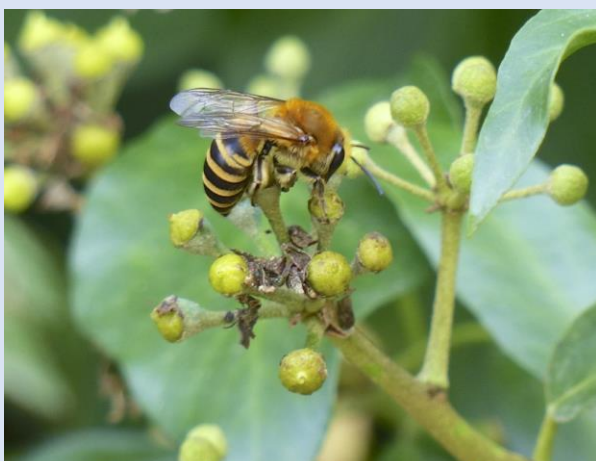
### Interesting recent research

Belmullet farmers to enhance Great Yellow Bumblebee habitat - *Beelines to Belmullet and Beyond*

Read more: <https://www.con-telegraph.ie/2021/08/26/launch-of-mayo-project-for-conservation-of-the-great-yellow-bumblebee/>

### Other things to keep an eye out for this month

This solitary bee has not been recorded from Ireland yet. Can you be the first to find it? It was recorded as new to Britain in 2001. Peak activity matches the flowering period of its key pollen forage plant, Ivy. It is the last solitary bee to emerge each year and is on the wing from early September until early November. The Ivy bee is about the size of a honeybee but has distinctive pale bands on its abdomen. If you spot it you'll need to take a photo and send it to me for verification.



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### Workshops and upcoming events

All our events are still suspended currently. I am happy to answer as many queries as you have by email and to look at any photographs you have for identification.

### Free online course on identifying and monitoring bumblebees

Don't forget we have this free online resource. It should be especially useful for new volunteers. It not only helps you get familiar with our common bumblebees, but it also explains how to take part in the monitoring scheme, including how to log your route online and submit your monthly data. You can access it here:

<https://www.biodiversityireland.ie/projects/monitoring-scheme-initiatives/bumblebee-monitoring-scheme/identifying-irish-bumblebees-online-course>

### We need more volunteers

Despite Covid, 2020 was a successful year. While a lot of people dabbled, we had 66 transects that were walked sufficient times to be included in the 2020 monitoring analyses (at least 6 out of 8). There are some walks that couldn't be walked due to Covid restrictions, that will hopefully come back on track as things improve. Also, some new people joined the scheme mid-way through and will hopefully come on stream with their data from this year. **This is an incredible achievement and we are very grateful to all of you.**

We also fully understand that sometimes unexpected events arise and it is simply impossible to achieve this target in a particular year. Where this happens, please do still persevere as the data is still very useful. The longer you've been in the scheme, the better able we are to cope with occasional monthly gaps in your walk data.

Our target is to get to 100 monitoring standard walks each year so we do still need to recruit many more volunteers over the coming years. If you know of anyone wishing to get involved with the monitoring scheme please forward this to them and/or encourage them to get in touch with us here in the Data Centre.

**Thank you for all your efforts and for being generous enough with your time to take part in this important scheme.**

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